

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 71, Ohio State 65

Q. Coach, wanted to get your thoughts on what has led to Malik's impressive improvement. Footwork is a better. More scoring moves. Take me through that developmental process.

MIKE WOODSON: This summer, you know, he put a lot of work in. Never really left campus. Got his weight down. The baby fat that he had last year has trimmed down.

So you just got to tip your hat to him. He put the work in this summer and it's paying off.

Q. Roddy Gayle and Bruce Thornton were 0-12 from three point range. Ohio State only hit two threes in the second half. What made the three point defense better, especially after halftime?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it wasn't like we were touching them. I thought our defense from the 15-minute mark on was pretty good, but the second-chance shots they got, they had good looks.

You know, we just were so awful rebounding the ball tonight. They had good looks spraying the ball back out. They was just bouncing funny and we couldn't come up with it.

For the most part when we were setting in our half court defense we were pretty good in terms of switching up and touching and making sure guys weren't just facing up, shooting threes in our face.

Q. You were blunt in your assessment of Xavier's play against Nebraska. Do you feel like it was a step healthier today or was he motivated to erase that game?

MIKE WOODSON: You can blame me a little bit because, again, he hadn't had much floor time in practice. You know, I just didn't want to blow him out the first game.

He was a little irritated at me, and I get that, because only played him 14 minutes. His 14 minutes were awful. I don't care how you look at it, you get 14 minutes, you got to be positive, do some things to help us win the game.

He didn't do that. Today I told him at would shootaround I was going to play him, let him loose. I thought he was huge tonight. I gave him the game ball, him and CJ. I thought CJ was excellent coming off the bench for us.

Q. You got 18 points out of X tonight, too; in 34 minutes he didn't have a single turnover and only four as a team. After what you went through with the turnovers Wednesday night, how do you explain going from 19 to four?

MIKE WOODSON: It brings a smile to my face. That's all I can tell you. I mean, that was miserable sitting through that in Nebraska, just giving them the basketball.

We talked about it. We watched the game when we came back as a team. After I watched it a couple times, it was just awful. But we rebounded from it. Learned from it. Only had four turnovers today, which is kind of nice.

Q. You brought up CJ before. Obviously gave you some really big minutes off the bench. Big part of the improved back court play as a whole. What allowed him to come in and be so impactful tonight?

MIKE WOODSON: His last few days of practice has been tremendous. I'm telling all these guys, you know, it's how you practice, man, that carries over into a real basketball game.

You don't bring it in practice you're not going to bring it in the game. I've always believed that. I thought the last two days our practice was tough because I wasn't really happy about the Nebraska play and how we played.

But he had two good days, man, and I thought he deserved to play. I thought he responded, which was kind of nice.

Q. Sticking with CJ, what do you think it'll take for him to stack together more consistent performances like

tonight? We've seen him do it at Michigan, but had a lull there.

MIKE WOODSON: A lot of it is, the young guys, it's the mental part of it, knowing exactly what we're doing when we go into a game setting and putting the game plan together. It's mentally -- your mental approach has to be on par.

If I don't see that, then how can I have confidence in playing you? I thought these last two days he was right on par, man, in terms of what we wanted. Kaleb as well. He didn't play as much but I thought tonight I was going to play him. I came into the game with the attitude I was going to play them both. CJ stepped up and gave us some important minutes tonight.

Q. Revisiting rebounding, I think they had 49; you guys finished with 27. Why do you feel like the gap was that big tonight?

MIKE WOODSON: A lot of it was because of how the ball was bouncing off the rim and the big fellow, Felix, he had a lot to do with it. He kept balls alive. I told Ware and Malik, they were awful tonight in rebounding the basketball. Their bigs basically kicked our butts in terms of going to the glass.

You're not going to beat a lot of teams in the BigTen with that kind of margin in terms of rebounding. We got away with it tonight, but have to be much better as we go to Rutgers.

Q. You talk to a lot of players, whether visitors or home, and they always talk about the crowd gave us inspiration. The Nebraska players talked about the way the crowd motivated them, and Ware talked about the crowd, the way it motivated. What do you have to do when you go on the road to get the crowd out of the game and just play basketball and get the crowd out of the game?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I can't ask the crowd to stay home, that's for damn sure. I wish I could.

I just think you got to have a mental toughness about yourself. Just like we played the last 15 minutes of that ballgame, that's what you got to take to the road.

Somehow I got to get our team understanding that. You got to do that for 40 minutes not just 15 minutes. It's on me some, but I got to get these guys to understand what it's trying to play on the road and win on the road.

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