

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Friday, January 12, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

## Coach Mike Woodson

### Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 74, Minnesota 62

**Q. Coach, Mackenzie Mgbako had a really good game tonight, career high, made threes. You've mentioned before he continues to improve. What did you see tonight from him that you liked the most?**

MIKE WOODSON: I thought he was aggressive right from the start. I thought our whole team was aggressive on both ends of the floor.

He got some good looks early that he made. I ran a couple plays for him that he was able to knock shots down, and the way they double-team, it opened him up on the backside, as well, to get shots.

**Q. Following up on just the wider start, did you see maybe it was shots going down? Was it guys making plays on defense? It just felt like everybody was kind of beating their man to the spot.**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, I thought the scouting report was perfectly fit going into the game, and they followed it right from the start. We really defended the ball. We didn't let their guards really get away from us in terms of getting downhill, so we really focused in on not giving straight-line drives where we had to help as much.

I thought our bigs did a pretty good job of battling inside with their bigs. It was a total team effort tonight.

**Q. Speaking to that team effort, Malik doesn't play the last nine minutes of the first half with foul trouble, and sometimes those have been trouble spots for you guys when he's been on the bench. Happy with how they handled that tonight, to survive without him for that extended stretch?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I thought Walker came in and gave us some great minutes off the bench. They were shuffling guys in and out, so we were able to match with them, but Walker was huge off the bench for us when Malik had to go to the bench.

Then everybody else just kept pitching in, doing their job, and we were able to come in up 10 after the half.

**Q. Gabe Cupps was guarding Elijah Hawkins early in the game. Elijah Hawkins has kind of been the head of the snake for Minnesota. Talk about the trust you have in Gabe to put out that level of defensive effort to take them out of their game?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, he's done it before. He's been doing it pretty much all season when we stick him out on real quick guards. The Michigan guard was kind of an example, I guess, of him going out, and all we're asking him to do is just put heat on the ball and maintaining it and not letting him get downhill, and for the most part he did a hell of a job doing that.

**Q. Can you put your finger on it at all as to how you guys can be so bad one night and then so good the next?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's the road. It's tough on everybody in the Big Ten on the road. It's just not our team.

Everybody is kind of having a tough time winning on the road.

We've got to figure it out. Our safe haven is here at home. I get that. We've got to continue to win our games here at home.

But somehow I've got to help us get over the hump and get us feeling good about playing on the road.

I really thought that wouldn't be a big problem for us after winning the Michigan game right off the bat, but it has been, and we've got to fix it as we move forward.

**Q. You've talked several times about wanting your team to play a full 40-minute ballgame. I'm not sure if tonight would rise to that level for you, but it felt like one of the more complete performances, at least close to that, that you've had in a while. What after the**



## **Rutgers game allowed this to happen?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, I thought we were solid in the Ohio State game. I really did. That was a battle game, back and forth. Rutgers game, we just -- when you miss free throws, you turn it over, you don't rebound it, you set yourself up to lose.

Tonight we didn't make our free throws again, but we rebounded pretty well, and we didn't turn it over. We kept our turnovers down. It was a solid game.

But we've got to somehow convert how we play here at home on the road. That's going to be the difference moving forward.

**Q. When you were talking about Mackenzie you said that he was going to be fine, he just needed some time to develop. Tonight you mentioned him being really aggressive. What does that add to his offensive game, him being able to put it on the floor and go to the basket?**

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's just not Mackenzie. You've got to understand that these young guys, they take a while to develop. They come out of high school, out of the AAU programs that they play in, and it's not just that easy to walk into college basketball and be great. If it was that easy, everybody would be doing it.

But he's put the work in. He's continuing to work, along with the rest of our young players. All we can do as coaches is continue to teach and push and try to get as much out of them as we can as we continue this journey.

**Q. Can you just talk a little bit about the decision to put Gabe Cupps in the starting lineup over Xavier Johnson?**

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, in-house stuff. I decided to go with Gabe, and Gabe came in and played extremely well. I thought the minutes X played were positive minutes to help us win.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.