

Emirates NBA Cup

Saturday, December 13, 2025

San Antonio Spurs

Victor Wembanyama

Semifinal Postgame



San Antonio Spurs - 111, Oklahoma City Thunder - 109

Q. Your thoughts on coming off the bench and not playing in the first quarter and the strategy that Mitch employed spreading your minutes out where you had more in the fourth.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: So my thoughts before the game were that in this kind of game you have to make things happen, no matter the conditions, and this is just a slight detail. I can do just all right with three quarters, so I didn't even have to ask myself this question. Looking back, I think it was a good formula. It was a good system to do it like this. I just tried to make the most out of it.

Q. Mitch mentioned in one way of looking at it was this was the worst-case scenario for you coming back because you're jumping into such an intense situation, but it turned out that you looked like you were enjoying that. Are you glad that you were able to do this in this situation?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Of course. I am. I feel very lucky because it's just this kind of situations where I know I can trust my inner self to get in that zone to just make the right things happen. So it's really not a worry on my side.

Q. Now that you guys are whole again, what are your thoughts about sort of what you can be here in the future in the coming games?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I think it's our first time playing everybody. My thoughts are just that we're already a solid team, already more than 20 games ago. It's just experience. We're just figuring it out. The difference with us and this team who is, I don't know, what are they 24-2? It's that we haven't had this many reps, recognizing what it takes and enjoying what it takes to win. And this is our next step. Because this OKC team, they're not just first in the league, they're way ahead of everybody. Because when you watch them, no matter who, whether it's the 12th man or the starting five, whether they're playing against the 15th seed or in any kind of game, they're playing the same way. They're enjoying the little things that make them win,

and this is the next step we have to pass.

Q. It seemed like the second quarter for you was very intentional in terms of defensively, just paying attention to trying to eliminate everything that Oklahoma was trying to do. Obviously, you are a generational defensive player, but why was that quarter for you so important?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Second quarter?

Q. Yes. Even without scoring the basketball --

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Because it's my first quarter in I don't know how many weeks. So if I hadn't been intentional, I would have been really asking myself questions. So I had to do that.

Q. Next year this game would have been played in Oklahoma City with the change in the format, the semifinals aren't going to be at a neutral site any more. Curious what your thoughts are like if this game had been in Oklahoma City and what that would have been like compared to this?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: In the same conditions it would have been just, I mean, just the same. It was so much going into that game, especially for me being my first game in a while. So it's hard to answer, but I guess the crowd would have been on the opposite side, because it felt like they were rooting for us today. So that's just one little factor.

Q. After missing so much time, to be out there in the fourth quarter like you were, to be able to close the game out the way you were, obviously against a guy in Chet, you guys have played against each other a lot, and against a team you guys said you were chasing, how much fun was it to be back in the mix again after having to wait the last few weeks to play?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Oh, you can't imagine. It's just incredible. I keep asking these guys for the last 12 games, just get better, do some beautiful things. And I just wanted to be a part of it. I'm glad that we can still do it when I'm here, I'm happy with that, of course. But I'm just glad to be

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a part of something that's growing to be so beautiful. So pure and ethical basketball, you know.

Q. First few minutes of the third quarter you guys were playing well and the bench was into it at a level that you typically don't see in a regular season game. They missed a front end of a free throw in the final minutes, you grabbed the rebound, screamed and, again, not typical for a regular season game. I know you can't quantify with a number, but how much more did this one mean than just a regular game?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Oh, yeah, this is not a regular game, this is not a typical regular season game. Because we know that if we lose we're out. Some people are built for these moments, some aren't. But we definitely are, and it shows, because it's not against anybody that we won that game. So it's just, again, I feel lucky, I'm glad we have this group because everybody buys into this and everybody is built for these moments.

Q. Are you going to shift your focus to the Sixth Man of the Year award? Are you looking forward to staying coming off the bench?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: [Laughing]. I have had this thought, I'm not going to lie. Am I still eligible?

Q. I think you could be.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: All right. We'll think about it then. Can you be a Sixth Man of the Year and MVP?

Q. Maybe. We'll check with the NBA. When did you get tired? Did you hit a wall?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah, of course. But my baseline is so much better than it's been any time in my life before that, even the tired today is was the normal of before. And it's just my first game back, so it's only going to get better. Of course it's up and downs all the time. I don't remember when, but I did get a little wind out at some point.

Q. Have you heard the name the Slash Brothers regarding your teammates, and just talk about what you saw out of them and their ability to penetrate the paint, and not only that, finish incredibly well against the OKC defense.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I mean, that's just an ability that's so useful in this league. And even more useful when you got shooters around it. So it's two very young guys that are already able to do that. So they're going to be huge problems. It's having Dylan and Steph, and even

De'Aaron of course, the ability they have to get downhill, it makes the whole defense shift their focus, so it just opens up things for everybody.

Q. Obviously wins and losses are what matter a lot, but what are you learning about the process that it takes to get to those wins and losses and then learning, growing throughout those over the year?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It's hard. It's hard. I think we're on the right path, and for the first time in my career, not in the case of everybody in our group, for the first time in my career, we're winning much more than we're losing. So it's a lot of pleasure, because -- it doesn't feel normal when we lose, but unfortunately it's things we have to go through. And we go through it again in the future if we need to, but we're winning much more than we're losing right now, so we are all where we like to be, we're all where we want to be.

Q. Coming back here and having such a big impact on your team, does this change your confidence after the injury and everything?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I've never really felt a lack of confidence in anything, whether it's my movement or just mentally, so my confidence has been up there, it's still up there, I know I'm taking care of my body like nobody else, so I have really no reason to worry. I don't think there's any more things I could do to put myself in a better place, so my confidence is up there as well.

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