

Emirates NBA Cup

Saturday, December 13, 2025

New York Knicks

Josh Hart

Jalen Brunson

Semifinal Postgame

New York Knicks 132, Orlando Magic 120

Q. For either one of you, just the way they play so physical, it seemed like you guys came out today and tried to match it, exceed it, just was that part of it, to just not back down from that?

JALEN BRUNSON: Well, I feel like in the first quarter, the first couple of minutes, they were beating us up pretty physically. And so Coach Brown basically told us to wake up and we had to match it, exceed it and do what we have to do.

But I think it was good on our part how we responded to that but they definitely brought the physicality to the game.

Q. Jalen, one thing that separates you as a scorer is your footwork. How early in your basketball learning, development process, did you become obsessed with footwork?

JALEN BRUNSON: I don't know. It's been a long time. I've always played older than my age when I was younger. I had to be deceptive. I had to be crafty. Footwork lasts a long time. So since maybe like fifth or sixth grade, really. That was the start of it.

Q. Yesterday we heard it in your voice, have you been battling some sort of illness or anything?

JALEN BRUNSON: Oh, no.

Q. Feeling any effects of anything?

JALEN BRUNSON: No.

Q. Didn't look like it.

JALEN BRUNSON: Thank you.

Q. Josh, I know the last week or so, you guys have been all over the place but you guys have talked about



how important the Cup is. What was the feeling like winning this game? Was it a little more juice to it than maybe you guys even expected when the final buzzer hit?

JOSH HART: I mean, I don't think so. I mean, obviously whenever you have the ability to win a Cup or a title or something like that, you know, that's the goal. But you know, this is just another game, and now we've got to focus on the winner of this game.

I don't think there was any extra juice to it.

Q. What have you guys made of KAT's defense? Mike had a lot of praise for him on that end of the floor. What have you seen out of him defensively?

JOSH HART: I think he's taken the challenge personal. I think he's protecting the rim at a great rate. I think the last four or five games, he's really taken that challenge on. He's been really keying our defense. You know, not fouling, challenging at the rim.

So he's been great. He was our Defensive Player of the Game this game for the first time this season, and hopefully he can do it again.

Q. It was 92-92 late in the third quarter. You guys had a 10-0 run. You had two little shots in the lane, hit a pass in transition and step-back three. Was that a point in the game you felt you needed to take over? I know the clip of the three went viral. Any thoughts on that play, in particular?

JALEN BRUNSON: I wasn't thinking that I needed to take over. I just knew that they were on a run and we needed to step up ourselves. And so those are the plays, and it just happened to be me at that point, and I was aggressive and we converted.

For that three, it was just he tripped on my foot and I made the shot. Simple as that.

Q. We've talked about a lot about the offense under Mike developing. When we see today what you do, three steals; OG, three steals; Mitch, four blocks, have

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you guys developed a feel for this system or what you were doing defensively that is different than Game 1, Game 2?

JOSH HART: Yeah, I think so. I think our physicality is extremely better. You know, when you're able to be physical on the perimeter, you're able to throw teams off of what they do, and now your defense is more impactful. You can be in passing lanes and do those kind of things. Protect shots at the rim. I think our physicality was really, you know, driving that, and that's something that we have to do.

I think we also have to figure out time for -- we can be physical and times to show our hands. I was [inaudible] of that today with six fouls. I like where our physicality is and our attention to detail.

Q. Mike Brown earlier was stumping pretty hard about you for MVP, saying that you don't get the recognition; that your name doesn't come up when the MVP discussions are happening. Do you pay attention to that stuff, and what does it mean to have a coach come out unprompted and say those things about you so very early in your own relationship with him?

JALEN BRUNSON: To answer your first questions, no, I don't read into that stuff.

The second question, just shows the trust and the faith that he has in me, and I'm very thankful of our relationship over these past couple months. It's only going to continue to get better. Our communication has been great.

Yeah, it's a growing experience, a learning experience but I'm really thankful for our relationship.

Q. To that end, you've never been a guy that outwardly has seemed like recognition is something you seek. Just when you play well, you get it, and you seem to be good at that. Not everybody is that way. What is it, do you think, about you that allows you to play and not focus on outside opinions or anything of that nature?

JALEN BRUNSON: Sandra and Rick Brunson, first and foremost, how they raised me. My family, my wife, my inner circle, everybody that I have been involved with. My inner circle keeps me humble, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

Q. Josh, I wanted to ask this you this because I think you would factor honestly. When you factor in his height and not the most athletic --

JALEN BRUNSON: Jesus.

Q. You've said it. You've said it.

JALEN BRUNSON: You didn't have to say it, though.

Q. How many guys in the NBA think score the basketball better than he does?

JOSH HART: Probably not many. You know, he's barely six-foot guard.

JALEN BRUNSON: This is your fault.

JOSH HART: He's not physically impressive, not athletic,

JALEN BRUNSON: Hey.

JOSH HART: But he's able to manipulate the defense. Obviously big head; so he has a big brain. He's able to figure out these angles and find himself in positions to be successful.

You know, inch for inch, I think is probably the best -- best one [smiling].

Q. What have you seen from Yabusele? And as a leader, how do you keep guys like him engaged, even if he doesn't have much playing time?

JALEN BRUNSON: Yeah, he's been great since he's been here. He's been first and foremost, he comes and works hard every single day, does what he has to do and he stays ready. It's a tough position to be in.

But we're his teammates and we have his back and when he's in there, he makes an impact. We're very thankful to have him. I'm also very thankful of the teammate he is. He couldn't be -- he doesn't have to have the character he has with everything going on, but he has it. And he's a great teammate, great individual, and we're very thankful to have him.

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