

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Mackenzie Mgbako Anthony Leal

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 84, Rutgers 74

MODERATOR: All right, we've got Anthony Leal and Mackenzie Mgbako. We'll start with Todd and then go Zack.

Q. Mackenzie, over here. Malik goes down almost the first play of the game but the team gathered itself and was able to overcome that adversity. What do you think the key was and the effort from everybody to be able to do that tonight?

MACKENZIE MGBAKO: Yeah, it was really scary when Malik went down. We were all worried for him. It's good that he's doing okay now, but, you know, the goal was to play together, play as a team, take the right shots, move the ball, play team defense and I feel like we accomplished that goal today, you know, just being able to be in the right spots at the right time, knock down open shots like we did and then stick to our cues and make the right plays.

Q. Talking about knocking down open shots, 12 threes is the most you've made this season but it felt like they were timely, too, that a lot of it, especially in the second half were answering Rutgers maybe threw five points at you hit a three to just kind of push them back. Just how important or how good does it feel to not just see them go down, but for them to be ones that change momentum or extend momentum that seemed to come at the right times.

MACKENZIE MGBAKO: We practice them every day so to see them going in, that's what we're supposed to do, so it's not a surprise. We're going to keep hitting shots and we're going to stay with it for the rest of the season.

Q. Yeah, Anthony, I just want to get your thoughts on Ballo's game, 17, 14, blocked shots just big plays. Your thoughts on how he played and especially the rebounding and just his big boy play inside. How impactful was that for you guys?

ANTHONY LEAL: It was great. He played dominant. We know that what he can do. That's why we brought him here to be a dominant presence down there and that's where we needed him today, just continue to build on that and stay focused on what we're doing.

Q. Anthony, for you yourself you had three offensive rebounds. The team had 18 as a total. A lot of second-chance points. Was that a key? How important was that tonight and how important will that be going forward?

ANTHONY LEAL: Yeah, early on in the game we kind of noticed that they weren't really boxing out so we saw opportunities to go get offensive rebounds and luckily I was able to get some and with our team and how deep we are, we're able to wear teams down and you could tell they got tired and we're not really focused on rebounding so we were all mindful of trying to get extra shots and extra opportunities and just seeing what could come from it.

Q. Anthony, when you see Myles hustling up and down the court laying out for loose balls, chasing down long rebounds, I guess how contagious is that effort and what maybe sticks out about his effort behind the scenes that we don't get to see?

ANTHONY LEAL: It's great. We try to make it to where everybody is doing that. So someone has to come out and set the tone every game and you hope that happens in the first few possessions where somebody makes a hard play like that and it kicks in with everyone else and it becomes contagious and everybody is like okay, we got to really match that energy or else we're just going to be letting them down. It's becoming contagious and it's selfless team basketball and that's what we're about.

Q. Anthony, what was the approach you took when I know the you kind of got matched up on Ace Bailey and you see the kind of game he's having.

ANTHONY LEAL: Yeah, obviously super skilled, tough match-up, as you could tell, but we knew he liked to favorite his right hand, so any time I was on him I just tried



to take away space, get physical on him and force him to his left hand knowing he's going to make some tough shots. He's projected to go where he's going to go, so just tried to make it tough on him and tried to make him hit contested shots, which today he did, but it's a team game so we were able to get the win.

Q. Mackenzie, when everybody had the rough shooting game a few days ago, what was the message from the staff and in the locker room to keep everything positive?

MACKENZIE MGBAKO: Just keep shooting the ball. We got to trust in ourselves, trust in our ability to make shots and know that they're going to fall down when they need to. Just keep shooting the ball and keep looking for the open man.

Q. Anthony, could you just kind of walk us through that play at the end of the first half. How were you able to make that shot and your emotions around it?

ANTHONY LEAL: Yeah, I got nothing for you on that (chuckling). I saw him shoot it and I tried to go get a tip in and it got blocked. I chased it down, peeked at the clock and saw there wasn't much time so I just kind of turned around and shot it. Weird things like that seem to happen for me, so I'll take it. I would rather be lucky, so.

MODERATOR: Last question.

Q. And that was pretty much what I was going to ask, but your immediate reaction, the crowd went crazy. Teammates were hugging you. What was going through your head at that point? Was it like wow, that really happened?

ANTHONY LEAL: No, honestly, it was how much hurry up, we got to go to halftime, figure some stuff out and try to get a win. I'm never really focused on my own success or stats or anything. It's cool that it went in, cool to celebrate for a second but next play, we got to make sure we get a win.

MODERATOR: Thanks, guys.

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