

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Monday, June 17, 2024

Boston Celtics

Jaylen Brown

Game 5: Postgame



Boston Celtics 106, Dallas Mavericks 88

Q. Jaylen, knowing what Bill Russell meant to you and to have this moment in your life and your career tied to him in that way, what does that mean?

JAYLEN BROWN: To be honest, I can't even put it into words. Just Bill Russell and what he's meant for me through my Boston journey, and his spirit. You know, everything that he stood for, just for this to be the Bill Russell MVP Award, it just -- I've got nothing, man. I don't even know what to say. It's unreal.

Q. A year ago against Miami, you sort of lost the series that was played this way. This was a gritty, tough series. Less three-point shots and all the offensive glory. Can you talk about the difference and why you guys were built and ready for this run, as opposed to a year ago?

JAYLEN BROWN: I think we learned. I think we learned from all of our mistakes. All of our adversity has made us stronger, made us tougher. All season you could see it. We started from the jump. We made all the sacrifices. We played both ends of the ball at a high level. We didn't skip any steps. And this was the result.

But all of those experiences, like, led to here. All of moments where we came up short, we felt like we let the city down, let ourselves down, all of that compiled is how we get to this moment.

And it makes it feel even that much better that we had to go through all the journey, the heartbreak, the embarrassment, the loss, to get to the mountaintop.

It's great. And shout out to all the supporters and the city of Boston.

Q. After you were named [Eastern Conference Finals] MVP at Indiana, you said you were surprised. How did you feel this time? Were you even -- I don't know if

there's a word beyond "surprised," but how did you feel?

JAYLEN BROWN: I can't even put into words the emotions. It's just I'm blessed and I'm grateful. This was a full team effort. We had a great team. My teammates were great. They allowed me to lead us on both ends of ball, and we just came out and performed on our home floor. It's just amazing.

You know, it could have gone to anybody. It could have gone to Jayson. Jayson, like I can't talk enough about his selflessness. You know, I can't talk enough about his attitude. It's just how he approached not just this series or the Finals but just the playoffs in general. And we did it together as a team, and that was the most important thing.

Q. You were very intentional now and earlier making sure that you acknowledged JT. Why is that important to you? And also you reflected a lot during the playoffs about your journey and, you know, what you heard from people. What does this mean to you in that context as well?

JAYLEN BROWN: Just our growth together. We've been through a lot. We've been playing together for seven years now. We've been through a lot, the losses, the expectations. The media have said all different types of things: We can't play together, we are never going to win.

We heard it all. But we just blocked it out, and we just kept going. I trusted him. He trusted me. And we did it together.

To get to this point and share that experience with JT is just awesome, you know what I mean? It's amazing, and it feels great.

Q. How does it feel to silence doubters after last year against the Miami Heat the way you guys lost? There was a lot of doubt about the team, maybe even about your game; you didn't make an All-NBA Team this year. And now you win the Eastern Conference Finals MVP, you're an NBA Champion, and you're MVP of the Finals. Do you feel at all vindicated?



JAYLEN BROWN: If you would have asked me that maybe a year ago, I would probably say yeah. But just at the point I got to right now, it feels great. But any of the personal awards, it is what it is.

Yeah, the doubters, they may be quiet now, but they will be back. They will be back next year with something to say. I'll embrace that moment the same and get after it yet again.

Q. From the night you were drafted and a lot of Celtics fans had not heard of you, coming out of Cal, there was kind of this unknown.

JAYLEN BROWN: Golden Bears.

Q. From that journey to being doubted, and all of what they said coming out of college, and the transformation of your game, and then signing the contract this summer, can you encapsulate winning the Eastern Conference and Finals MVP and being on top of the world?

JAYLEN BROWN: I can't. I can't. I absolutely can't, man. Just the story and the journey is awesome. You know, just being drafted here in Boston, like a lot of the people probably didn't watch me play in the Pac-12 at Cal. You know, it led to a lot of people feeling a way about that.

And, you know, I just came in and kept my head down and told myself, I'm going to just keep working. And, you know, to be here in this moment now, through all the years, through all the doubt, through all of the ups and downs, through all of the verdicts, through all of the everything, it just makes the story that much sweeter.

But I can't even put it into words. Like, it just feels great.

Q. You know how long it's felt for you to go through eight years for this moment. Double it and add one, and that's what Al Horford had to go through to get to this moment. How do you feel for him as a teammate, and how can you sum up what his role was on your guys' journey?

JAYLEN BROWN: Yeah, nobody deserved it more than Al. He's been a great not just leader on the court but off the court as well. Just a mentor. Somebody I know I can talk to about life and is going to give me great advice about family, about finances, about just life, adversity, whatever the case is. Just Al has just been that guy for me and for us.

Like just his performance all season long, like Al is 37, 38 years old, and we leaned on him so much. Probably too

much for his age and where he's at. He just delivered. So consistent, so disciplined with his body. Never complains, you know what I mean. The only thing he does is add to winning.

For him, great teammate. It's been an honor to be by his side. And Al Horford is a real-life legend and hero. It's been great to be his teammate.

Q. I was just wondering if you felt that the collection of the group that you have is built for sustained success going forward, or is that just too hard to predict?

JAYLEN BROWN: I think we have an opportunity. I think we definitely have a window. We take it one day at a time. We definitely have to make sure we stay healthy. But, you know, we'll enjoy the summer, enjoy the moment, and then we get right back to it next year.

Q. All season you've been pretty adamant on job's not done, we're going to keep going, next game, last game didn't matter. The job is done. There's nothing left to do. I guess other guys have said it has not sunk in yet, but how does that feel knowing there is nothing else to prepare for and you did it?

JAYLEN BROWN: I mean, it still kind of feels unreal. It feels like there's another game or something tomorrow. But, you know, I can't tell you enough about our group and our coaching staff. They were great all season long. They prepared us for these moments.

We had an excellent game plan in the Finals, and then all of the guys contributed. Like, for example, like Payton Pritchard, like unreal, right. Unreal. Like just comes in the game and drains one from halfcourt. That dude, he's a f---ing legend, man. Shout out to Payton Pritchard.

Q. Yesterday you had your Grandma on your shirt, and you had a big hug with Mom onstage, your brother is here. What does it mean to do all this with family by your side?

JAYLEN BROWN: It means a lot. I wish my grandmother was here with me to see this moment. But I woke up from my pregame nap, and I had a dream, and my grandma was in the dream, and she gave me a hug this afternoon. I just knew everything was going to be all right.

But I wish she could be here. But she was so important and pivotal in my life. And it's just awesome. I know she would be proud of me.

Grandma, I know she was watching, and I love you so much.

Q. How do you spell her name?

JAYLEN BROWN: Dianne Varnado.

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