

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

**Boston Celtics**

**Xavier Tillman Sr.**

Game 3: Postgame

Boston Celtics 106, Dallas Mavericks 99

**Q. What was it like for you as a teammate to see Jaylen and Jayson outscore the Mavericks on their own in the third quarter, and then both of them make key plays down the stretch in the fourth after Dallas had made it a game again?**

XAVIER TILLMAN SR.: Those are our leaders. So for them to step up how they did in the third quarter and just kind of take the game over is what we needed, and you know, they came through for us. Especially in the fourth quarter with those last four to five minutes where we were struggling to get a bucket. They willed in the buckets, you know. At times, that's what you need, and they responded, and we needed it for sure.

**Q. With KP out, you lose one of best rim protectors in the league. You play a switch-heavy style and Luka was going at you and you got a few stops. What was it like playing this different brand of basketball when you have to step in with the guys who have been playing a different brand with KP on the back line and letting the guys pass him? How easy is it to jump in and be ready to go?**

XAVIER TILLMAN SR.: This is something as far as staying ready is something I've been doing for the majority of my career. My rookie year, I was fortunate enough to play because when my best friend was hurt, Jaren [Jackson Jr.] was recovering for his meniscus, so I was starting a lot. Second year, I was out of rotation. Third year, two guys got was injured, Brandon Clarke and Steven Adams. So I stepped up again, you know what I'm saying.

So this is something that like I've been preparing for, I guess for a while now. So I was ready for the opportunity. They were kind of hinting at potentially if KP's workout didn't go well and he didn't feel comfortable that I was going to have to step in today.



**Q. Joe said that he went to you because of your time in Memphis and because you are familiar with a similar defensive strategy against Luka Doncic and the Mavs. Can you walk us through that -- how comfortable you were, and how helpful that was in you stepping in?**

XAVIER TILLMAN SR.: Yeah, I'm very comfortable. I feel like switching is like my bread-and-butter defensively. That's something that allows me to use my quick feet and my strength to be able to bump guys on versus being in drop coverage and having to use my vertical leap.

So for me being able to switch and stuff like that is more catered for me. Being able to get subbed in and used for those opportunities, I feel like I can excel majority of the time.

**Q. Xavier, you've had relatively limited stints during the postseason but now on the most important stage you're playing significant minutes and hitting an important three. What were the emotions when the shot went in and the bench went crazy, and what are you feeling right now?**

XAVIER TILLMAN SR.: I knew that when I saw Maxi Kleber go to the block, that I was going to shoot regardless of anything. And then their bench was talking. So it was cool to hit it and be able to look at the bench as well.

But to hear the bench going crazy on our end, guys like Svi and Oshae and stuff like that, it was pretty awesome because those are my guys. Those are my SRG guys. Each day-in, day-out, we go to war with each other to try to better each other to be ready for whoever's name gets called. So for them to celebrate with me is pretty cool.

**Q. Coach was sharing some UFC with us before the game about when you think you have your opponent beaten, that's when they sucker punch and you now you're up 3-0 and at the precipice of winning a championship. What are you expecting from your coach over the next couple days to reinforce that message?**

XAVIER TILLMAN SR.: I expect him to do whatever is needed for us to be ready to go. I feel like for us coming



into this next game, we have to being locked and loaded.  
We can't come in there thinking they are going to roll up.  
Even though we were up 20 today, they didn't quit.

So for us, being up 20 is not enough. We have to try to  
push the lead as far as we can. Yeah, I expect Coach to  
go over the film probably tonight, knowing him, and  
tomorrow we are going to have a game plan as far as the  
things that we could, you know, work on and come into  
practice tomorrow and be ready to work on it.

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