

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

P.J. Washington Jr.

Practice Day



to capitalize on those in Game 2.

Q. Will Game 2 feel less anxious for you?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I think the nerves went away. Everybody is ready to play. Like I said, it's the biggest stage. Just come out ready to play.

Q. How important was that early second-half run where you guys did get back in the game to help them shake off some of those nerves and say, hey, all right, we can play on this stage?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I think it was great. Outside of the first quarter, we felt like we played a good game. Obviously, the first quarter they hit a bunch of threes. We kind of limited it in the second half; I think they were 5-of-15. That's where we want them to be. Have to do a better job of making them take the shots we want.

Q. Do you like having the extra day in between games?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I don't like it. I feel like it's too much time. I'm ready to play. I think it's good rest for guys, but me personally, I don't like it.

Q. Why do you think you guys have been so good in Game 2? Is the coaching staff making adjustments or is it the players?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I think it's both. I think the coaches have done a great job of adjusting, and I think we have done a great job of adapting to their adjustments. Like I said, we watched a lot of film and we've seen ways we can be better, and we are going to try to capitalize on those.

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Q. What did you see on film and what are you expecting from your team in Game 2?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: Defensively, I feel like we can do better. Not allowing them to get a fast break and get open shots. Just try to contest threes, force them to take more twos. A lot of stuff we feel we can do better.

Q. How confident are you and the team in Game 2?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: Extremely. We are not worried at all. Like I said, it's a lot of things we can clean up and we're excited about it. We're excited to get going.

Q. What do you think of Dereck's Game 1 performance, and do you have any veteran words for him after a tough outing like that?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: Just keep going. He's young. At the end of the day, it's a very high ceiling, and we need him in these clutch moments. I'm not worried about him at all. He'll find his rhythm. Obviously it was a tough game Game 1, but Game 2, he'll be ready.

Q. What was it like playing in an NBA Finals game? Was it what you had dreamed of?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: Definitely. I couldn't sleep. I was super excited to get out there and get warmed up and get ready to play. For me, it was just a dream come true to get out here and play on a stage in front of the world. And I'm pretty sure it was like that for my teammates, as well. We can't wait for Game 2.

Q. Remembering the 2011 team, they lost Game 1, too. It could be a good sign that you could repeat history and you could to be a part of that.

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: Yeah, definitely. They lost Game 1. We lost Game 1 in Round 1, Round 2. So we're not really worried about it. It's one game at the end of the day. We're looking at ways to get better, and we're going to try

