

# Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

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Bloomington, Indiana, USA

**Darian DeVries**

**Tayton Conerway**

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana - 81, Siena - 60

**Q. Just kind of a little bit of a big picture question. The start to the second half you guys have had some struggles. What do you see as the issues, and what needs to be better moving forward?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: First of all, I thought the first half was exactly what we wanted. You get a lead, and you're up 26. The good part is, if that's what we've got to work on, that's a good thing if we've got to figure out how to figure that problem out.

I thought the second half we just lost a little bit of our edge both ends of the floor. First half, when we were getting stops, it allowed us to get out in transition, allowed us to get our shooters free. Second half we weren't quite as stingy defensively and we're taking the ball out of the net a lot more, and the game really just slowed down at that point.

That game was just a choppy game. A lot of fouls, a lot of dead ball situations and things, so we never really had any flow in that second half. But after a little lull there, I thought we were able to get it pushed back out. I thought Tayton did a good job getting downhill and getting to the rim and creating some things for us to open that thing back up again.

**Q. To follow from that, you guys are top 20 KenPom defensive efficiency here headed into the break. I know, when we talked in the summer, you said you felt your team was further along offensively than it was defensively. Do you see things that kind of like, I don't want to say surprise you, but building blocks that have gotten you into place defensively or maybe changed your expectations for this team defensively because of what overall you've been able to do there?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think defensively I've really liked it, and I said it from this summer, we weren't there yet, but I

thought there was a lot of promise for us as a defense. I think our ball toughness is where it starts. I think our perimeter guys do a really good job of making things difficult and challenging for guys to not just play freely. They've really bought into that and given us great effort there.

Like I told the guys, whatever our rankings are right now, it really comes down to like we still have to clean up the defensive rebounding, or that number would be even better. That's got to be our priority as we come back from Christmas break here is clean that up so now we can get out and play in transition so that's going to help our offense.

**Q. Tayton, if I follow up on that, Coach talked about making it hard for guys to get downhill. How much of an emphasis is it for this group, especially when you think about the harder it is to get the ball in the paint, the easier to get rebounds, et cetera?**

TAYTON CONERWAY: Definitely keep it out of the paint. It keeps you from having the little short, easy shots. So every time you get in the paint, they try to kick it out. But if you can get them spread around the 3-point line, we're in position to help. So it just keeps the defense solid.

**Q. I noticed you ran something for Tucker right out of the gate tonight. Got him a good look and had a really good game on the glass too. I know he's been struggling recently with the shot. It's obviously a father-son relationship, but as his coach, what do you see on a night where he's shooting the ball well versus a night where maybe he struggles?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think the little things like everybody -- even the really good shooters sometimes can get in a little slump and start to question themselves a little bit. We even mentioned it the other night when Lamar had a little stretch earlier in the year just trying to find him an easy one. So we started the game out trying to get him a post touch to see if we could get something going a little farther in, see the ball go in, and hopefully get that started for him.

Long term, this is probably just a good time to get a break.



Everybody get their legs underneath them and come back and be refreshed again.

**Q. In terms of you had a limited roster number available for injuries kind of at the start. How do you feel you made it through these two months? Do you feel like this break is going to maybe pull back a little bit, and how have you managed? How is everybody feeling two months in?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think the good part is we're getting more guys healthy again. That's even helped with practice too. You've just got more bodies that we can keep guys fresh. That part's been good.

It has been a long summer and things, with our trip and now the season, and to have a few days off here, it's a nice, clean break, not only physically, but mentally. Just take a couple days and clear your head and come back and really be locked in to get ready for a long stretch run.

**Q. Darian, kind of on that, with this break coming up, it's kind of a natural break in the season, finished nonconference play tonight. How would you assess your team through the first two months of the season? What's kind of the progress report for you guys right now?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: We've learned a lot. Like we talked about, when you have all new guys, you see what you see in practice, but until you get under the game lights, you don't know for sure how everybody's going to respond to different situations and circumstances. Home, road, zones, man, pressure, no pressure, those type of things.

I think as a coaching staff and as a team, we've learned a lot. We felt like there's an opportunity or two that we let get away, but hopefully it was something that we understand why and it's things that are within our control, and we can correct it. If we can come back and do that and get ourselves ready, maybe we don't pay for that later down the road.

