

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Mike Woodson

Press Conference



Q. What are your initial reactions of the draw you got and just being back in March Madness?

MIKE WOODSON: I just went in and told our team I couldn't be more proud of a group of guys. This is so new to me, again, being here over a year and a half now into this job, a few guys from last season made a major jump this year.

We had to play in a game to get into the tournament -- and fourth seed. I couldn't be more proud of a group of guys but that being said we got a lot of basketball left and we drew a great team I think in Kent State who has had a hell of a season, as well, that's well-coached. I don't know a whole lot about them but I'll start today my process in terms of trying to put a game plan together to play those guys.

Q. You just came off the Big Ten Tournament, slight disappointment, but gives you an extra day of rest to prepare. I don't know if that helps you at all. The extra day of preparation, what does that do for you guys going into this tournament? You know who you're playing now, even though it's someone you've not played before but you get the extra day, how important is that?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I think rest, coming off the Big Ten Tournament gives us an opportunity to rest some legs and get everybody mentally focused on what the task is ahead of us.

You know, tomorrow, we'll come in and break down starting today, really, break down Kent State and get ready, I don't mean. There's a lot that goes into preparing for an NCAA Tournament game. The opposing team, they are doing all their prep work on us and we've just got to make sure that we're in tune as a team when we step out on that floor Friday that we are ready to go.

Q. What did you learn from coaching in the tournament last year that you can apply this year, both what you thought was good and what you thought you needed to improve on from your first experience

coaching last season?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, you know, I thought we played well against Wyoming. The trip was kind of crazy, getting out to Portland, but I never want to use that as an excuse.

Just we looked very lethargic and sluggish against St. Mary's, and that's not taking anything away from them because they had a hell of a season last season and they have had a great season this season.

So we got beat by a good team that was well-coached and you know, I've got to think that this year, these guys who was with us last season, they tasted it, just like the Big Ten Tournament, we tasted it last season and I just couldn't get us over the hump. Penn State played extremely well, but now that's behind us, seniors that we have, they are going to have to step up, Race and Miller and Trayce, and really help guide and push this team through, because that's what it's going to take, and the supporting cast has got to be ready to play when called upon to give all they got as well, because that's what it's going to take.

Each and every game you go out, it's a game of inches in tournament play. I can relate back to when I was in college. We lost to Villanova at the buzzer after being up the whole game. I mean, nobody wants to go home in March Madness and I get it. That's why you've got to be ready to play every minute, every second of every game that you get an opportunity to play.

Q. Curious when you have such a short prep time for a team in this situation, how do you kind of go about as a staff breaking down the film and figuring out kind of the game plan as you face an opponent that you don't know about right now?

MIKE WOODSON: It was shorter last season, when you think about what we had to go through to get where we got. But we do have three days. We don't play until Friday, so we'll have four days, really, to get ready for our opponent, and that's enough time, I think.

So we've just got to come committed tomorrow. We'll let them sleep in and then we'll have a late practice tomorrow,



and then we'll get going on Kent State.

Q. I know before, you've said that you stayed close to the IU program when you were in the NBA. Curious if you got to know Kent State's head coach Rob Senderoff when he was an assistant in Bloomington and also in the same bracket as Kelvin Sampson. Did you get to know those guys when they were at IU?

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, I met Kelvin. I came back and I spoke to the team briefly. But the assistant coach, no. I'm sure I probably met him if he was here in passing, but I couldn't tell you who he is or anything like that.

But he was here when I -- when Kelvin was here, you're saying?

Q. Yeah, the Kent State coach was an assistant under Sampson.

MIKE WOODSON: Well, he's had a hell of a season with his ballclub; I know that.

Q. This is kind of a weird way of asking this but a guy like Trayce, in your experience, is there benefit from getting out of the Big Ten and basically just a guy that can affect the game in so many different ways, when you're playing teams that don't have the learned behavior of having scouted him once before in the season or played him in previous years, how much more difficult of a cover, essentially, is he when teams may not have that muscle memory of having played him before?

MIKE WOODSON: It can be a tough cover but make no mistake: Kent State will do their homework on our ballclub. That's what we do as a coach and coaching staff.

At the end of the day, he's still going to be double-teamed like he has been all season because of the fact that he's good at what he does in terms of putting the ball in the hole and making plays for people around him.

So I don't see that changing, so I've got to prepare for that throughout the tournament. I mean, if we advance, which you know, it's going to take a lot of hard work to advance. I mean, that's what tournament play is about, trying to advance. Each game is a journey. You know, even though we haven't played this team before, they are not in our conference. They will do their homework on our team as well as us doing our homework on them.

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