

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Daniel Gafford

Media Day



Q. What type of adjustment will you be making this series?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Being confident and being pretty much prepared for anything, 'because nine times out of ten I'll be out on the perimeter a lot more defending. Just being comfortable in that situation. There's going to be times when I'm out on the perimeter, in the paint, protecting the basket. There's going to be a lot of stuff thrown at us.

Being comfortable in that situation, being confident I make sure I make those reads and being able to rotate defensively.

Q. What type of advantages do you think you have?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Hmm. Just coming out, setting the tone. We got a lot of energy around this team. We got a great atmosphere around this team. If we come out with our heads on straight, I feel like it's going to be a pretty good situation.

Q. On being traded from Washington to Dallas in February.

DANIEL GAFFORD: What's crazy, when I got traded, we were actually headed here to play Boston. I got to the practice facility. (Wizards General Manager) Will Dawkins called me and said there's a possibility you'll be going to Dallas. I said, okay, let me know. I sat in the parking lot for 30 minutes. He called me and said, You've been traded to Dallas.

I would say when it comes to the emotions of getting traded, you could be mad, you could be happy. I would say I didn't really have a crazy reaction to it because I've been in the situation before. I just took this as a point, one door closed, another door opened for me. So this is another opportunity for me to kind of like progress throughout my career.

I just wanted to make sure I most definitely took the right

approach to it. I didn't really want to think too much on it. Like I said, it's another opportunity for me. I just took this as this is another step down my path of success.

Q. Do you remember a specific moment here that this kind of felt like home, a fit?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Oh, man, the first game when we were there, Luka threw the first lob to me. The crowd went crazy. The Dallas crowd reminds me a lot Bud Walton Arena when I was in college, for sure. Just being in that atmosphere like that, love and energy throughout the arena. It's just something that I felt like I missed just throughout my career, for sure.

Q. Does the game plan change depending on Kristaps Porzingis' availability?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Pretty much the same. Go out and stay confident and comfortable when it comes to just like the position we're going to be in defensively. Offensively, not letting them speed us up. They got a lot out of veteran defenders -- Derrick White, Jrue Holiday, Al Horford, he's around the basket blocking shots. There's a lot of guys that are guards that can block shots, too.

When it comes to the rebounding side, we got to make sure we keep the little guys off the glass. Little guys coming from the corners, up top. They're flying from everywhere, to rebound to make sure they get a second-chance opportunity. We have to be pretty much focused on this. Pretty much the game plan.

Q. How would you describe Kyrie as a teammate, maybe some of the things the fans don't see?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Honestly, one of the best human beings to be around. When I got here to now, just seeing how he carries himself, how he talks. One of the best people to be around. He embraces everything he's been through, and he's found ways to just improve and progress from that.

I've heard him talk about when he was here, transitioning to Brooklyn. He said he learned a lot. It takes a lot of just like humble and humility just to go through something like

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that.

I would say he's one of the best people in the world to be around, because everybody has had some type of situation. You see me at my worst. You never pay attention to just like the progress of how I'm trying to better myself.

Q. Why do you think there's a disconnect between the public perception of Kyrie versus the private?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Because we are players. That's the main thing, in my opinion. Because we're players. We see him as a teammate, we see him as an opponent. At the end of the day, he is the same person on the court and off the court.

Q. What were the battles like in Washington with KP? What was it like being his teammate?

DANIEL GAFFORD: There's a lot of great memories with KP. I always used to expect to come in and have a challenge day in and day out going against him in practice. He's one of the guys that used to always, like, motivate me when it came to the things that I did on the floor. I really appreciated him with certain areas that he helped me progress in.

He helped me a lot defensively, too, guarding a guy of his height, a guy that shoots over you. You crawl up into his airspace, he still shoots over you. Finding a way to make that not happen was something I always focused on every day going into practice.

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