

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Q. Kel'eI, in terms of the offensive end, did you like seeing that confidence kind of spark, and how have you worked with him to develop that? Did you see confidence lacking when he came in at all, curious?

COACH WOODSON: Well, I mean, it's been a lot of really going at him in practice to get him to be aggressive and do the things that we want him to do on the offensive end. And he's starting to show some signs that he can do that.

I mean, he's a skilled guy, but we've got to get him now where -- because it's getting ready to start for real now, and he's going to be playing much bigger guys, more talented bigs.

I'm just curious to see where he's going to be once we start that journey.

Q. You guys shot 25 free throws tonight. What does it do for your offense when you can get to the line that often?

COACH WOODSON: It takes a lot of pressure off playing that half court. We also had 27 points, fast break points. And that's going to be huge moving forward so we don't have to rely on playing so much in the half court.

We can generate points with our defense. That's a bonus when you are playing offense, when you can get up and passing lanes and disrupt opponents with your defense and get steals and get out and run. That's how the game should be played.

Q. Specifically, with your back court, you guys got I think it was close to 20 assists no turnovers from them and they also played a big factor from the defensive side. What did you see from them tonight that led to their success?

COACH WOODSON: Again, we've been stressing, we watched so much from a film standpoint where we just are not making the extra pass. Our guy draws two people and somebody's sitting there wide open and we'll try to drive

through the guy, through the two people and around them instead of making the extra pass. That's going to be critical.

The only way you beat defenses is you've got to make the extra pass. If it calls for you to set a screen, you have to set screens. I thought tonight we really sacrificed the ball and made assists. X and Gal both had six assists tonight.

Q. Mac Mgbako had 15 -- he had 14 last time. How do you evaluate his start so far?

COACH WOODSON: Mackenzie?

Q. Mackenzie Mgbako.

COACH WOODSON: He's been solid. He's been solid ever since he came here. From a defensive standpoint, we have to speed the process up with him because the way we scramble and do things, you've got to communicate it and then you've got to give energy to get where we need to go from a defensive standpoint. And he's still in the learning stages right now, as well as a lot of the newcomers.

Q. Anthony Walker has been really good in the two exhibition games. What has he been like in practice and what do you think he'll do for the team this season?

COACH WOODSON: He's been solid. He's given me enough confidence, that whole second unit has given me enough confidence since we've been together that I can play them. I mean, I feel good -- somebody's not playing well in the first unit, I feel really good about playing guys in the second unit because they compete. They like to compete. And that's how it's got to be the rest of this season.

Q. Kel'eI has done a lot of his damage in the second half. I think he's had 27 points over the two exhibitions in the second half. Once he seems to get going, he gets going. What do you think gets him going?

COACH WOODSON: Well, I called a couple of plays for

him in the second half. But it's not about play calling. I mean, he's big enough when we run our pick and roll offense, he's big enough to roll and demand the ball as a big target. He can run the floor and get buckets that way. He can get offensive rebounds.

So, I mean, I've never bought into guys saying, well, Coach, you don't run plays for me. There's all kind of ways of scoring the basketball. And he's capable of doing that. And sometimes you have to pick on other guys that are guarding him.

I mean, I ran a back screen where he got a bullet pass down the middle and ended up laying it in. Plays like that, you gotta take advantage of it, but I thought he was solid tonight.

He did a lot of good things on the floor. I was out there. And we're going to need him to continue to grow.

Q. Obviously this was the first time you and your team have taken the court since Coach Knight passed. How much was he on your mind at all tonight? Did anything about game prep or game day feel a little different for you?

COACH WOODSON: I mean, it's been tough. I prep every game the same way. But knowing that he's not around anymore, it means more now to me.

I mean, I wish I could do all the things he's done as a coach, which is impossible to do, for me. And my thoughts will always be with him. They'll never go anywhere.

As long as I come into this building knowing that this is Bob Knight's building, I'm going to always think about him and just hopefully I can make him proud. That's all I think about every day that I come here and work and coach.

Q. With the season three or four days away, what's your biggest concern going in?

COACH WOODSON: Well, I mean, again, these are two practice games. When it's for real, I mean, I don't have a concern. I just want to make sure that our guys are prepared and ready to play at a high level and just keep doing the things that we've been doing. I mean, we've done some pretty good things from an offensive and defensive standpoint and we've got to build on those things and don't forget how we've done them. That's what's important moving forward. And everybody's got to push each other to get better. We've still got a long way to go and it starts on Tuesday.

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