

Crossroads Classic: Indiana vs Notre Dame

Saturday, December 18, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Indiana Hoosiers

Race Thompson

Trayce Jackson-Davis

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana - 64, Notre Dame - 56

Q. They made a run at you guys, and those guys made a run, you guys got it back tied up 46 there late, and then you guys made pretty much all the stops down the stretch and you got this one pulled out. How important was that after they had made that run and considering what had happened at Wisconsin that you closed this one out the right way?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I think it shows that we're growing as a team. It was really big for us. I think our defense is really what kept us in the game, and I think our defense is going to be a really big part of what keeps us in a lot of games.

That's what we hold our hat on, and we made plays down the stretch. We got stops down the stretch that we needed to, and then we pulled that one out, so I thought it was good for us.

Q. Asked about Parker in a couple of different ways -- Parker. Sorry. Kind of mumbled through that. Forgive me. Whether it's maybe the extra semester he had. I know obviously a coaching change, but he was with you guys before that, or maybe it's something else, but just what has allowed him to fit so seamlessly into the flow of the offense to the degree that I think he is shooting at or near 50% from three, and it's a volume too. He is not shooting like 5 of 10 or 10 of 20 or something like that.

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Parker is one of the most gracious guys on our team. We all love him, and we know when he is out on the floor we know exactly where he is at all times. We try to find him, and for some reason teams keep leaving him, and we're going to feed him shots, and

he is going to hit those shots. You have seen it. We're going to keep feeding him.

Q. I have one for each of you. For Race, Mike Brey was talking about Trayce's impact, just presence at the rim defensively. You go against him in practice. How much does he impact your ability to score at the rim?

RACE THOMPSON: Mine personally he doesn't affect me.

Q. (Off microphone)

RACE THOMPSON: He definitely changes people's shots. You go up for a layup. If he is coming over, you got to adjust because he is going to block it if you don't. He does it in practice. He does it in the games. If I get beat, I'm like, Trayce is going to block it anyway, so not too worried about it. He is definitely a rim protector.

Q. Then for Trayce, what are your thoughts on the lift finish he gave you tonight? Gives you two threes, team high five assists, helps Blake Wesley to 5 for 16. Your thoughts on Rob's play tonight?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: The thing is Rob hasn't been 100% yet. Rob hasn't been 100% all year, and I think when he gets there, he is going to be really, really big for us. A big addition to our team. He is trying to grind it out and practice. He just has to get healthy, and I think he is starting to get healthier and starting to get his confidence. Once Rob has his confidence, he can do a lot of good things for us.

Q. For either guy, I'm curious if the improved three-point shooting, kind of more threats on the floor is making it easier for you inside, or how is that affecting maybe the floor space role?

RACE THOMPSON: Makes it easier for us both. It's hard for other teams to dig on me and Trayce because if they do, me and Trayce are completely comfortable and unselfish enough to throw the ball out and have confidence in our teammates to shoot the ball.

Even tonight when they're going under on X, and sure, he



shot 2 for 9 from three-point, but, again, I would tell him to shoot the tenth one because he can make that shot. Definitely just having that outside threat makes it easier for us to do what we want to do, and then if we get two hard digged on, we'll kick it out, and they'll knock it down.

Q. Trayce, you're the focal point every night of every team. How do you get yourself physically, mentally ready for all the various defenses, doubles, non-doubles that -- how do you get yourself ready to play at a high level?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: You just got to take what the defense gives you really. I think today I was a little sped up with double-team. Missed a few easy ones, obviously.

At the same time you can't get too high or too low because Coach Woodson will have an emphasis to keep feeding me. My teammates are the same way. They know I am the best player on the team, and I have to play like it. Even down the stretch when I missed a few shots, missed a few things, they are still trying to compliment me and raise me up to just go on to the next play. Basically that.

Q. Back on the topic of Rob, you guys talked about how he is not 100% yet, and making sure that -- Coach talked about getting him that confidence that he needs. How do you give him that confidence on the floor?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I think all of us as a team, we know what each one of us are capable of, and we know what we can do. We've seen it on the floor. I mean, I played with Rob for three years now. I know he has had games where he has been unbelievable.

So we know every player on the team and what we can do, and we just got to keep telling him even if you miss a shot, shoot the next one.

X was the same way today. X missed a few shots. He is wide open. They're playing him at the free-throw line. Just got to keep shooting it. I've seen him hit two or three shots in a row, so it's just basically confidence, and we just got to keep telling each other, you can hit those shots and do anything that you need to do basically.

Q. Race, you ended up on the perimeter on a lot of switches. You're defending those guards. That's something you have gotten used to this season. How do you think you've gotten better at that? How have you become a better defender when you find yourself in a switch against a two or a three?

RACE THOMPSON: I try to keep a little bit of space. Sometimes they got the step on me a little quicker than me

maybe, but I try to just be smart about it and think about -- like I really pay attention to personnel when we do that, what they want to do, what this player likes to do.

And I don't know, I just really key in on that and know that player's strength and try to force him away from that, and, again, force him to Trayce if I get beat or to the middle where most of the help is.

It's really just a scouting thing and just overall just keep doing it and keep getting more comfortable with it. I think it's good for me.

Q. Guys, in the first 12 minutes of the game, I think you guys combined for only three attempts from the field. What changes were made to get you more looks?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: I think Coach Woodson, a big emphasis, whenever that happens, he has a big emphasis right from the start. He starts yelling and starts getting in people's faces talking about playing inside-out. I think that was a big thing, big key.

At the same time we trust our guards to make the right plays, and if they want to shoot the ball, they can shoot the ball. I know they can hit shots. But after that first sequence, he came and said we're playing inside-out the rest of the game, so ...

Q. Trayce, Notre Dame Coach Mike Brey talked about your demeanor and being able to play at a high level, and always doing that at a calm demeanor, like today when there was a potential flagrant foul issue, but it all stayed calm. How can you play at that high level and keep your head about you all the time?

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: You got to stay level-headed really. You can't get too high. You can't get too low. Obviously, I sometimes let out some emotion, but not too much. And then sometimes you miss layups. You got to stay composed and locked into the game.

I know he didn't mean anything malicious by it. I could tell by the way when I fell he was still holding me to make sure I didn't fall very hard. It was just a basketball play, and obviously, it happens. I mean, it's not -- it is what it is, I guess. I'm not mad at it.

Q. Can you talk real quick about the role that Anthony played, especially defensively down the stretch tonight? He and Rob are out there a lot in the final minutes of the game, and both of them came up with huge steals, and he played 16 minutes and didn't score a point. Didn't matter. The defense was great.

TRAYCE JACKSON-DAVIS: Anthony is a huge role on our team. I think he is starting to carve out that role and he knows what he needs to do, and it has to be a spot-up shooter and play hard on defense, and he is doing that.

And he is just going to keep continuing to grow and get better because we need him on the floor, honestly. He is one of our best defenders on the team, and you saw today. He had a huge key stop on that dig, so props to him. His confidence is going to keep growing, and he is just going to keep getting better.

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