

Emirates NBA Cup

Saturday, December 14, 2024

Milwaukee Bucks

Giannis Antetokounmpo

Semifinal Postgame



Milwaukee Bucks - 110, Atlanta Hawks - 102

Q. Just that stretch you had there at the end, the block, the diving on the floor, the turnaround jumper, your teammates just kind of said how those winning plays kind of helped spark the willingness to win. How much did you want to see that or what were you feeling in those last moments that you wanted to put this one away?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: I just tried to compete. They came back with like seven minutes to go, eight minutes to go, I don't remember, was trying to get my rhythm going.

I feel like sometimes to get your rhythm going, you got to start defensively. Yeah, I wasn't necessarily thinking I'm going to dive on the floor, but at the end of the day I know that I'm trying to win the game and I'll do whatever it takes to win a game.

I'm happy that I did, because I feel like it translated to the whole team. You got to do whatever is necessary to close this one out. I'm just proud of my teammates. The way we started the game, we kind of set the tone that we were here to compete.

Down the stretch I felt like we could be definitely better in executing, but, yeah, we won the game. We have another one in few days, got to be stay focused, stay humble and try to get the job done.

Q. Your teammates mentioned that you have just been using your voice more lately. I'm curious what has been your approach; we saw you in pregame, you were giving the team a little bit of a speech. How have you tried to use your voice as an asset this year?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: I've been using my voice throughout my a career. Obviously I played with very experienced players. Growing up when I was younger, 23, 24, 25, all those years, you know, from George Hill, Jrue Holiday, Kyle Korver, Wesley Matthews, Robin Lopez, like they were very, very experienced vets.

I believe that as I got more comfortable I become more vocal. Now myself, I view myself as a vet. I view myself like a guy that can help the team, kind of spark something within the team. I just try to use my voice more.

I feel like the more I use my voice, the more I'm engaged within the game, and guys not only listen to my voice, but follow my example. I'm trying to go out there and lead by example, which that's what I love to do, but also I know that my voice carries a lot of weight and is very important within the team, so I try to talk as much as I can without allowing my voice to go too much, because I don't like that too much.

Q. You guys have, I think, three chances at an inbound late. One Khris called the timeout, one he turns it over and then the third time you guys get it in and you hit the shot. Can you take me through what happened and what went wrong on those first couple ones and just Dame being able to hit a big shot late in the game?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: We just got to be able to get to our spots better, give Khris a better outlet, more clean. Obviously in that position you don't make a pass. Once you're able to get it in and it's clean, you don't turn the ball over.

I feel like we didn't do that good of a job of hitting our spots. He was smart enough to take the timeout. We went back to the bench, wrote down the play, we were able to get the ball in, gave it to Dame and Dame did his thing. He loves to have the ball down the stretch, get to his spot, and put games away.

Q. Offensively you had the turnaround jumper and then you have that assist to Brook. They were throwing some different defenses at you, different coverages, stuff like that. How did you kind of find your way through that?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: That's one of the teams that is very disciplined. They're going to show the wall for 48 minutes. You just got to stay present and be patient. That's what I felt like we did. Be patient and it's going to



come. Sometimes you can break that with a pass, sometimes you can break it by being aggressive.

But I was able to make some reads. I think Andre made a shot in the corner, Brook was able to go in the dots and had like a layup. Before that there was a lob to Brook.

Then I was able to kind of spread the wealth a little bit more. Then I got to my spot. At the end of the day, as a player, as a leader you got to stay patient. Sometimes it's going to come, sometimes it's not going to come, and happy this game it came.

Q. I know you and your teammates like to do one game at a time. You know when there's a big game, but it's one of 82. This next one, it doesn't count in the standings, the stats don't count; it's literally to win a championship. Can it be a measuring stick of sorts, regardless if its OKC or Houston, to kind of show you where you are with one of the better teams in the West, getting through the Cup in that way? Can you view it that way because it is kind of a standalone game?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Yeah. I'll be very honest with you. I've watched OKC, I watched Houston play, and I don't know exactly where they are in the standings, but that doesn't matter. We got to get the job done.

I think the conversation within the team is that nothing matters, only win. Stats don't matter; it doesn't add a win or a loss to our record. Nothing really matters. How many shots, if you go 0-15, if you go 15-15, it doesn't matter. The only thing that matters right here is to get a win, and that's the message within our team right now and everybody got to stay locked in. Everybody got to stay locked in; the job's not done.

Q. Can you take us through the blocked shot on the lob. I know Brook was there with you, but you obviously were pretty emotional after you hit the floor afterward too. Just how big was that moment in the grand scheme of things?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: It's just winning plays. Just got to keep on doing things to help your team win. Sometimes it's going to be a block, sometimes it's going to be a shot, sometimes it's going to be a pass. It doesn't matter what it is. What matters is just being able to be selfless, sacrifice your body, your own ambitions, goals, to help your team win.

You can see on that play both me and Brook went up and tried to get that block. We both fell down, and that's winning plays. That's winning plays. We got to see that clip over and over again and show it within the team that

this is what it takes to win games.

It doesn't matter if it's a NBA Cup game, doesn't matter if it's a regular season game, doesn't matter if it's a NBA Finals game. To win games, put yourself in a position to be successful, you got to have plays like that. So that's pretty much it.

Q. You talk about defense, you talk about better protection on defensive rebound and rim protection yesterday and how you guys aligned mentally and physically and do better job today and what you guys looking forward to carry this to the next game?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Yeah, you know, I feel like the way we set the tone, the winning plays that we have hopefully can carry over to the next game, got to be a little bit sharper executing, play with more confidence, play with more joy. You can't take these moments for granted. We got to put ourselves in a position to win. I think it's going to carry over.

Q. I think you visited the Euroleague Final Four this year. How close is that to the tension that you saw here that you saw there, and is there a chance that it's going to be someday like there?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Yeah, that was my first Final Four in Berlin this year. Obviously, the atmosphere is a little bit different, with the crowd, with the Beko crowd, Fenerbahce crowd, Panathinaikos crowd, it's kind of different. You know, I wish we had that atmosphere in the NBA, but we don't. But the intensity within the game, I think it's pretty much the same. Everybody understands that it's one game. You have to play well; if you don't, you get knocked out.

So the intensity within the game from the teams, you see high level of basketball, teams are competing, as I said the intensity is high, so in that aspect, it's pretty much the same. The only thing that's different I believe is the atmosphere, which I wish that the NBA could have that type of atmosphere here.

Q. Early on in the game Dame talked about how when the Hawks are playing fast you guys matched that intensity to play fast and kind of pick up the tempo, but in the second half, especially in the fourth quarter, you guys settled down, and you and him in particular really settled into that two-man game and that pick-and-roll game. How would you describe the evolution you two have gone through this season in that pick-and-roll and that two-man game?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: We're feeling more



comfortable, our chemistry is the best it's ever been, and at the end of the day it takes time. I feel like a lot of people had such high expectation from us from day one to be the best duo to ever play this game, but it takes time. Now it's our second year playing together, we are more comfortable playing with one another, we know one another's spots better, and as you see, our chemistry has been getting way, way better. Down the stretch, you know, something that we like to do, we feel very, very comfortable that we can both get to our spots, and we've been more effective when we play that two-man game this year. There's always areas that we can improve, which we will improve, but I'm so happy that we're feeling way, way more comfortable to play that two-man game down the stretch, and we know our spots better.

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