

Emirates NBA Cup

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Oklahoma Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Semifinal Postgame



San Antonio Spurs 111, Oklahoma City Thunder 109

Q. What was maybe a takeaway for you tonight, particularly on offense? Just seemed not as many clear cracks at the lane as you guys normally get.

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, a combination of a couple things. Obviously they are a really good defense and have a defensive juggernaut that takes away the paint and the rim.

Then I don't think we did a good enough job moving and moving the ball side to side. A lot of that probably has to do with me.

But yeah, especially when there's a team that's going to take away the paint, you have to be able to move the rim protectors around on the perimeter and the corner, things like that. I don't think we did a good enough job of that.

You could sit here and say we missed shots we should have made, got some good looks. The game of basketball is never makes or misses. It's always little things. They took care of the little things, especially after the first quarter. They really won the game.

Q. Dub was saying that this matchup was fun and the challenge that it presented. How important is that mindset to your guys' success, the willingness to experience these things and learn from it even if it does come in the form of a loss?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, we can't be spoiled. We can't think we're above anything. Us, along with every team in the league, if you show up on a night and don't do the necessary thing to win, you probably won't win, no matter how talented or no matter what your record looks like. That was the case for us tonight.

They, like I said, especially after the first quarter, brought the fight and really controlled the game on both ends. So, yeah, they deserved to win.

Q. Only second loss this season. How do you

process a loss? Is it an odd feeling at this point?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It is, but personally I think it's exciting. It's easier to learn when you don't feel the way you want to feel. It stings a little bit more.

We'll also see these guys a few more times in the next couple games. So it will be a good challenge. Kind of like an automatic test, almost like in school. You fail the test, you get to retest a couple days later. That's what it will probably feel like.

Yeah, losing is where you find growth and where you really get better, and this team has done a good job of that so far.

Q. I asked Dub something similar, but when you guys get off to the start that you've gotten off to, you open yourself up to questions like do you think you can win 73; do you want to catch the Warriors, like that. Curious big picture how you think about that, and a loss tonight in a Cup semifinal; that clarifying for what other big goals you may have?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Sorry, I don't really understand what you asked. What are you asking me?

Q. On one hand, is 73 something you want to get to; that's an actual goal? And tonight, you lose in a game that we might say was a bigger game. Does that sort of clarify for you what your other regular-season goals might be?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: 73-9, I mean, the position we're in right now, what are we, 24-2? My goal is to get better. So if we get better than what we are now, that should take care of itself. That's kind of how I see it.

Goals to me are pointless trying to reach at when they are so far away. You have to take care of everything step-by-step, and tonight we didn't. If we stack nights like we did tonight, we won't even come close to it.

So I think trying to focus on getting better than we just got in this 25-game stretch will help us, and all the goals and stuff will take care of itself.

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Playing in bigger-moment games, games with a little bit more on the line, definitely helps sharpen a tool for later in the season when moments matter. All these experiences, you definitely can grow from.

Q. Overall, how do you like the battle with Wemby and these generational talents, especially in a one-elimination game like the NBA Cup? Does it prepare you for something like a bigger stage like defending the Championship?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it's fun. It's always fun to go against good teams, especially when they are young, athletic, kind of play a similar brand.

And then yeah, moments like tonight definitely help you, like I just said, sharpen tools for later in the season when you really want to win big.

Q. You mentioned a couple retests coming up on the schedule with the Spurs, and you guys obviously defending champs, still an extraordinarily young team. They have got a pretty impressive young core, too. Do you anticipate this becoming maybe the best rivalry in the league?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Possibly. Yeah, there's a good chance. They, like you said, are young, really good, have a lot of talent, play the right way. They play a good brand of basketball.

But yeah, definitely, definitely it's a possibility. I've noticed that anything can happen in a couple years. So, yeah, it's definitely a possibility. Not a hundred percent but definitely a possibility, for sure.

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