

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

**Boston Celtics**

**Jaylen Brown**

Game 3: Postgame

Boston Celtics 106, Dallas Mavericks 99

**Q. Jaylen, you stressed defense from day one this year. For so much of the series to kind of be individual efforts on defense, switching, guarding your yard, how much does it say about the way you've embraced defense this year, and how has that developed to this point?**

JAYLEN BROWN: I think I've made that play from beginning of the season or before the season even started. I told myself that I wanted to just maximize my defensive potential, and I wanted to make First Team All-Defense going into the season.

I mean, that didn't happen, but to be able to be in these moments and show your defensive versatility, picking guys up, guarding guys in the post, guarding contested threes, switching on, it's been big for us.

But we have a lot of great defenders on this team. So it's been a full team effort, but that's something I definitely took personal going from last year to this year.

**Q. You've played most of the playoffs without KP. What discussions did you have after you found out he was going to be out, and what was the kind of mindset going in without him, and what do you think of the way Xavier pitched in, and did KP talk to you guys at all before or after the game?**

JAYLEN BROWN: No, KP didn't talk to us, but we've been playing all season and all playoffs without KP. So it wasn't any surprise for anybody.

Obviously we'd love to have KP out there. We are different when he is.

But X stepped in that role, and I thought he was great. Defensively I thought he was stellar, and that big shot he made in the corner, I just knew it. I just knew when I drove, they were going to help, and he was going open. And I



trusted it all the way. I just knew it was going in. I don't know how to tell you. It was just like a divine experience. I knew X was going to make that shot, and he did. That was big for us.

I thought X was great.

**Q. Eight years into your partnership with Jayson Tatum, you're in the fourth quarter with a chance for the first time to get three wins in the NBA Finals. Is there responsibility about, hey, we have to make plays to close this thing out? And what is it like to tackle that final stage of the fourth quarter together?**

JAYLEN BROWN: I thought it was a great team win. That lead dwindled fast. I know we were up 20, and then they stormed back. And that's what the beauty of basketball is. You can never let up. It's always time, and they were able to cut the lead.

But in those moments, those are the moments which you have to just live for. We've been in those moments a lot. We just needed to be patient, be poised. I feel like we got some good looks. The defensive intensity ramped up. Officiating, you know, got a little bit tighter. So at the end of the day, you've just got to make plays. I thought we got some good looks down the line in the fourth. Some went in. Some didn't.

But we were able to make plays and find a way to win. And we've been in those positions, and we've lost. It was great to overcome that with my brother, Jayson, and with our team. That was special.

**Q. Luka has eight points in the fourth quarter. This series he's shooting 20 percent. We can see that. But what does it feel like guarding him as much as you have when it comes to the fourth quarter, and can you sense him wearing down at all?**

JAYLEN BROWN: Luka is a great player. I'm going to start by saying that. He does a lot for their team. Offensively has the ball in his hands a lot. It's a tough lift for him. He's been tough. Even with that fourth quarter, those stats, he's still been able to pretty much get to whatever he wants.



So we've just got to continue to be better, and that's all I could really say.

**Q. You mentioned how you guys have been in a lot of spots over the years. You go down early in the fourth quarter, recover, respond the way you did; and fourth quarter, same thing, they go on a big run and get back in the game, and you're able to respond again. How much of the way you responded on the road, like you have so many times over the past couple years, is because you guys have been in so many of these situations and sort of experienced just about everything you could have so far?**

JAYLEN BROWN: Yeah, sometimes success can be almost not -- I don't want to say a bad thing, but just being able to finish that quarter where we were up 20. You know, start of the fourth, they came out and made some plays. I checked out around that time, and around that fourth quarter, they just stormed all the way back.

But, you know, it's like that in basketball. Sometimes when you are winning, comfort kind of sets into your mind. You kind of like relax. Your brain kind of wants to go at ease, and you've got to fight that. You've got to fight that temptation to fall into that because it's still time left to be played and other teams are still competing.

And I think even though that lead dwindled fast, we found ways and moments to overcome it. In that fourth quarter I was proud of, we made some big-time plays. Jrue Holiday, D-White, JT was physical, aggressive. Got to the paint, and we were able to finish it.

