

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Hoosiers 69, Gulf Coast Eagles 63

Q. Coach, your thoughts on Gabe Cupps' impact? I know he didn't have big stats, but his play with that smaller lineup in that 14-0 run.

MIKE WOODSON: He's a winner. That's the first time I've had an opportunity to play he and X some extended minutes. Especially in crunch time you don't expect that, but I felt comfortable enough with Gabe in the game. I've seen him enough plays.

He's capable of hanging in there and making basketball plays. I thought he was tremendous on both ends.

Q. This is probably a question better asked once you can watch film, but how do you parse a game like that, the good in some individual performances, the struggles, some defensively, the fact that it's opening night. How do you break that apart for your team?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, I mean, the things I look at is from a defensive standpoint, we held them to 63 points, and that's kind of in the ballpark where we want to be from a defensive standpoint.

It was all the missed cues on the backside of our defense that we just weren't executing. I got to get that fixed and clean it up.

We were pretty good the last two years in that regard. And, you know, free throws. I mean, we just got to step up to the line and make them.

I mean, that's the difference in winning and losing games a lot of nights. We weren't very good tonight shooting them.

Q. Mike, with Malik Reneau, is he the most comfortable you got attacking the basket? How careful does he have to be? He had that one exchange, six points to start the second half, picks up his third foul right away. What do you tell him when he comes out in that moment?

MIKE WOODSON: That's where Payton, becomes valuable to us as well. Not having him gives you another center, another big body that you can play.

But Malik has to be smarter. I think he's a lot better than he was last season. Hell, he came in the game and he looked at somebody and get a foul.

So in that regard they're letting him play a little bit this year. He's just got to be smart, especially coming down the stretch, not getting silly fouls.

Q. Mike, you called a timeout with Florida Gulf Coast up 6. After that you went on a 14-0 run. Looked like the defense picked up noticeably, the pressure out there did after that. What did you say during that timeout and what were the instructions?

MIKE WOODSON: I had no choice but to call a timeout. They had gone on a nice little run, and I drew up a play, we came out of the timeout, got a bucket, and then our defense just -- you know, we got a double team on the side of the floor over by their bench, which was a big steal and converted that into a bucket as well.

But make no mistake, it was our defense coming down the stretch that got us back. The fans got into it and that was very helpful getting us on a roll. That was enough just to bring it home for us.

Q. Yeah, after that you went to the three-guard set. I think you guys scored on six straight possessions. What made the offense run better with the three guards?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, they were small, too, you know. I mean, I was basically looking at it from a defensive standpoint, and it's always good. I feel good with all three of those guys handling the basketball. If we run a pick and role offense they all three are capable of making plays out of the pick and roll.

You got to give them credit. Their defense was I thought solid as hell. Their rotations were right on and they

stymied the ball in our pick and rolls to the point we couldn't get it out quick enough to that pass leading to something good.

And that's something we just got to get better at.

Q. How much better are you offensively as a team when Trey could have a night like tonight, 7 of 9 shooting, 16 points, and really attacking basket when he had chances?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we're a lot better, but my concern is CJ and Kaleb and Mackenzie. All three of those guys are capable of scoring too, so when they're in the game I got to get them comfortable number one, and they got to figure out what the hell we're doing from a defensive standpoint. A lot of that was missed cues on their part.

I got a lot of work to do, put it that way.

Q. Seemed like down the stretch your captains, X and Trey, stepped up with some big plays. How much did you see those guys step up in moments like that?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, X and Trey are seniors; they're supposed to step up. You know, the freshman, he's a freshman, but didn't play like a freshman. He's capable of making plays. I mean, I followed this kid for some time now. That's why he's wearing an Indiana uniform. He's a winner. He's not going to get it right all the time, but he does a lot of winning plays that help you win games.

That excites me.

Q. When you talk about the issues you had with the defensive rotations, what goes into practice and film work fixing that and getting it right?

MIKE WOODSON: Reps, reps, over and over reps. You know, that's the only way you are going to learn it and then demonstrate it once you get to the games.

Then once you figure it out, it becomes natural. Right now we're guessing, thinking too much. That's on me.

Q. Kel'el had a great game tonight. What do you think he did best? Anything you see that he needs to improve on even in a game like tonight?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, he played a lot of minutes tonight, but he plugged the hole up for us and got a few blocks, rebounded the ball for us. I don't need him to do much more. Just continue to do that. When he's around the bucket I expect him to finish and make his damn free throws. That's what it's all about.