

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Mike Woodson

Press Conference



Q. I just wanted to ask kind of with Xavier Johnson's as injury status up in the air what you're expecting to get out of the back court heading into the BigTen play tomorrow tonight?

MIKE WOODSON: We're still evaluating X to see where he is. If he can't play, it's the next man up. That's how it's always been here. Injuries are part of the game. You know, nothing you can do about it. If he can't play, then I expect somebody else to step up and play.

Q. Kind of going into a couple games with BigTen opponents do your rotations change a little bit? Obviously X's status will determine that. You've gone to the second unit together in every game so far, but do you tighten things up this week?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, don't really know. Flow of the game based on who they got in the game will determine that. X will play a major role in that too if he doesn't play. It's all about feel for me. You know, if guys are playing well when I put them in there they'll stay in the game. If not, I got to go find it somewhere else.

Q. I know rebounding was a dig concern. Last couple games you guys have done a better job. What do you feel like has changed for you guys and how can you keep that going?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, our perimeter guys are starting to rebound a little bit. Mackenzie, Kaleb Banks when he's been in there has picked up some rebounds.

We just got to get our guard play. Got to get Gallo and Gabe and CJ. Got to get them picking up some rebounds. If they do that, that takes a lot of pressure off the interior having to always rebound the ball.

Q. So just want to check, you mentioned some things on your radio show about three point shooting. Some of the advanced analytics suggest that very few teams have made the NCAA tournament making a low number of threes. Do you look at those things and

say, okay, we have to get our three point numbers up to a certain rate? Or do you look at this team and say, hey, with the front court there is a different way for this team to be successful? How do you approach that?

MIKE WOODSON: Maybe we might be that team that makes the tournament not making threes. You ever thought about that? That could happen.

Q. Yeah.

MIKE WOODSON: I'm just saying. Everybody puts so much on analytics. Maybe we might be that team to make it. The bottom line is we're sitting here with one loss, with some wins. Got a lot of work still on our hands. We hadn't made the three point shot, but we still are winning.

Maybe the three point shot will come around. I don't know. We work on them every day just like we work on free throws, shooting twos, all the things that you're supposed to do in terms of preparing for a game and getting better.

So all we can do is hope that they put the ball in the hole when they shoot the three. If they don't, then I to feel like they are going to go down and get some stops and rebound the ball and give us another shot at it again.

Q. Kind of sounds like you guys have been picked apart a little bit even though you're 5-1. You alluded do that. What do you like about what you've seen from this team so far, and what encourages you about the development and has you excited as the season moves along that this team can develop into a tournament team?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, when you got ten new faces and every game has been a challenge, we haven't gone the other way. You could easily go the other way. Then you guys will be singing another tune. But that hadn't been the case.

We made plays with a new team, new players, down the stretch, where we had secured the game. That's what's been intriguing to me as a coach. We could have easily gone the other way. So that means a lot in terms of



building a basketball team.

Do we still have our long way to go? Absolutely.

Q. Mike, Kel'el came here with a reputation. We're all aware of that reputation. How have you been able to get him to play at full capacity? He's obviously playing with a lot of energy.

MIKE WOODSON: Just pushing him. I mean, again, I'm not knocking where he's been, the coaches that coached him, but I coach a different way. You know, I mean, that's not even knowing how the other coaches coach when they're in practice.

You have to come to practice with energy. You have to play hard. That was a knock on him. He is starting to figure that part of it out. So far this young season he's been playing well for us.

Q. Malik Reneau before the season started conveyed to us that he felt more comfortable, and because he feels more comfortable, he's more confident. Obviously that's been demonstrated in his play. Was there a point in the off-season where you started to see him click a little bit in terms of comfortability and confidence? Has his back bothered early at all this week in the run-up to tomorrow's game?

MIKE WOODSON: He'll be ready to play. The difference is he put the time in this summer. His body has changed. It's not the same body he came in as a freshman. We thought we trimmed him down. He trimmed down even more and put the work in this summer, and it's paying off.

That's what young players have to do. They have work in the summer to get ready for the upcoming season and put time in on the floor. That's the only way you're going to get better, and he's done that.

Q. You mentioned the three point shooting. What about the three point defense that you guys have had so far. Lots of teams have been able to get plenty of good looks against you. Where do you stand trying to get that better going forward?

MIKE WOODSON: That's big problem right now because we were pretty good in that area the last few years and that's one of my biggest conference. That and rebounding the basketball.

A lot of that is, again, new faces trying to figure out what the hell we're doing from a rotation standpoint. The miss cues have been so glaring it's scary. These are things that are correctable, but we just got to keep working until we

get it right. Because we are giving up too many threes. It's putting so much pressure on us from a defensive standpoint to truly get stops when you need them. We got it got better in that area. No doubt about that.

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