

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Mike Woodson

Press Conference



Q. Coach, did Kel'el come out of the game okay? He got banged up at the end. How has the wear and tear added up on him and how has he handled that in the last couple weeks?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, we had to give him the day off yesterday, so he basically went through treatment. I'll know more today when we practice to see where he is.

Q. Had a question about Gabe Cupps and defense and specifically dealing with screens. That's just part of the job description for guards. He is a smaller guard, so he's has to fight through the screens. Seems like teams are trying to take advantage of that a little bit. What advice are you trying to give him on how to deal with that? What can be done to help him with that? How are you handling that?

MIKE WOODSON: It's not just Gabe. You know, they're letting the bigs dominate the screens in the BigTen, and it's tough. You know, Gabe being a little bit smaller than some of our other perimeter guys, it's tough getting over.

You know, I go back to the Penn State game. We were in the drop pretty much that game because they were a team that played downhill and we got burnt because they made threes. We didn't let them get downhill as much, so kind of backfired. They made shots which we didn't think they would make but they made them and we paid for it.

The other night, unless you are trapping the ball screen up top, which is the toughest trap in terms of trapping screens, because then you expose yourself in the middle of your defense, and if that ball is completed to the guy that's rolling, then it causes havoc because guys got to suck in, and now he's spitting the ball out to three point shooters.

So it's kind of a double whammy. All we can do is kind of help Gabe in terms of maybe staying up a little bit longer with him. But if he gets knocked off, it's just tough. He's kind of in a switch position with a bigger guy, which we don't want.

That's kind of the nature of the beast with all the BigTen guards. They're letting the bigs set the screens, and some look illegal probably from the eye looking at it, and some of them are illegal, but they're not calling it.

Q. Purdue is a team that draws a ton of fouls. It was an issue for you guys early in the last game. When you watch them on film, what keys are you seeing to avoid that scenario this time?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, maybe I just need to call the officials and tell them don't call fouls. I don't know. Again, they established themselves as a team based on Edey inside demanding so much attention that he's getting called, he is getting his calls.

When we battled them in the past with Trayce and Race and those guys the last couple years, we were able to bang him a little bit. He banged Trayce some. Kind of went back and forth. If you remember the one year, hell, Trayce only played 10, 11 minutes in the ballgame. Just didn't let him play against Edey.

And Ware caught some of that here. He picked up two early ones and had to go to the bench. So it's just how the officials are calling it that game that will determine.

But you got to bang some with him, because if you don't, then you get embarrassed. He's embarrassing a lot of teams. The guy is an unbelievable player. He's a lot better than he was last year, and he was Player of the Year last year.

We just got to go in with the mindset that, hey, hopefully we can stay out of foul trouble, bang a little bit, and play aggressive like they do and see what happens.

Q. Wanted to follow up on that. Seems like with some of the fouls that Edey draws it's because he's so close to the basket. How can you force him to receive the ball a little bit further from the basket and be more physical on defense there?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, if you listen to what you said, if you push him out and start trying to shove him out, that's

where fouls are picked up. It's a double-edged sword. I'm not saying we're not going to bang. We got to attempt to bang and be aggressive with him.

If not, damned if you do, damned if you don't. So there is no secret method. Ware has to be a little bit more physical than he was here at home so he doesn't establish deep low-post catches. We might try maybe fronting him some. I don't know yet.

We'll start working on some of that today. We met yesterday on it. We'll try to come up with a game plan between now and Saturday and see where it leads us.

Q. Purdue has a similar team to last year. One addition they made was Lance Jones, the guard transfer. What has he added to the group that has kind of changed them?

MIKE WOODSON: A guy that's getting the ball and makes basketball plays off the bounce. Good ass three point shooter. Shoots the long ball pretty well. I mean, tough kid. Competes and likes to compete. Great pick up for them.

He was a tough matchup here for us the first game, so we going to have to key in on him. I mean, they got surrounding pieces around Edey that have gotten better, so there is no night off for any position when you play them. You just got to come and commit for 40 minutes and see what happens.

Q. With a game like the first one you guys played against Purdue where it felt like in the first half so much went wrong, is there maybe a specific thing or a couple things that you want to course correct going into this weekend?

MIKE WOODSON: The game really didn't get out of hand until really the 8, 9 minute mark of the half. The first 10 to 11 minutes the game it was a close game. It was 2, 3 points here and there. And then we just dropped the rope right before the half. They were able to go in with a comfortable lead. Now, we got back in and cut it I think to 5 or 7 I think it was then the second half.

When you build big leads and get behind like that it's tough, especially against a top team like that to battle your way back. They had their way, man. I'm just anxious to see where we are.

Listen, we haven't had a full deck of guys. Not having X, which again he's out indefinitely, it's been tough in terms of shuffling guys. He's been a big piece to the puzzle.

But our front line is gonna have to battle on Saturday. That's going to be the key. And the perimeter guys are going to have to guard their perimeter guys. You know, they're deep both ways. That's why they sit at the top in the country.

Q. Obviously you guys dropped a few road games in January. Then the other night you had to come from way behind, but got the job done at Ohio State. Going into a big game like this, does seeing it go your way again on the road, how much confidence does that give you going into a big game like this?

MIKE WOODSON: Every game is big in the BigTen. You think the last two years, man, we've won four games on the road in the BigTen. That's how tough it is to win at home. Nobody is dominating. Purdue is the only team that has had great success on the road. Everybody else a around two, some don't have any on the road. It's not easy winning on the road in the BigTen. That's why it's so important protect home.

If you do and you go out and get three or for BigTen wins on the road, you're pretty damn successful if you win at home. So we got to go back and try to find two games on the road that we gave airway at home. That's how I look at it. Purdue is next up.

That are great at home. They might have lost one game at home or they might be undefeated at home. I know Northwestern is undefeated at home and Nebraska is undefeated at home I believe.

But it's tough winning on the road. You got thing right. I thought the other night we did everything right the second half to get back in the game and made all the plays down the stretch to win it.

Applaud my team because they didn't quit. They kept fighting and Gallo made big plays. Anthony hit the big shot. Malik made big plays and got key stops and defensive rebounds. It's not that easy.

You got to go out and commit for 40 minutes and do everything right and have a little luck on your side, and hopefully you can come out with the wins. That's how it's done.

Q. Looking at CJ and Kaleb, I know early in the year you mentioned needing more from them. Combined three points in the last four games. What has prevented them from making that next step so far this year?

MIKE WOODSON: You know, I wish I knew because they

have worked. I mean, in practice they work. I just got find some confidence somewhere in one of them, if not both, because it's tough. You can't just play six guys. I mean, Walker played a little bit in that game. I played Payton very little. Anthony played a big chunk of minutes along with the starters.

I just got to keep working and trying to get them where I need them to be, man. We still got a lot of basketball left, and my thing is when I put them in there, maybe I'm putting too much pressure, they're feeling too much pressure to have to perform.

I don't want them to feel that way, so I just got to -- that part of it I got to figure out.

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