

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 82, USC 69

Q. Mike, what do you feel like made the offense better in the second half that helped you put this game a little bit out of USC's reach?

MIKE WOODSON: Defensive stops, rebounding the basketball, and getting out, getting quick strikes. Thought we came out, started the game very slow, sluggish, and they played great early.

That's why they built a ten-point lead and we were able to sub some and get back into the game.

Q. You mentioned the sluggish start. Not the first time at home that's happened this season. Have you been able to pinpoint where that lack of energy has come from?

MIKE WOODSON: I'm not going to dwell on it. The bottom line is we won today. You know, I mean, our team has shown that they don't quit. You got to give Southern Cal, their team, credit because they came ready to play.

I thought they were the most physical team starting the game. Once we got going and met their physicality, then we got back into the game and started playing Indiana basketball, which was nice to see.

Q. Mike, I recognize it's not by choice necessarily, Malik out, but does this success offensively of some of the lineups that only have kind of one player who's truly kind of a back-to-the-basket post player give you food for thought with the way that a guy like Luke is shooting the ball, the space it gives your guards, things like that?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it gives us better space, but make no mistake about it, Malik is a big part of what we do, so he's not going anywhere.

Q. Next 11 games are all quad one opponents, all in a row. Are there three or four things you look at that you

feel you guys need to do well to have a good stretch in that time?

MIKE WOODSON: Iowa is the next team up. I'm not looking at the 11 games. I'm looking at Iowa. They're next on our list, you know, in terms of who we got to play.

They're well-coached. They won a big game the other night coming from behind. We are going to have to go down there and play for 40 minutes to beat Iowa. That's how good they are at home.

Q. On Oumar, I want to say he's averaging 22 and 11 over the last three. Is that as easy as matchups? Malik being out? What do you attribute that to?

MIKE WOODSON: He's playing better. He's gotten being better. We're featuring him. He's a big piece to the puzzle. That's why we brought him here to play center for us.

No, he's played well. You know, he's going to have to continue to play well the rest of the way through the Big10. Teams are going to force him to play.

Q. Coach, earlier this year you said you didn't know what your identity was. Tonight you said playing Indiana basketball got you back into this game. What is Indiana basketball right now?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, when we're scrappy and defending and rebounding the ball as a unit and able to get out and play a little faster instead of staying in the half court game, that's Indiana basketball.

We've had some glimpses of it off and on. I thought the last three, four games we were playing much better now, shooting the ball better from the three-point line. Didn't shoot it well tonight but had good looks.

We got to continue to take those shots when we have them.

Q. Coach, at the 12 minute mark of the first half you called a timeout. Seemed like after guys came out of that you were -- Miles and Trey were trying to get to the



rim on almost every possession. Is that something you saw that needed to happen to adjust?

MIKE WOODSON: No, we ran a few plays that kind of opened it up a little bit that we had just put in today, and they executed it well.

I mean, Gallo got a layup; Ballo got a dunk off of it. So I mean, execution out of a timeout is critical. You know, I mean, I didn't like the last timeout I called and Gallo threw the ball away on the inbound pass.

You know, I mean, we got to be sharper in that regard.

Q. Five straight wins now. Where do you feel like the team has grown the most in the recent stretch?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, guys, we have seven new players on our ball club. We're still trying to figure it out just like every Big10 team, every college basketball team in the country.

When you make drastic changes to your ball club roster, that takes time.

You know, we are starting to grow and learn one another and guys are feeling comfortable about who can do what and who can't do what. Makes a big difference. Still got a long way to go and still growing.

Q. Mike, I know you don't want to have one of your leading scores go 0-8 and not score on a night, but you have to feel great about having multiple other players doing so many different things. Rice goes down, 11 at the free throw line; Goode is four of five from behind the three-point line; Ballo was, what, five of five from the free throw line. Everybody did something different to really contribute. That has to bode well for you going down the next stretch.

MIKE WOODSON: No, it is. I mean, that's kind of the makeup of our ball club. Every Big10 team is talented and deep, well-coached. When someone is struggling, Mack was struggling tonight. You know, I can't -- I got to search too as a coach. That's what we do.

No knock against Mack. He'll be back in there tomorrow. He'll be ready to go hopefully for the Iowa game. I got to lean on everybody. You know, it's what you do with the minutes you get. I thought the guys that came in off the bench gave us some positive minutes tonight; that set us up to win a ballgame.

Q. Coach, on Oumar, did you see in the scouting report he might be able to use his body the way he did

tonight, or did it come in the flow?

MIKE WOODSON: No, I mean, Ballo is a pretty big guy. You know, their center that started tonight wasn't as big as Ballo, but I thought they played Ballo early. He couldn't really touch the ball that much. They were top siding him, and we did a poor job trying get to to him early.

As the game wore on, everything kind of loosened up and where were able to utilize him a little bit more. He delivered for us.

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