

Emirates NBA Cup

Friday, December 12, 2025

Orlando Magic

Paolo Banchero

Semifinal Practice Day



Q. How great of an opportunity is this to show the progress your team has made from opening night to now on this national stage?

PAOLO BANCHERO: It's a tremendous opportunity to play on this stage. You can just tell by all the stuff going on. It's a big stage, and as a team we want to take advantage of the opportunity and just go out there and do our best to get the win.

It's a fun environment. Everybody is excited to be here. Definitely looking forward to it.

Q. What was the focus in practice today? What do you guys think you got out of it?

PAOLO BANCHERO: It's a team that we've played three times already. They are familiar with us. We're familiar with them. So just some minor cleanup stuff, what we want to do heading into it the game, some details on that.

But just getting up and down. Getting to sweat. Getting shots up in the arena because it's a little different and stuff like that.

But just overall a lot of excitement and guys ready to go.

Q. All four of you guys, all four of the teams as of right now are playing for, roughly, like 480 grand still left to win. What does it mean to you, what does it mean to your teammates, and I guess what is something cool that you like about the Cup that isn't money?

PAOLO BANCHERO: That's a good question. I would say the money, I think obviously everyone on the team, we got a lot of young guys, got a lot of guys that could really use the money, including myself and everybody.

So when you are playing for something extra like that, you want to go after it.

And then I think as far as besides the money, I think it's just the atmosphere that is created when it's a Cup game, whether it's at home or on the road. I know just with the

courts and everything, kind of creates a different environment for you. I wouldn't say it's a playoff environment, but it's definitely not a normal regular season game environment.

Stuff is a little elevated. Teams play a little harder. Point differential matters. You have to play the whole 48 and stuff like that. Creates a lot more excitement in the league early in the season that we can play for and get up for.

As far as our team, I think we've been close the last two years in advancing to Vegas. So for us to finally get here and continue our success in the Cup, it was a big confidence boost.

Q. You've had playoff experience the last two seasons with the playoff series. How does being here in this moment, how much confidence have you gained from that playoff experience to level up and put yourself in this position in the standings and as well as where you are here in the Cup?

PAOLO BANCHERO: Yeah, playoff experience is valuable. I think the deeper you go, the higher the stakes are and the more pressure builds and the more media that is around and stuff like that.

This is obviously a lot of that, so I think it does prepare you for what's to come, if you are advancing in the playoffs and make it far.

So I think it's just a good thing for our team to be a part of and get a chance to experience, come out here and play.

Q. You said you're familiar with them; they are familiar with you. Just what sticks out from those first three games with them?

PAOLO BANCHERO: Yeah, I think what sticks out is that every matchup, different guys on different teams have been in and out, and so it's kind of every game has been a different look in terms of who is out there for each team. And so now, we're here. Obviously we don't have Franz. So it's just another opportunity to kind of match up with them and compete.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

They are a good team. We have won twice. They have won once. They are at the top of the East. So we're looking forward to kind of seeing them all year and, yeah, just got to give them their respect as a team.

Q. You guys are built to be a contender in the East. Is winning here a way to validate that?

PAOLO BANCHERO: You said is winning here?

Q. Yeah.

PAOLO BANCHERO: I think so. This obviously isn't a guaranteed ticket to winning in the East. If you win, you get money, you get confidence as a team. It's a big stage.

But it's also December. Those games are played in May and June. It does give you confidence as far as knowing that you can come into something like this and come out on top. But at the end of the day, you know it's a long season, and you have to be playing your best basketball in May and June. I think just never losing sight of that as a team is important.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports