

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Thursday, June 6, 2024

**Boston Celtics**

**Joe Mazzulla**

Game 1: Pregame

**Q. Is Porzingis on a minutes restriction and is he starting?**

JOE MAZZULLA: He's not on a minutes restriction and we haven't gone through that yet.

**Q. What do you think it's going to be like for him tonight, just kind of what are you going to be looking for from him in terms of how he fits back in and kind of shakes off some of the rust after the time he's been out?**

JOE MAZZULLA: Same thing he's done for us all year. Defense, offense, communication, play hard. Just what he's done for us over the course of the season that's helped us get here.

**Q. Jaylen talked yesterday about how he uses criticism as motivation. How have you behind the scenes seen him use that as fire?**

JOE MAZZULLA: I mean, Jaylen is the kind of guy that just works hard, has a chip on his shoulder. I would say everything is motivation for him. I enjoy watching him when he works. He has a huge growth mindset and he's going to look to dig deep into weaknesses that he wants to get better at, makes his strengths better, never skips a detail.

I would say he's one of the higher-motivated guys I've seen, just the way he works.

**Q. In the regular season you talked about taking inspiration from other coaches and using off time to learn from either their playbooks or their style or sense of poise. I'm curious, you had a week off. Were you able to either learn from other coaches or speak to other coaches, like coach to coach?**

JOE MAZZULLA: No. We just talked to the staff, just Celtics, practice, getting better, and that's it really.



**Q. I know you're big on building good habits, preparation. About to coach your first NBA Finals game as a head coach. What did today look like for you in terms of preparing for this moment?**

JOE MAZZULLA: Honestly, same way every game day has looked. It's no different. We've got to rebound, we've got to sprint back, we've got to play defense, pay attention to detail. We have to pay attention to spacing, we have to execute, we have to crash. We've got to play hard. I can honestly say it hasn't looked any different, and the things that will go into winning this series are no different than the things that we talked about in preseason, habits, mindset, details, execution.

**Q. I know that you are treating it the same, but heading into your first NBA Finals as the head coach of the Celtics, are there any emotions, any butterflies? What are your emotions today?**

JOE MAZZULLA: Same as they were first game of preseason, got to go out there and play. There's a game plan. We've got to be ready to execute it. But there's going to be adjustments, variables, things you're going to have to go through.

In the short time I've been around I've been in some big games. The things that go into winning and losing are still the same. We can't be distracted by anything else. We've got to make sure we stick to those details. That's the most important thing.

**Q. There's reports about the possibility of the Lakers making an offer to Dan Hurley and it raises the questions about college coaches making the leap to the NBA. You had your own unique path to this job. Jason Kidd went straight from playing to coaching. People come through a variety of paths. Is there any one unifying thing that you think makes for a successful head coach in the NBA and do you think the assistant level in the NBA or college level, whatever it is, does any of that matter in the end, or is it something else that leads to success?**

JOE MAZZULLA: Yeah, I think it's all the fundamentals of that are the same. You have to communicate. You have



to build relationships with people. You have to have a great staff around you. You have to have great players. You have to get those players better. You have to empower people around you. You have to know whatever level you're at what goes into winning and what could lead to losing.

I think no matter the level, it's all the same, and obviously each level presents different types of challenges, but you rely on those things that can be translated regardless of where you're at to help you, and it's the people around you and the way you can build relationships.

**Q. From the outside it seems like Doncic will challenge the way you guys want to defend maybe more than any matchup you've had so far in the Playoffs. Do you feel that way, and are you maybe more prepared to have to change things up than you have been in any previous series?**

JOE MAZZULLA: Yeah, I mean, he's a great player. They have a great team. There's no one way to guard these guys, especially when you have to play them over again. So you have to be open-minded to go into different things, absolutely.

But the game is connected, so the offensive adjustments we make will be in large part by how we defend and our defensive adjustments we make will be in large part how we attack, and the game is connected, and those decisions are made by kind of those things, how one thing affects the other.

But I don't anticipate one solution. You have to have multiple solutions.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports