

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Indiana Pacers

T.J. McConnell

Practice Day



Q. How much does the home court help out tomorrow night?

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, I mean, I think anytime in the Playoffs anytime you can play in front of your home crowd, it's huge. But especially when your back is up against the wall in an elimination game. This crowd can really will us to wins, and they have done so. We need their very best tomorrow.

Q. Does Tyrese and his injury kind of inspire you if he's not going to play 100% healthy, how does it inspire you to play harder?

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, we all support him no matter what. There for him. Just, like I said, the support is there. Play extra hard for him, as well.

Q. How are you able to come in and change the game the way you do?

T.J. McCONNELL: I don't know. I mean, for me, I just try to come in and do my job. That's basically what it looks like. Just come in and insert energy where it's needed, shoot when I'm open, make life difficult on defense for the other team, give my teammates the ball. That's what I've tried to do my whole career.

Q. On whether the Pacers draw inspiration from following and rooting for the Indiana Fever.

T.J. McCONNELL: We see all them come to our games. We appreciate it. I think the support back and forth between both teams is awesome. We certainly support them to the fullest. We love going to their games and showing support like they do for us.

Every time they're at games, we certainly appreciate it. We try to support them and go to games as much as we can.

Q. How crucial is the performance of your bench in this series?

T.J. McCONNELL: We just kind of got to inject energy like we always do. Our starters have willed us here. We just kind of got to go in there and, like I said, inject energy where it's needed and do our jobs.

Q. Your job description could change tomorrow night. Possibility you could start. Have you talked to Rick about that or are you just prepared for anything?

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, I haven't talked to him. Honestly, just think as a bench player, role player, just be prepared for anything.

Q. Do you embrace this challenge, one game or it's over?

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, I mean, it's give everything you have. That's what all of us are going to do. We're not going to leave anything to chance or any regret. We're going to give everything we have. We have no other choice.

Q. Coach said you may have been dealing with some fatigue in Game 5. What do you remember about that from the game?

T.J. McCONNELL: Honestly, I don't even remember. I trust Rick wholeheartedly with his substitutions. Let's make one thing perfectly career: Rick is a Hall-of-Fame coach. He knows what he's doing. We all have the utmost faith in his rotations, his X's and O's, we all love him. That's the bottom line.

Q. Rick talked last year about a conversation he had with you early in the season about what your role would be. He said that was a very difficult conversation to have. How did you respond to that?

T.J. McCONNELL: By putting my head down and going to work. I think coaches in this league have a tough job. Can't please everybody. So sometimes you're the odd man out. You can put your head down and sulk about it and make excuses, or you can put your head down and go to work. I chose the latter.