It was a couple good learning lessons in there. We just have to make sure that we learn from them.

**Q. Tayton, what was going right in the first half offensively and defensively for you guys to get that big lead?**

TAYTON CONERWAY: Just sharing the ball. We had this thing where we talked about it first giving up a good shot for an even better shot. I feel like we did a great job of that.

**Q. Coach, on the offensive end, do you expect over the next couple weeks that there would be points of emphasis, whether it's improving against switching defenses or heavy ball pressure or anything like that? What will be your areas of focus?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: I thought these last maybe two weeks we've become a little more turnover prone. Getting back to making sure we have some ball security and ball toughness with those things. Then really as physicality ramps up, you have to put more of an emphasis on your screens and more of an emphasis on winning the war, as we like to say, whether you're the cutter or the ball handler. And between the two, now all of a sudden you can create some opportunities because you get two to the ball and now we can find people in space.

Those are things that we've got to get better at. I know from an offensive standpoint at times when we struggled, we haven't been as good in those areas. We need to do a much better job of that as we get back from Christmas here and get ready for the new year.

**Q. Tayton, following up on what Coach just said, both of these games, you guys have won comfortably. The defense has been great. You shot the lights out in the first half, and things kind of go sideways in the second half. Is the team staying locked in, the foot down, hands on the throat, just trying to do everything till the end even though you've got these comfortable leads? Is that playing, possibly playing a part?**

TAYTON CONERWAY: Yes, just trying to weather the storm. We know, whenever we come back out there and we're up 20, we know this team is going to come out and try to punch us first. Trying to weather that first little four or five-minute storm. If we can't punch them in the mouth first, we've got to definitely rebound the ball and lock into the little details whenever we come out of that second half.

**Q. Tayton, it seemed like you took over there in the second half. The offense kind of struggled a little bit. Was that something you saw, something that Coach said? What kind of happened for you to step up and get downhill more often in the second half?**

TAYTON CONERWAY: Just something we seen on film. We seen there was a couple people that we could attack off the dribble. Coach believed me in and thought I could get by the first one, and I had some teammates that set some good screens and got me open, and it just happened to work out good.

**Q. Given the context of how new the team was at the beginning of the year, Tayton, how much better do you**



**think you are as a group now than if you look back two months?**

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TAYTON CONERWAY: I definitely think we took a lot of big steps, being able to understand what each other's really good at. We kind of know where, like, if we set a screen for somebody, we know if they're going to roll, we know if they're going to pop. At first we didn't know. We didn't know who was our best shooters, we didn't know who was going to do what, but everybody buying into their role definitely helped us a lot.

**Q. As far as the break, how do you sort of break this up? How do you handle the time off when they come back? When they do come back, outside of things you mentioned, what are two or three things you look at where you say I'd like us to be improved in those areas?**

DARIAN DeVRIES: Basically they've off right now, and a lot of them won't be able to leave until tomorrow. They'll come back, and we'll start practice again on the 27th. They'll get a good four days, which is a nice break. You don't always get that. Then we'll practice the night of the 27th.

I think the biggest thing, we've talked about the several key areas, the turnovers and the defensive rebounding, that's always going to be something we're going to prioritize. I believe that's you have to win those two battles every night if you're going to give yourself a chance. We have to turn the ball over less, defensive rebound better. Those will be the top two.

Then it's the screening, the force, all that stuff on the offensive end, playing with pace. Then defensively just try to continue to do what we've been doing and try to get better at it and continue to find new ways, as we maybe see different offenses that are going to attack us in different ways, that we have some things ready for that when that time comes.

**Q. Tayton, Coach has talked a lot about defensive rebounding. I know you guys maybe don't have the biggest frontcourt. That also falls on the guards a little bit. How do you guys kind of improve in that area moving forward, and what is the key in your mind to becoming a good defensive rebounding team?**

TAYTON CONERWAY: At least it's defensive rebounding, so it's kind of more like just a want to do it. So we're having our guards go in there, instead of leaking out, we've got to get us all five crashing. We know that, if we can hold them to one shot, our defense is pretty solid.

