

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

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Boston Celtics Derrick White

Game 3: Postgame

Boston Celtics 106, Dallas Mavericks 99

Q. Obviously defensive efforts, one-on-one defense has meant a lot this series. What's it like seeing individual defenders rise to the occasion in this series, and how much do you think Jrue has been a benefit with some of the tips and advice he's given you guys as defenders throughout this year?

DERRICK WHITE: I just think that top to bottom, we trust everybody, and we just compete at a high level. Obviously they are great players, and it's a challenge but just consistently being in the right position and just competing.

Jrue is literally everywhere. It's unreal. I don't know how he does it. Try to learn as much as I can from him, and he's just -- just when you think you've got an opening, like he's just -- he's unreal.

Q. I was just going to ask you, you've described Jaylen Brown as unreal many times during this playoff run and talked about how he has no weaknesses at this point. You've been his teammate for a couple of years, and Joe talked about how he works with six or seven coaches to figure out how to make every read. What have you seen from that, from the work he's putting in in practice? Are you involved in that? And how do you see that growth translate on to the court in the biggest moments?

DERRICK WHITE: He's just a guy that just wants to learn. Some of the drills he does is just a little unconventional, I think, but like just wants to learn and wants to grow. And then every year he's been in the league, he's gotten so much better. That's just a credit to his mindset and the work he puts in.

So being his teammate has been a lot of fun. I've learned so much from him, and he just continues to push me and the rest of us to continue to improve and want to get better.

Q. Joe's philosophy of the closer you are to winning,



the closer you are to losing, seemed like that was playing out in the fourth quarter as the Mavs were making a comeback. How was he down the stretch and to what degree did he help you pull together and stay poised?

DERRICK WHITE: Yeah, Joe is consistent the whole time. I mean, he's probably so happy that it happened like that so he can just continue to tell us that (laughter).

But he just stays consistent. He just makes the right calls, and we just trust him completely. So, yeah, it seemed pretty true today.

Q. Was he enjoying it?

DERRICK WHITE: He's a sicko, so probably. (Laughter).

Q. With KP out, you guys played a lot more switch-heavy defense. Guys like Xavier Tillman, Sam Hauser really stepped up in that regard. What did you see from them and the whole team in that defensive style?

DERRICK WHITE: Sam has been doing it all year. He gets attacked nearly every time he checks into the game, and we've just got a lot of faith and confidence in him. He just does what he needs to do.

But big shout out to X. To not be in the rotation but to stay locked in and he gives us big-time minutes, plus nine, and he just does a little bit of everything out there. Then he guarded his ass off and hit a big shot and rebounds, and he just did a little bit of everything for us. Credit to him. Great, great teammate, great guy, and he was big for us.

Q. Watching you guys, it's so apparent that one through whatever in your rotation, everyone is out there to contribute, as you just mentioned with Tillman. When you get into a late-game scenario, how does the group rely on guys, the two guys in Jaylen and Jayson, and obviously they made some plays down the stretch after Dallas cut it.

DERRICK WHITE: Yeah, I mean, obviously the strength of this team is the team. But we understand that JB and JT,



... when all is said, we're done.®

they are our guys, and they are going to make big plays and they are going to make the right play. I think that's the most important part is just we trust them to make the right play every time down the court, and they are facing literally every coverage known to man. They just make the right play no matter what time is on the clock, and we just trust them so much.

Q. It felt like this game is a game that a lot of the Celtics naysayers coming into the series felt like you guys would have lost, in past seasons, you might have given this one up. What do you think has gone into the change in these moments, both individual guys on the team and collectively?

DERRICK WHITE: I mean, I think experience always helps. We have a lot of guys that have been in close games and big games, and so I just don't think we panic probably as much as we have in the past. We just try to stay calm and do what we need to do.

I mean, who knows if we would have lost these games in the past, but we just know we've got so many different ways to win games and trust that we can find the answer and just do whatever it takes to win.

Q. Earlier this season, Joe said about Jrue Holiday that it doesn't matter if he's having a good game or if it's not going well for him. You can never tell based on his body language. How has that even-keeled approach helped you guys stay calm in the most challenging moments?

DERRICK WHITE: It's big time. He just stays right here, competes on the defensive end like always. And offensively he can take nine shots, he can take one shot. Like he doesn't care. And just does whatever it takes for us to win. So just having him on the team is just a big blessing.

Q. You guys obviously had that slow start, and then you played great for most of the next three quarters. And then that early part of the fourth quarter, things went haywire again. What did you see go sideways for you guys, and what allowed you to reset again like did you in that second half of the first quarter to close things out in the end?

DERRICK WHITE: Yeah, I think just we had some turnovers, which allowed them to get out in transition. And just a couple of things that we've been doing really well, we kind of just let go of the rope for however many minutes that was. It seemed like, what, two minutes, they cut it to two, three or something.

It happened quick, and we just settled back down. Understand it's a game of runs, and we just trust what we do.

Q. Now you're one win away. What were you saying to each other in the locker room, and what's Joe's message coming out?

DERRICK WHITE: Obviously the closer you are to winning; that's his go-to. That was obviously said.

But just understand that we need to play better. The close-out games are never easy, and close-out games in the Finals is probably ten-times of that. So learn a lot from what we did well, what we need to do and just understand we're going to have to play even better for the next game.

Q. Jaylen had both baskets to answer Dallas after they cut it to one possession in the last three and a half minutes. I think it was a put-back and then the foul line jumper. What do you remember about those plays, and what do they say about Jaylen?

DERRICK WHITE: Big-time. Big-time shots. Just a guy that he wanted the ball and was able to get to his spot and rise up and knock it down.

He makes tough shots, and he's just a special player.

Q. When you got here, your teammates demanded that you shoot threes. Coaching staff demanded you shoot threes?

DERRICK WHITE: Demanded, whoa.

Q. They are pretty adamant about it. Joe has built a system where a lot of the reads are set to create open threes, and you kind of three-point attempt teams until you have that advantage. Tonight Luka and Kyrie, they were scoring on the inside because they kept taking the threes, and the math worked in your favor. How has that worked for you guys over the long term? And now that you are at the precipice of potentially winning a championship, how valuable do you think Joe's approach has been for you?

DERRICK WHITE: I think Joe is a basketball genius. So whatever he says, I'm going to try to just do it to my highest capabilities.

I mean, we just try to make the right basketball play every time down the court, whether that's a three, but just trying to have the right spacing and just make the right basketball play.

It's not like we need to take however many threes. I think we just can win in so many different ways, and with our spacing and guys that can shoot on the court, we can just do so much.

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