

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Coach Jason Kidd

Practice Day



Q. What stood out to you on film?

JASON KIDD: Yeah, I thought we were too much one-on-one. We've got to move bodies. We've got to move the ball. Multiple guys have to touch the ball. We were just too stagnant, and that's not the way we play. We've got to be better tomorrow.

Q. You've gone up against Joe Mazzulla a handful of times. What is that coaching matchup like? What are the tendencies you notice from his coaching style that you're going to have to match up against in this series?

JASON KIDD: Unfortunately, we are not playing. I don't know how to answer that question. I'm taller. I would post him up, but he would probably be more physical.

He's one of the best coaches in this league. He's gotten his team to the Finals. They play at a high rate. He understands his group.

So when you talk about Joe, he's done an incredible job. And it's not easy, especially when you're favored or supposed to be somewhere. It puts a little bit more pressure. But I think he's handled it well. His group plays at a high level. His group plays hard. He's one of the best coaches in the league. For that, we have our work cut out as a coaching staff. We've got to be better.

Q. Going back and looking at Kyrie's shots, what did you think of the shots he was able to get? And you talk about needing to move the ball more, how can you get him the ball in more advantageous situations?

JASON KIDD: He got great looks. Unfortunately, our two quarterbacks had turnovers that normally don't happen. Give credit to Boston. But we believe that the shots that he got in Game 1 were great looks that just didn't go down.

Q. In Game 2s, you guys have won them. What adjustments have you been able to make in the past

that allowed you to take a Game 1 loss and get a win in Game 2?

JASON KIDD: I think there's no panic with this group. We didn't play well in Game 1. Give credit to Boston; they did.

But it's a series and we don't just look to capitalize on just one game. We've lost Game 1 a lot of times, and we've responded. We believe that we can respond in Game 2. We just try to take it one game at a time. We didn't have a really good first quarter there at the end. Put us down.

But the guys kept fighting. We found a way to get it to eight. It was very similar to the way the playoffs started for us with the Clippers. We didn't play well. We cut that 30-point lead down and made a game of it.

But we responded in Game 2 on the road. Hopefully we can do the same thing here in Boston.

Q. What are some of the problems that Jayson Tatum can create on both ends, and what did you think of your defensive execution against him in Game 1?

JASON KIDD: Jayson, he's one of the best offensive players in this league. Understanding that he puts a lot of pressure behind the three, behind the line, and then also being able to get to the rim. He's not one that just settles.

We have to, again, try to keep him from getting to the rim, keeping him off the free throw and then giving him wide-open threes. And so that's not easy. It's easier said than done. Again, we just have to make it tough on him.

On the defensive end, he uses his length. He's strong. He's not one to give in. We've got to find other ways to score.

Q. You knew that KP was going to play Game 1. Were you surprised that he came off the bench, and is there an extra or unique challenge of having to guard or worry about him coming in as a second-unit guy?

JASON KIDD: Yeah, we knew that he was going to play, and he played well. He played well coming off the bench. He's played well starting, or as he showed, coming off the



bench.

We've got to make it tougher on him. When he starts to get going, he can shoot it from halfcourt with range. We have to be able to take some of those threes away.

On the other end, we have to make him work. But we also got to account for -- when you go to the basket, he's going to be there. You have to account that he's got a good chance of blocking the shots. We have to take advantage of his overhelp at times.

Q. You've mentioned that you, Kyrie and Luka shared a similar position. I wondered if you three are able to have conversations, just amongst you three, that maybe are a little different than you have with the rest of the team given what you see or did see on the basketball court? What are those conversations like?

JASON KIDD: Yeah, I think we happened to play the same position, some are a little bit better than others.

But when you look at the things this we have to do just in this series better, we've got to take care of the ball, we've got to make it easier for Ky and Luka. Being able to put those guys in different spots on the floor so there's a little bit stress-free so they can do what they do at a high level. We just didn't do that in Game 1.

But it's really simple conversation when you talk about things that we have to do not just on the offensive end but the defensive end. Ky and Luka take responsibility for that. Our conversations are really simple and to the point. When you talk about the high IQ, you don't have to sit there and paint the picture. You can just get right to it. They understand from my side what I'm asking them to do, and when they respond I understand what their responses are and what they are talking about and what they see.

It's worked at an extremely high level for when we do talk in-game or on a day like today of what we are trying to get to. Those guys trust what I see or what I'm telling them, and I trust their response.

Q. You said there's no panic. But you told your team to have fun at halftime. Which kind of worked because they got it down to eight pretty quickly. Did you think that the team was being a little too fearful or maybe even respectful of the Celtics' environment. You have young guys coming out here and seeing all the championship banners and everything going on. Why did you tell them to have fun?

JASON KIDD: I think just understanding this group, it's not about screaming or yelling. It's about what we do best, and

when we are having fun and smiling is when we are at our best. I just felt there at the end of the first, we just weren't at our best. It was talked about and it's going to happen. It might happen in Game 2.

But the response from our group has to be quicker and it has to be better. Not where we're talking about we have to score the ball, but we have to get better on the defensive end, and that's being connected. We felt we lost a little connection there at the end of the first. But when we talked about it at halftime, it was a great response and we did play at a better level in that second half.

Q. With Luka having the ball, getting pressured a little bit in the backcourt, taking some time off the clock and then getting into your half-court offense, when you watch film with the team, was there anything you saw about maybe getting into the paint a little bit more to rotate some of their defense so you can get maybe lobs, or those corner threes? Is there any adjustments you'll have for that?

JASON KIDD: Yeah, we'll make some adjustments. But Boston is going to give the layup to Luka, so he's got to take it. They're not going to give him the lob, and they are not going to give the corner three. So it's two-on-two, and we have to take advantage of that.

We missed some layups. We missed some shots in the paint. That happens. But we believe that Ky and Luka will get into the paint and make them in Game 2. But it's no different than what we saw in Minnesota. Just understanding that Boston is a really good defense, and being able to bluff or take away something, we trust that Luka and Ky will pivot and do what's best, and that's take the layup or take the easy two and continue to wear out the paint and layups.

But we've got to make those, too. Because on the other end if you don't make them and they come down and they make a couple threes, it puts a lot of pressure on your offense.

Q. What makes going against a guy like Jaylen so challenging?

JASON KIDD: Well, Jaylen is their best player. Just looking at what he does defensively, he picked up Luka full court. He got to the free throw line. He did everything, and that's what your best player does. Just understanding he plays both sides, defense and offense, at a high rate. And he's been doing that the whole playoffs. I mean, when talk about the Eastern Conference MVP, and it seems like he has continued to pick up where he left off.

So he's playing at a high rate. We've just got to be a little more physical with him. And again, we have to keep him off the free throw line and out of the paint because, again, he was finishing at a high rate or he was getting fouled and getting to the free throw line.

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