

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Friday, December 1, 2023

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 65, Maryland 53

MIKE WOODSON: Before we get started, I want to send a shoutout to our new coach. First off, just want to say welcome to Bloomington. Couldn't have picked a better place to come.

That being said, let's go.

Q. Anything in particular in that first half, felt like you were able to bully them a little bit, Kel'el, double figures, Mackenzie Zi, Trey in particular getting points around the rim. Was it your aggressiveness or something you saw in maybe being able to leverage your size?

MIKE WOODSON: No. I just thought our wings, our perimeter play, was really good tonight from a defensive standpoint. I mean, you know, held this team to 53 points, I'd say you've done a pretty good job defensively. I've got to do a better job helping this team offensively because I didn't think we executed the last seven, eight minutes of this ballgame, and that's on me.

Q. That last stretch, you guys got a little sloppy as well with the turnovers. Does that take away some of the -- you run the lead up to 23, and you're happy about that, but what is that last seven minutes going to do for you?

MIKE WOODSON: It's a learning tool for me. I've got to be better in helping them. They didn't do anything any differently than they did in the first half. I thought their press the first half slowed us down a little bit. But we were still able to execute the press, and they were matching defense in the halfcourt and we were still able to still get points and move the ball.

I just thought we got so stagnant the last seven, eight minutes where we didn't move the ball, bodies weren't moving, and that's something that can be corrected and I've got to help them correct it.

Q. I know you've been concerned about the rebounding situation so far but tonight, 46 to 30, outrebound by 16, Mackenzie with seven, Trey with 6, perimeter guys helping on the boards. How much difference did that make in the first half?

MIKE WOODSON: It makes a big difference. That's something we talked about in pregame that our wings and perimeter guys had to get in and mix it up a little bit and get rebounds, and I thought we did a great job in that regard.

We've got to continue to do that. We can't put all the pressure on Ware and Malik and big Payt and Walker to get all the rebounds.

Q. The rebounds had a lot to do with it but it seemed like Maryland when they came out wanted to put their physical stamp on the game, and your guys responded well to that. Was that something that you were happy to see early in the game when Maryland tried to be physical with you, you kind of punched them back?

MIKE WOODSON: Again, it's the Big Ten in general. I mean, it's going to be this way every night you jumping up in the Big Ten. It won't be any easier when we go to Michigan next week. I mean, the Big Ten is tough. They let you play.

So if you don't come and meet the challenge, then you'll be exposed as a team. I thought tonight we were the more aggressive team tonight.

Q. Without Xavier tonight, what did you think of Trey and Gabe Cupps' play in his absence?

MIKE WOODSON: I thought they handled it very well. I mean, we can't -- you know, we can't -- I wish X was in uniform but he's not here. He's just going to have to continue to rehab. The guys that are in uniform, they have to just pick it up and play. I thought our perimeter play was pretty decent tonight. I just thought we didn't execute from an offensive standpoint bringing it in the down home stretch.

Q. You mentioned allowing 53 tonight, I think they had



25 in the second half which is a season low for you guys. You mentioned the wings earlier. What clicked for you guys overall on that side of the ball?

MIKE WOODSON: I thought we were connected tonight. We didn't give up a lot of threes. I thought our switching was right on par.

You know, we had a few miscues but we didn't let this team get into the teeth of our defense very much. And then early on, we kind of had our way from an offensive standpoint in the paint where Malik and big Ware were able to make buckets for us.

I just thought defensively, we were solid tonight for 40 minutes.

Q. Trey has had some offensive struggles early on but tonight before he started to score, he already had an impact on the game on the rebounds and in the passing game, as well. Is there a value to him still being able to stay locked in before he's able to put the ball in the basket?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, he knows we're a little shorthanded not having his running mate with X out. He's going to have to do more and give us more, and he's a senior; that's what he's supposed to do.

So I was pleased with his play from the beginning to the end, you know what I mean. We've just got to execute better offensively, and I've got to help this team do that.

Q. Going back to the physicality point, Maryland seemed to want to push Kel'el off the block. He seemed to respond to it pretty well. How would you assess his play with the physicality of the Big Ten?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, he's been smacked around a little bit this early season. Hey, it's part of the game, man. You've got to get in the fight. I thought he did a great job in holding his own and demanding the ball and making plays when he got the ball.

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