

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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## Darian DeVries

### Press Conference



**Q. I think you said last night this is your 28th. Are there traits you can see with the team you have that are kind of unique traits?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: Every team has kind of its own identity in its own way, but I think this team, at least to this point -- now, we haven't played many games. We've had some exhibition games in Puerto Rico.

But this team has a really good feel for kind of our motion offense and have really shared the ball well in practice. I'm excited about that as we continue to grow as a team and play some more games. The way these guys have shared it and moved it has been really impressive in practice.

**Q. I'm just curious, I was looking -- just from watching the Baylor exhibition and kind of looking through some of the stats, Tucker and Lamar, I think, combined for nine assists, and five of those were to each other. Looks like those two have pretty good chemistry. I'm curious if you noticed it as well, those two playing together, and where does that come from?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think those guys do play well off of one another for sure. I think we have multiple guys that do. Tayton has done a really good job as well. We just had practices last week, one day he had 13 assists and one turnover and the next day it was 10 assists and two turnovers.

I think those guys all play off each other, and Lamar and Tucker, they're a little unique just because of their ability to screen for one another and set each other up for flare opportunities and such. I do like the chemistry that those guys have so far.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the two Puerto Rico exhibitions and the Baylor game, the common denominator there. It seemed like you guys came back from big deficits, and it seemed to me the defense is really what flipped the script in those games. I'm curious, do you agree with that? How much of that is like those games not being scouted to where you kind**

**of had to figure out in game what teams are trying to do versus you guys just needing to be better at the start of games?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I would say it's a little bit of both. I would actually lean more towards us being a little better, a little more connected defensively. I thought in the second halves of all three of those games you mentioned, we were a lot tougher on the ball. We were a lot more physical, we were a lot more disciplined.

Sometimes you think being aggressive, being tough, being physical is just denying everywhere and getting all spread out. I thought what we did a good job of was increasing our physicality in those games but still remaining with some gap discipline when we needed to and protecting one another. So more of a five-versus-five defense instead of just a one-on-one defense.

**Q. What are the two or three things you're hoping to see from tomorrow night's game? What really intrigues you to see what's going to happen?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think number one we just want to set the tempo for both sides of the ball for a full 40 minutes. We've talked about the three games we got behind. You can't put yourselves in those positions over and over again and expect to be successful.

We've got to put a better full 40 minutes together and specifically a better first half, getting off to a better start. That's going to be huge for us all year, but that's probably number one, getting off to a good start.

Then just play how we've been practicing, that's probably number two. Making sure the ball continues to move, we get good player movement as well as the ball movement on the offensive end. Then defensively just being connected and being physical and being tough.

**Q. I just wanted to get your thoughts. If Nick Dorn is available in the opener, what are some lineup options he gives you guys? Not just about the opener, but as he becomes more integrated into the lineup, his minutes increase, and all that?**



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DARIAN DeVRIES: I think the greatest thing with Nick is he can really shoot the ball. He just gives you automatic floor spacing. I don't really get into kind of what position he's at particularly out there, but he's just out there, and he's another guy that can go get three, four, five in a row, and we've seen that in the short period of time he's been practicing.

He's just one of those guys that has extreme confidence in his ability to shoot the ball, and he gets it off fast. He's a big guy, he's tall, he gets it off. Like I said, when you've got that type of confidence, that's a big plus for us to have him out there.

**Q. Have you had a chance -- I know it's been kind of a whirlwind seven, eight months, just to reflect now with the opener here, what this means for your kind of coaching journey and kind of be on the stage now and it being here?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I'm really excited. I know our players are excited, but I think myself and our staff would be kidding if you didn't recognize the significance of your first regular season game in Assembly Hall. We can't be more pumped up to get out there and showcase what our team's been working on and to have them go out there and play the way that we expect them to.

We're excited as a staff. We're excited as a team. Ready to get rolling.

**Q. You mentioned establishing the tempo tomorrow night. It seemed like it was a little bit slower against Baylor. Was that the defense kind of dictating that, the Baylor defense, or something else? Then how do you kind of judge the tempo and pace that you want to be at for each game?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think there is a combination of factors. We've talked about our depth right now is -- we've got some guys on the sideline, so we weren't able to go as deep as we would like in a rotation standpoint.

I think the second piece is sometimes when you think about tempo and pace, it can be a little misleading. A lot of times our tempo and pace is we want it off of turnovers, we want it off of missed shots, and we want to be incredibly aggressive in that space. Where there is a broken floor and you have an opportunity to attack a defense before it gets set, a lot of times off of made baskets, that's when you get a little more into your possessions.

If we don't get something in those first 10 seconds that we like to really get and be in attack mode, then we're going to

run offense and get into our motion and really move it and share it. You can play incredibly fast at times but have your tempo, the pace of play be a little bit slower at the end of the game.

I think it was a combination, a little bit of our depth, that you could tell we didn't quite have our game legs under us yet as the game wore on. Also, I thought there were moments there, especially when we made our comeback and kind of started to build that lead, where our transition game was a big piece of that.

**Q. In regards to lineups, both in what we've seen in the exhibitions and moving forward in nonconference, how do you balance trying to put in new looks versus kind of keeping one group in there and letting those guys gel and get comfortable with one another?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: That is a little bit tricky, especially early in the year when everybody's kind of learning new things anyway, and then you have some injuries happen and now guys have got to learn multiple spots and positions and things.

We try to be pretty specific on game day about, hey, here's the things we're going to run. We have more things we can run, maybe out of the timeout, we can go to and really put guys in the spots in case they don't know. But when the guys are out there, we try to keep it to a smaller group of plays this early in the year that they're most comfortable with.

**Q. When you hired Nick Norton back in 2021, what kind of attracted you to him coaching-wise, and how valuable has he been moving with you to West Virginia and then here to Indiana?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: Nick's been terrific. I think he's one of the great young coaches out there. He was someone I had recruited out of high school. He had come to play for us at Drake. He's someone I have known for a long time, have a great relationship with him, have a really good feel for kind of his demeanor and his rapport that he has with the players.

He's just one of those guys that comes every day with great energy, has a terrific understanding of what -- not only what I want, but what we want as a staff because he was a player and a coach. He understands all that. But I just love the energy and enthusiasm he brings to the table every day. He doesn't have any bad days. I think our guys have a lot of respect for him and the way he approaches it.

**Q. You talked about just the slow starts, whether it be in Puerto Rico or against Baylor. When you see**

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**something like that before the season even begins, how do you kind of try to make sure it doesn't become a constant trend with your team going forward?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: Sometimes it's hard to figure out why, whatever it may be. A lot of those games, or all three of those games, it was more kind of in the middle part of the first half where some of those leads really grew. That's something that we'll keep an eye on. I don't think you want to overreact when you have some different circumstances, especially with the Puerto Rico games.

The Baylor game is one that we certainly were -- didn't have any of those outside factors. We treated it like a regular game. We prepared like a regular game. We had a stretch there in the middle of the first half where that lead started to get away from us. So it's something we'll look at, see how you can try to prevent it and things, but there's certainly a lot of areas we can clean up that led to that lead that I think we did a good job of fixing in the second half.

**Q. You talked about kind of what Sam brings as far as the physicality is concerned, but what other things does he bring to this team that doesn't necessarily show up in the box score every night?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: Just his energy and enthusiasm. I think Sam plays a game with a little fire in his belly. So that's fun to see, that energy, enthusiasm, that joy for the game is something that's contagious. That's one of those that doesn't show up on a stat sheet that, as a coaching staff, I know we really appreciate about him.

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