

Emirates NBA Cup

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Oklahoma Thunder

Mark Daigneault

Semifinal Postgame



San Antonio Spurs 111, Oklahoma City Thunder 109

Q. It seemed like there were some times in the game where offense was a little bit more stagnant or iso. What did you notice during those stretches and did you feel that way, first of all?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, it wasn't our sharpest night. I thought, certainly, our attacks weren't as sharp as we've been. That did get it to be stagnant. They are a good team. Credit them. They played great. It was a competitive game.

But there's a lot of controllable stuff that we can learn from that game that wasn't where we'd like to be.

Q. What kind of impact did Wemby have on this game?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Huge, obviously. He's got great two-way impact. He's obviously a rim deterrent. He's a problem on the glass, and certainly was early, and then caught his rhythm offensively and made some really tough shots down the stretch. So credit to him and them.

I thought for stretches of the game, they played really well without him, too. I didn't think it was isolated to him. I thought that was a great team win for them. They won as a team. A lot of their guys played well, but he certainly had an impact on the game.

Q. In the rare occasions you had to play clutch games, you've been dominant. The numbers were pretty ridiculous. Why do you think you guys weren't able to get flowing, especially offensively down the stretch?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I'd have to watch it. I mean, sometimes it comes down to make-or-miss plays. I thought we made some good passes out of the double teams and stuff like that. So I thought our offensive attacks were okay.

We didn't get a ton of stops down the other end, and usually that's a hallmark of our defense in the game flow

and down the stretch. When you play close games, you're not going to win them all.

I thought we put ourselves in a tough position there playing from behind down the stretch with how we played in the game flow. I thought that's what decided the game.

Q. Five turnovers for Shai, a little uncharacteristic for him. What did they do to disrupt his rhythm a little bit?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, I mean, credit them. Like I said, they played a really good game and they played hard and competed.

I thought fundamentally, there were certainly some things that usually we do pretty well that puts us at advantages and makes the reads easier and gives us more space, and when we don't do those things, it makes everything harder. It makes decisions harder, makes the shots more contested and closes space on the floor.

So there's a lot we can work with from that game from a process standpoint, and usually when our process is pretty good on those things,, we're making pretty solid plays and rhythm shots.

Q. Caruso really came alive in the fourth quarter, hustle plays on both end of the floor. What did you see out of him, and how much does a sequence like that really speak to him as a competitor?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: We had some positive stuff tonight. He certainly was one. He was in the fight. I thought Cason gave us really good minutes. I thought Mitchell gave us really good minutes. Those guys stepped into big moments of the game and delivered some really good plays.

So it wasn't all negative. Certainly a lot we can learn from and some good stuff in the game, as well.

Q. Seemed like you guys had a pretty good start. What do you feel like flipped the game for them?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: We got off to a decent start, but they won the last three quarters. They outplayed us

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tonight. This was a close game, but they outplayed us and deserved to win.

I'm not sure exactly what happened in terms of what flipped it or whatever you said. But out of the 48 minutes, I thought they outplayed us for the majority of that. It's hard to win a game, or at least control a game, when that's the case.

Q. In a game like this where neither team has their home crowd, you guys can't feed off the crowd, you can't feed off the negativity of the crowd, what makes it tough to create your own energy in a game like this?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I honestly didn't think that was a problem for either team tonight. I thought it was a highly competitive game. The environment or the whatever didn't impact the competition. I thought both teams competed really hard and really wanted to win, us included. We competed hard and we wanted to win.

I thought our execution and our precision, which is usually pretty good, wasn't as strong tonight, and I thought that was what had more to do with it.

Q. Do you think there should have been a whistle on Caruso's put-back attempt at the end?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I don't know, maybe. But when we play like that, I just am not going to come up in here and rail about the officiating. No one wants to hear that, to be honest with you.

Q. This was your first game this year with last year's starters. I guess I wouldn't maybe expect there to be chemistry issues, but can you see a little rust with that group playing together for the first time this year?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: No. I thought we got off to a good start. So that would have been the time it would have been rusty. We've just been so good about integrating people back in.

There's controllable things that if we play to them, we should be able to move people in and out of the lineup and bring guys back from injuries and introduce different guys to the rotation without skipping a beat.

I thought tonight, like I said, it was more of a fundamental game that just wasn't our sharpest, an execution game. But I wouldn't put it on -- I think that was more correlation than causation.

Q. You mentioned that there's a lot that you can work with from this game, a lot of takeaways, the fact that

you're going to see this team now two more times over the next five games, how much are you looking forward to getting back after it against them?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I think it's a good game for to us learn from in general. It's an 82-game season. We want to be a team that gets better through all of our experiences. You're not going to be perfect every game.

When you have some slippage or you have a game where you're not on the ball in certain areas, you have to be a team that looks in the mirror on that and addresses it quickly and gets those things tightened back up. This team has always done an unbelievable job on that.

We don't necessarily get spooked by a game that's not our fastball. But we do have to look at it, learn from it and apply it forward, not just against them, but against the Clippers when we play them next.

Q. So players right now are rushing back to the locker room, yelling, essentially, the monetary value of what they have won. What do you think that created in the urgency and the drive for this exact game? As you mentioned, it's wanting it more.

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, I mean, the monetary thing, guys like talking about it. But we have got a team that, like I said, you could have no one in the gym in practice and put a scoreboard on and throw the ball up in the air, and our guys seem to compete just as hard in that setting as if you put the lights on or popcorn popping or money on the line. They competed at a pretty high level every night regardless of that, including tonight.

Like I said, I didn't think our compete level was an issue tonight. I thought our execution and our fundamentals had more to do with the game.

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