**Q. Heading into the first quarter, what was your mindset, your approach? And the embrace with Jayson Tatum at the end, to be one win away from a championship after all the years you guys have played together and all that, after you won the Eastern Conference MVP, just what's that like?**

JAYLEN BROWN: To answer your first question, I feel like in the first half, I feel like we had some good looks, some good reads. I was finding guys, getting to the paint, getting up into the offense. I was a little bit -- I was letting them off the hook.

I felt like they were letting me just have open looks from three, and I was taking the first one and I should have been a little more patient. I was a little bit more patient in the second half of letting the game kind of come to me a little bit more.

But it's awesome. I mean, I can't -- I don't even really have

words. It kind of doesn't even really feel real right now. I'm just trying to stay in the moment. It feels great to be up 3-0 in the series but the job is not done.

**Q. You had seven assists for the second straight game. What's your progression been like in that area on this stage, and how have you been able to balance it with also maintaining your aggression scoring?**

JAYLEN BROWN: Just seeing what the game is giving me and making the right play. I feel like we got a bunch of great looks. Good things happen when I get to the paint. Sometimes I don't always get to assist. Sometimes it's a hockey assist.

But I just like making the defense converge. You have to respect them getting to the basket. And we have a lot of great shooters. I was committed to that all night.

I feel like in the first half I could have done it more and I settled for some shots because I have like a big on me. You know, I needed to get to the paint a little bit more. And I did that in the second half, and then in the fourth quarter, and I feel like that's what helped us win.

**Q. Joe, ever since he's gotten here, has tried to reframe the way you guys think about basketball and looking at things as almost like a balance. He talked today about how sometimes like new ideas, it's hard to accept them at first. Looking at the different ways he's tried to change the way you guys think about the game, how long did it take for you to understand and embrace them, and how do you see those paying off now?**

JAYLEN BROWN: The coaching staff has been fantastic all season long. I've been saying that throughout the regular season, even before we got to the playoffs.

Just it's been just super organized. We've walked through all different types of scenarios. We've been like overly prepared and making sure that we know. Sometimes it's like you've got the coaches, they game plan, but they don't always let you know exactly what they are thinking. Like, they tell us everything. Super transparent. And we trusted it. We trust it.

I thought that's been great. Joe has been a big reason of that, and he showed himself in these playoffs. He's been coaching his ass off.

**Q. You hit the big 20-point third quarter, and then in the fourth when they came back you hit the big two jumpers to give you guys some breathing room. When you are in those moments, do you feel like the calm,**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**the maturity, the poise, compared to maybe two years ago, three years ago? What has that process of being able to handle those moments been like for you?**

JAYLEN BROWN: I think definitely it's been some growth, but I think this team has trusted me, especially in this playoffs and those moments to just be who I am.

I felt like I've been able to just deliver just by being just being patient and being poised. Those opportunities have presented themselves, and I've been able to take advantage of them. But I give all my credit to my teammates for the trust they had in me to have the ball in my hands and to be able to make those plays.

**Q. Can you take us through -- two questions. Take us through the dunk at the end of the third quarter, like what were you thinking there? It just seemed like that kind of seized the momentum.**

JAYLEN BROWN: Just being aggressive. You know, running that action with the ball in my hands to finish the third, I wanted to make sure that we got a good quality look.

So if they would have overhelped, I would have been ready to kick it out. I saw that I had been making those passes in the first half, and they didn't want to give those threes up. So they kind of were in between, and when I seen that, it was lights out. So I just went up and finished it.

**Q. What's the difference between maybe in past years, you guys in the fourth quarter going, uh-oh, here we go again, as opposed to you and Jayson going, let's get there and be heroes here?**

JAYLEN BROWN: Experience is the best teacher. All year long we've been hearing about the Celtics are the past, for the last six to eight months, that's all we've been hearing is all the different shortcomings we've had in the past.

This is a new team, you know what I mean. We've learned from those experiences. And in these moments, you can see that we learned from it. We stepped up to the plate, and we found a way to win.

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