

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Mike Woodson

Postgame Media Conference



Michigan - 70, Indiana - 67

Q. Mike, not asking about the statement but about your team and just how you guide your team, how you get your team through a month that's a little bit unusual and get yourself through a month that's been a little bit unusual, starting with this week, how do you approach that?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, it's been emotional. We're dealing with young men, young kids that's trying to figure it out.

But we've still got seven more games to play. And it's my job as their coach to try to push them to realize that they can still win basketball games.

Q. Have you seen before this week weighing on the team, though, you mentioned outside noise before, but have you seen that weighing on their psyche at all, kind of over the last month?

MIKE WOODSON: We haven't been the same team for a while. And for whatever reason we've dug a hole. I've done a terrible job in really putting them in the best position possible to win, I think.

But emotionally, these kids have taken a beating a little bit. And it's my job to try to lift their spirits and keep 'em heading in the right direction because there's still a lot of basketball left.

Seven games is a lot of games, and we're still trying to play to stay in the Big Ten Tournament and then see where that takes us. But we've got to start winning some games here soon to do that.

Q. What does it say about those kids on the floor in the second half, though, down 17, with all that's gone on, to rally back to get it tied and then have a chance in the last minute or two?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, you've got to tip your hat and

give them a lot of credit -- I do -- because they could have folded it up and called it a night. But they fought the second half. Michigan scores a lot of points. We held them to 70 points, and the second half they only scored 27 points.

So I thought defensively we made a nice adjustment the second half. And guys fought, but Michigan was the better team tonight. So you've got to give them credit. They played their asses off.

Q. You said you haven't been the same team. Is that because of the losing streak or did that start because the team got booed at the Illinois game?

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, you can look at it in all kind of ways. I'm not even going to go there. I thought at that time we were playing pretty good basketball. I think we were 13-4 and 4-2 in the Big Ten without our leading scorer. And then all hell broke loose, and we just haven't been the same.

Q. You mentioned that you feel like you haven't put them in the right position to win. What maybe would you change, I guess?

MIKE WOODSON: I mean, maybe that's the false statement. I think we've had some games where we've had an opportunity. The Purdue game was an opportunity to win. The Maryland game. So we fought and we were very competitive. The Wisconsin game, the first half, was just nonexistent.

And tonight, we just couldn't make shots the first half. And I thought they had their way from an offensive standpoint because our defense wasn't there.

But the second half we were a lot better. We rebounded with them the second half, and we did some things I know we've been capable of doing all year. So hopefully that will be a good sign as we head to Michigan State.

Q. Earlier this year Luke Goode said this was one of the most talented Indiana teams he's seen in a long time. Why hasn't that translated to on-court success?

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MIKE WOODSON: I wish I knew. As the coach, your roster is changing every year, and that's no excuse. And you think you're putting the right pieces in play.

And I think our guys got wonderful intentions, man, and they do want to win. But it hasn't worked the last three, four weeks for our ball club.

So my job, again, as the coach is to continue to push them and keep them in a good frame of mind and hopefully something good will click. And we need to get a game under their belt so they can start feeling good about themselves.

Q. You eventually came around to a five on the floor in the second half that got you some success. That's kind of been the pattern in a lot of games where you settled in on a rotation that finally got there, but it's never the same five. How frustrating has it been that it's not that you could put a five on the floor that's going to always produce consistently?

MIKE WOODSON: Well, again, that part of it has been tough because we've been up and down individually and as a team. But tonight I went with guys, basically senior guys, to try to win this game the second half. And I thought they played like seniors. We just fell a little short.

Q. Luke, Anthony, Trey, Indiana kids, seniors as you said. Is it your sense to ride with them the rest of the year?

MIKE WOODSON: We've been riding with them. It's not like they've been sitting there next to me; they've been playing. We just gotta get other pieces in play to join in and help them.

I mean, tonight we were competitive coming down the stretch and getting back into the ball game. If we can bottle that up, along with how we played at Purdue and the Maryland game here at home, hopefully something will click for our team and we can get off this slide.

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