

Emirates NBA Cup

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Orlando Magic

Desmond Bane

Semifinal Postgame



New York Knicks, 132, Orlando Magic 120

Q. What made them so tough to slow down today?

DESMOND BANE: I just think they were too comfortable. We had a stretch there in the third quarter where I felt like we picked up our defensive intensity and were able to get into the ball and make it uncomfortable for them. But most of the night, just about everybody on the team was getting to the spots that they wanted to get to with little resistance from us.

Q. Coach credited some of the early fouls for the Knicks kind of finding some rhythm and you guys having to back off a little bit. How do you combat that, or how do you kind of answer that when maybe you have to be a little wary about the foul calls or what the whistle is going to be to get you in trouble?

DESMOND BANE: I've been fouling a lot early in games. I need to be better about that, for sure, because the aggression is what we live upon. So I think that's definitely part of it. But fouls or no fouls, we've got a lot of bodies that know how we play and what makes us successful. We just didn't do that for long enough stretches.

Q. What seemed to be working then or what seemed to click in that third quarter, and why was it a struggle to sustain that after that run?

DESMOND BANE: It was just our defensive pressure. Give them credit, they've got a lot of good players that can do a lot of good things. But in a game like that, you've got to dictate more. I feel like we were on our heels on the defensive end more times than not.

Q. Jalen did eventually have to exit the game, but what can you say about his toughness and the way he fought through whatever he was battling?

DESMOND BANE: We know who he is and what he's about. He wants to win more than anything. He laid it all on the line for us.

Q. What do you think this group can take away from a night like tonight in this setting on this stage?

DESMOND BANE: It was huge. We need these moments. We need these games where we're playing in meaningful games and have to go through some adversity. I think it will help prepare us for our next challenges.

Q. Paolo's been back for a little bit more than a week. It obviously takes maybe some time to get back, especially when you kind of have a core injury like he did. What can you guys do to make it easier for him and help reintegrate him back into the group at the level that you guys need him at?

DESMOND BANE: I think he's definitely trending in the right direction. I like the way that he came back, balancing being aggressive and making plays for his teammates. I thought he's been doing a whole lot of that and really hustling on the defensive end, rebounding for us.

Definitely opportunities for us to get creative to allow him to carry us and be himself.

Q. Did coming out here to Vegas and being around your teammates even more develop more chemistry, more camaraderie with your group?

DESMOND BANE: Yeah, I think we got a pretty close group as it is, and I think that everybody's been pretty locked in. We haven't really done a whole lot of team bonding stuff. We did a little something yesterday, but mostly just been getting our rest and getting prepared for the game.

Wins or losses, we'll make sure that we stick together and come together.

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