

Emirates NBA Cup

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Oklahoma City Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Jalen Williams

Championship Postgame



Milwaukee Bucks 97, Oklahoma City Thunder 81

Q. Shai, you guys didn't have a typical shooting night at all. Anything else that you saw go into that that's more on the controllable side or was it just kind of not your night?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, we didn't shoot it well tonight. It's not really an excuse. There was definitely controllables tonight we could have taken care of and we didn't do so, and that's why the score looked the way it does. We've shot bad and won games before, so it's not an excuse.

Q. Shai, Mark was just in here saying that he felt he could have done a better job of freeing you up and that you were off the ball so often, so early because of Andre Jackson. What made it so tough trying to get free from Andre?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I felt like I got enough touches. Yeah, I shot 24 shots. I've shot less in wins, on other nights. The ball didn't go in as much as I wanted it to tonight, but I felt like I got enough touches, to answer your question.

Q. Dub, eight points in the paint in the second half. What did you feel like was the issue or cause for that?

JALEN WILLIAMS: As a team?

Q. Yeah.

JALEN WILLIAMS: I mean, they're big, so that's their advantage. Yeah, I don't think we generated enough force and weren't as sharp in the half court, getting free looks to get in the paint. But at the same time, some of it is trying to get in there to look for sprays and have them rotate. That's some of it. But yeah, probably not enough force getting to the rim.

Q. You guys had 14 points in the third quarter. What

were the problems that you guys saw offensively?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I think sometimes -- I think for the most part, we got good looks. Like you said, when you're playing a good team, you've got to continually generate good looks and also make shots, and I feel like that was one of those nights. I think defensively we were pretty good. How many points did they have, 97? So defensively I thought we were pretty good. Sometimes it just doesn't go in, and you have to have enough will to kind of keep doing the right thing and moving the ball, and the chips lay where they lay. But it's just one of those things, just didn't shoot well. Probably could have got some better shots, myself included. That's kind of it.

Q. Giannis presents a lot of problems with his size and physicality. How did you feel you guys did on him tonight?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Not great. Could have been better.

JALEN WILLIAMS: Found him a little too much.

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: But like you say, he presents his challenges. We'll watch film, get better, see if we can do a better job of containing him. He also made a lot of plays tonight. It felt like it. Yeah, he had 10 assists. He was kind of scoring and making plays, so we'll watch film and try to figure out how to do a better job containing him for sure.

Q. The Playoffs in some similar ways to this could be kind of a time warp where you're in one city for a long time and there's a lot of pomp and circumstance. What do you think this experience overall will do for you guys as a group? Still I think the second youngest team in the NBA as you move towards the rest of the season.

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's always good to have -- it's rare to have a feel like this where it feels like the playoffs, and we'll kind of take it and learn from it. Yeah, so it's a good opportunity for every team that's in the Cup to -- especially us being as young as we are to simulate being in a different city for however long and kind of having a

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playoff feel to it. It's definitely good practice, and now we have a lot more to learn from and still have I think 70 percent of the season left, so we have a lot of areas that we can improve, and this is a good kind of insight before we actually now get into the thick of it.

Q. Shai, what impact do you think Andre Jackson's defense had on you?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: He did a good job tonight. I don't think he was the reason for my type of night. The way I felt tonight, I still got to my shot, my spot, I just didn't make anything. Things like that happen. Nights like that happen.

But yeah, he played hard, was aggressive. Nothing I haven't seen before. But yeah, I feel like it was me missing more so.

Q. Giannis is obviously a two-time MVP. He's done this before. He seems to have gotten better. He's shooting more efficiently, scoring at a higher clip. What have you seen about how he's been able to take his game to another level?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it's funny, we don't play them a whole lot being in the West, but yeah, from the outside looking in, it seems like he works hard. Like you said, he's been playing at a high level for a very long time. You don't get that without hard work. Yeah, it seems like he puts his head down and he works hard.

Q. For either of you guys, I think the general public since the beginning of the idea of the Cup has questioned whether players are actually invested and care about the Cup and just the idea of it. Now that you've come so close and actually lost, how do you actually feel?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Disappointed. I mean, obviously it's a lot of money we're playing for. You saw them celebrating; they're happy. I think when there's money on the line, everybody is going to play hard. But yeah, disappointed.

I think you also have to know in a sense this doesn't really count for our record or stats don't really matter. But there is a competitive advantage, if I'm going to go play a game, I'm going to play hard. I'm not changing how I play just because of the circumstances. But yeah, I want to win, at the end of the day, and I think I speak for the whole team, and obviously they wanted to win. They had a fun time celebrating and they were playing hard. There hasn't been a team that we played during the whole Cup thing that didn't play hard, so I think it's a good thing.