

Emirates NBA Cup

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New York Knicks

Coach Mike Brown

Championship Practice Day



Q. Mike, someone like Wemby, who is so unique physically and can do so many different things offensively, what is the challenge of finding the right guy to match up with him, or how do you go about trying to slow him down?

MIKE BROWN: Well, you're not going to be able to guard a guy like that one-on-one. You try to put length, size, physicality at the point of attack when it comes to him, but it's got to be five guys guarding the basketball at all times. We do that no matter who we're playing, but especially when it comes to a guy like Wemby, because at his size and his skill set, nine times out of ten he's going to miss because he misses.

But we have some pretty good defenders with length, and hopefully they can, at the point of attack, try to make it as difficult as possible with him, knowing that they have help behind them.

Q. Mike, everyone knows that there's a trophy and prestige and money and all that stuff at stake, and the game doesn't count. How do coaches wrap their heads around, what do I do in this situation? Heaven forbid you don't want anything bad to happen, you don't want to overly tax guys, but they all want to win. Do you coach it like it really counts?

MIKE BROWN: Yeah, for sure, because in this league, there's so many talented teams and individuals. I tell our guys a lot of times what separates the great teams from the mediocre teams or the average teams, however you want to call it, is usually the ones that have the highest competitive spirit throughout the course of the roster and staff and also the ones that really embrace the details, because guys are just that good.

That's why on any given night, you can see a team that, quote-unquote, is not supposed to win, win. People say, you're supposed to -- no, you can't beat talented teams like that every night.

I feel like our staff and our players, our organization, starting with Mr. Dolan on down, everybody has a

competitive spirit. Even Derek [Lapinski] does, too. You should see him after my interviews sometimes and after the game. He's just like, yes, yes!

So that competitive spirit exists throughout the organization. And then having a guy like Jalen as your leader, who embraces the work, embraces the process, more importantly embraces the details of what you need to do to go out there and win, at his size and his athleticism, he doesn't have a lot of room for -- or a lot of margin for error, so he embraces the little things. That feeds off to everybody else.

So for us, we feel like we deserve to be here. We want to take advantage of being here by going out and trying to get this win.

Q. Mike, right around a year ago, the noise around the Kings began with you and job security and everything else. Do you take time to reflect on your journey from a year ago to here and what that means for you and how you feel?

MIKE BROWN: The biggest thing, I want to thank the Kings for an opportunity. Vivek gave me an opportunity to coach his team, so I thank them for that opportunity. I'll always be grateful for everyone that has given me an opportunity, so they're no different.

We enjoyed the city of Sacramento and thank the fans there. They were fabulous. We lived in a great neighborhood.

But in life, change happens, not just for me but for everybody else, and you've got to be ready to pivot. I feel fortunate, blessed, lucky, however you want to call it, to be in this situation here with the New York Knicks. You don't have a lot of control over your destiny or your path a lot of times, and so for me to be able to land within an organization like this with the type of players that are here, with the owner and Leon [Rose] and his group, again, you just take advantage of it. So I don't have a lot of time to reflect on the past. I'm about being present and trying to figure out where we can go as an organization and a city going forward. That's what I look forward to and am extremely excited about more than anything else on a daily

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basis.

Q. Tomorrow night you're going to play against someone that you have a lot of experience with in De'Aaron Fox. What is it like to play against him on such a high stage?

MIKE BROWN: First of all, I'll tell you what, man, I'm so happy for not just Fox but Fox's family. He's got a fabulous wife -- Recee, what up girl -- a fabulous, fabulous family.

I couldn't ask for anything better for them because he's a fabulous young man. Everybody sees him out there on the court and sees his speed and how he is as a player, but if you ever got a chance to get to know him and his family, you'd be really honored because they're really good people.

Then same with Harrison Barnes. Again, feel fortunate, blessed and lucky to be around both of those guys. They're both tremendous human beings on top of being great basketball players. I applaud both of them for getting to this point. I hope they both don't win any more games while we're here in Vegas, but they're tough.

HB shoots the ball well, at an extremely high level. His presence, he's got a calmness about him that just settles their whole team down. They've got a young team, but they're not going to get too high nor too low because I truly believe because it's how it was for us in Sacramento because of HB's presence and his calmness. He never gets too high; he never gets too low. That keeps him even-keeled, and you need to have that throughout the highs and lows of a basketball game, let alone a season.

Then Fox, shoot, you've got to deal with his speed. You've got to deal with his medium game. You've got to deal with his ability to get to the rim, and if you're not athletic and strong and explosive, he'll dunk on you. So you've got to get there early to help out.

Then he's worked his tail off to be able to shoot the three, and he's shooting that at a high level while getting to the free-throw line at a high rate.

Then defensively, I told him this from day one since we were together, he can be one of the best two-way players out there, and he shows it. Hopefully you don't show it tomorrow, Foxy, but he shows it. That's what makes him dangerous on both ends of the floor.

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