

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Sunday, June 16, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Dante Exum

Practice Day



Q. What's the mood around the team? You seem upbeat. How do you bring that to Game 5, what you did in Game 4?

DANTE EXUM: Obviously we are going to be upbeat. We're focused throughout practice on what we have to do. It's just about being relaxed and making sure we're ready once the game comes.

Q. Game 5, you know it will be loud. You know they're trying to close it out. What will that be like for you guys?

DANTE EXUM: We know it's going to be loud and it's going to be an atmosphere the fans want to see them win, but it's our job to stop that as much as possible. We know it's going to be loud and rowdy. We just need to make sure that we stick to our game plan and stick together as a team.

Q. You've been able to give this team a real jolt when you've been out there. What's enabled you to stay ready when your number is called?

DANTE EXUM: I think that's the thing is making sure I stay ready and then when I come in, doing what I can, and that's bringing pace, trying to relieve as much as possible for Luka and Ky when I'm out there bringing up the ball.

But letting the game come to me as well. I think that's the most important thing. Not trying to go out there and score 50 points or whatever. It's just about playing in the game plan and attacking where I can attack.

Q. Do you feel like Game 5 was the first time in the Finals you guys played to your identity?

DANTE EXUM: I do think so. I think it showed a lot about us. But I think the key for us is going to be do that when it gets hard and when it gets tough. We've seen where they hit a couple threes or coming out of a timeout, they will hit two or three threes, and it's just about how do we react to

that and get back to our game plan.

Q. How much reflecting have you done on your own personal journey, high pick, injuries, having to go back overseas and now back here? Have you had that moment where you've sat around, like, and thought, wow, I'm back, fully?

DANTE EXUM: Yeah, it's been a lot of reflecting on that. Even just looking at this year and playing in the NBA Finals and going to an Olympic Games, the two biggest stages in the world. So I think I'm forever grateful. It's easy to take it for granted, but I've been through injuries and not being able to play and missed out on events. I'm just making sure I do everything, and grateful that I'm on the court.

Q. Do you ever think about a guy like Shaun Livingston, high pick, injuries and he went on to have a great run later in his career with the Warriors. Maybe this is the start of something like that for you?

DANTE EXUM: Hopefully. Obviously he had a great career. And if I can do something like that, it would be amazing. But it's going to start here, and hopefully we can get this next win and keep building with that.

Q. Is there a mentality, one game at a time, or how do you guys look at it at this point?

DANTE EXUM: Yeah, that's the only way we can look at it. If we lose, we're going home. So we need to make sure that we win every quarter, every possession. I think that's kind of the mindset is make every possession important, and then if we do that, we can win.

Q. What does it say about the Mavericks, that you guys fought the way you fought?

DANTE EXUM: I think it shows a lot of character with us with being able to fight. You know, we could have been on vacation now, but I think it shows how we want it as a team, and we are ready to fight for it.

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