

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Friday, June 14, 2024

Boston Celtics

Coach Joe Mazzulla

Game 4: Postgame



Dallas Mavericks 122, Boston Celtics 84

Q. Joe, we often hear from coaches that sometimes after a night like this, they just burn the tape, so to speak. Can't really get anything from it. On to the next one. What's your thought on this? Is there something you can gain from this or is it fully flush it and go?

JOE MAZZULLA: You can definitely take something from it but at the same time, I thought Dallas played great. Give a lot of credit to them. You know, all their guys, whoever went in, well-balanced.

Thought they played with a ton of energy and physicality. You've got to give them that. And they are a great team, and that's Dallas. That's the reason why they are here when they play like that. But you can definitely take some stuff from it.

Q. You guys had 26 points in the paint, which I believe, is a season low for you guys, 3 for 16 on non-rim paint shots. What did you see from the process in terms of getting into the paint and the finish, and what was giving you a problem with that tonight?

JOE MAZZULLA: They did a great job flying around, making indecision on whether to shoot it or drive and their multiple efforts. And I thought their five men did a great job protecting the paint. Whenever we went in for a layup, they had multiple guys contesting. I thought they did a great job flying around on the defensive end.

Q. Was effort an issue at all, and when did you see that you guys just didn't have it? Because it seemed like no one across the board played well.

JOE MAZZULLA: I mean, I don't know, always in situations like this, it always goes back to us. But you have to give Dallas credit. They played well. They played really, really well. And that's the reason why that they're in this, is because when they play like that. So I thought they just

outplayed us.

Q. We talked a lot about the metaphor of the chokehold in UFC fighting and trying to make sure that you finish the submission. Now that you're literally in that position, actual title on the line, chance to finish it out, it didn't work, why do you think all that preparation didn't work in this moment, and how do you try to work through going back to your principles?

JOE MAZZULLA: Preparation doesn't guarantee an automatic success. And so I thought we had a great process. I thought we had a great shootaround. Thought we had a great film session yesterday. I thought the guys came out with the right intentions. I just didn't think it went our way, and I thought Dallas outplayed us. They just played harder.

You have to prepare to put yourself in the best possible position, but it doesn't guarantee anything. At the end of the day, we have to just maintain our process and get ready for Game 5.

Q. In the first half, particularly, they really got after you on the offensive glass. What led to the breakdowns, in your mind, and how do you clean that up going forward?

JOE MAZZULLA: Anytime there's two-on-ones and little indecisions, they do a great job cutting behind you and wedging under and getting in. I thought Lively was great in that. We had 26 misses in the first half and only two offensive rebounds, and they had more. So we've got to be better in our defensive rebounding, and we have to be better getting offensive rebounds when we miss.

Q. What were the biggest things you learned tonight? You mentioned there were things that jumped out at you about your group. What have you learned in terms of closing out the Mavericks the next game?

JOE MAZZULLA: Yeah, listen, I learned that Dallas is a great team and you're going to have to earn it. There's a lot of stuff that we can control. We'll go back on the film and we'll watch that, and we'll really try to be disciplined and control it.



Q. You said Dallas played harder. Does that bother you that they played harder than you guys, or is it a matter of their desperation? Why in a close-out game, you guys have been preaching, act like you're down 0-3, would you not play as hard as you could?

JOE MAZZULLA: I don't know. I thought Dallas played really -- the more I said it, because you have to give them credit. It's not about us. It's about our opponent and having respect for them. And you have to give them credit for how well they played, and that's the most important thing.

So it's less about us and more about how they played. They played well. They played hard. We have to be more disciplined in how we defend and attack them.

Q. You've been asked a couple times about your team's effort, and you keep going back to how well Dallas played. So how was your team's effort?

JOE MAZZULLA: It wasn't as good as Dallas's was. I thought theirs was a lot better.

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