

Emirates NBA Cup

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New York Knicks

Karl-Anthony Towns

Championship Practice Day



Q. Just the challenge of facing Wemby and the size. Obviously, we talk about the skill you have offensively, and he's sort of in that frame, another guy who can shoot from three and do all these odd things.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I mean, yeah. He's 7-5, and he's very talented. For us, we're going to have to do a good job of executing our defensive game plan and offensively, as well.

Everything for us is about execution. I think that's what's made us really good recently playing basketball is our execution. So we've just got to go out there and find a way to do that for 48 minutes.

Q. KAT, I just asked Jalen, this is the biggest Knicks-Spurs game since the '99 Finals.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I did just bring that up, too.

Q. Could you name the starting lineup the last time the Knicks were in the Finals?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Sprewell and Tim Duncan were on the shirt, I know that.

Q. Timmy was on the Spurs.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Marbury.

Q. Nope, he's early 2000s.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Spree, Tim --

Q. Spree was a shooting guard. Point guard was a Heisman trophy winner, No. 21.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Florida State, right?

Q. Yes, sir.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Oh, my God. I know his name.

Q. CW.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Oh, Charlie Ward. Latrell Sprewell.

Q. Small forward is in the front office.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Allan Houston.

Q. Power forward, former No. 1 pick, in '91.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: You feel like I should know that, right?

Q. You would know him if I said his name. Crazy four-point play against the Pacers in '99.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Oh, I feel bad because --

Q. LJ?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Larry Johnson.

Q. Who was the center? Round it out.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I mean, obviously it's not Ewing. Tyson Chandler? No. That's too early.

Q. Who backed up Pat? Former No. 2 pick to the Raptors in '96. UMass legend.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Oh, Marcus Camby. Shout-out John Calipari.

Q. This early in the year, early in Mike's tenure, what would winning something, winning a trophy and having a tangible sign of success mean so early in his Knicks tenure? What would that represent?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I think the Cup is big for us just for the energy it brings to our team. To have the opportunity, one, to win it and how blessed we are to win it, do our part, I think it brings great energy to the team, great mojo to the team.

It also brings that feeling of winning. No matter if it's the

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Cup, NBA Finals, winning any game, when you get that feeling of winning, it's addictive. Obviously, I want us to have that mindset where we're addicted to the next championship if we can win this one.

I think this is a great start for us to understand the standards needed to win at a high level, at a championship level, and also giving us that feeling of there's nothing better than the belief when you know you can do something, and I think this will be a great start for us.

Q. KAT, your second year, Mike's first year, all the things. What's been an unsung element that has allowed this team to have this much success when you look at how potent you've been offensively?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I think it just falls down to the locker room, you know, all those guys in that locker room willing to sacrifice and do whatever it takes to win. I think our team last year showed that in the Playoffs when it wasn't just one person but a collective group of guys who were willing to make that one play needed to win the game, whether it was Mikal with a steal, obviously Jalen being the Clutch Player of the Year making the shot, OG dives on the floor for a loose ball, Mitchell Robinson gets the key offensive rebound, Deuce McBride, full-court press, gets a steal that, one, takes time off the game, but two, gives us a chance to score and puts us in a better position. Landry Shamet, Cameron Payne, you could go down the list about all the people who's really impacted winning for us last year, and I think this team this year has the same philosophy; whatever it takes to win, we'll do.

Q. KAT, I want to know, being Dominican and also David Jones Garcia being Dominican, French players from the squad, I want to know, this is a celebration, this is a fiesta for us, so what does it take to celebrate the NBA Cup and become a champion? What do you need to become an NBA Cup champion?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: You bring up the Dominican Republic and our team there. I think just like in a World Cup, I always preached to our guys about execution.

In my experience playing basketball at this level, it's always been about the word "execution." When you get to the Playoffs and the Conference Finals, it's about who's willing to execute at a higher level and more consistently for 48 minutes, and that's why you hear so many coaches when you are on Amazon, they have that footage and stuff that they're always talking about executing, executing, who's going to do it for longer, 48 minutes.

I think for us to win this Cup, we're going to have to go out tomorrow, execute at a high level, and stay at that level for

a longer time than the Spurs. That's what it's going to take. It's going to take us to do whatever it takes to win.

Like you said, it's a celebration for Latin America too, to have so many people on this big stage, especially Dominicans, let alone two of us going out there and doing what we do best.

Yeah, it's a bunch of fun. I'm super excited that Latin America gets to get represented tomorrow. Hopefully the show is great.

Q. There's a ton of Latin American talent coming forward, Karim Lopez probably a lottery pick next year. Any advice you would give yourself whenever you were about to get to that draft?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Yeah, just keep your head down and stay focused on the task at hand. Take care of the present and be willing to sacrifice whatever it is, whether it's a fun night out or time with your friends to see your dream come true.

For me, when I was coming into the NBA Draft and going through the process, I was just so proud to represent my Dominican roots through the process and then also understood that making it to the NBA was the cool part but staying in the NBA would be the hardest part of them all.

Eleven years in, I still feel I'm finding success at this level, and I'm still blessed and bewildered that I'm even in the NBA. I'm just so honored that I get to, like you said, be up here at this stage at a championship game for the NBA Cup speaking to the next generation about the experiences I've had.

Q. Just want to know what the process of sort of working with a new coach from the start of the season, new offense and sort of how that has gotten now that we're about a third of the way, how that adjustment went for you beat by beat.

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Well, fortunately I've had a lot of experience in it. Unfortunately. Going through that process so many times, I've always known that I've got to control the man in the mirror first and I have to be my best version so that when I come to the coach and we're building our relationship and we're going through the growing pains of learning how to work with each other that I'm presenting my best version so we're working with a good foundation.

I think for me, that's always been the focus. Make sure that I'm putting the work in and make sure that I'm keeping a great positive mindset and I'm letting that not only push



the relationship between me and the coach forward but also bringing great energy to our locker room for all of us that are trying to build that relationship with the coach.

Try to make it a very inviting environment and also an environment that is okay with questions being asked so that we can all grow together.

Q. To go back to the Dominican/international theme for a second, with voting about to start and all that, what do you think of the U.S. vs. World All-Star format?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: We brought the Olympics here. No, just jokes. I think it's cool. I think it's going to be fun. I think that -- I go back to the Rookie- Sophomore game when it became a USA vs. World game, and I thought that the fans really enjoyed that. I had fun playing in that game. I don't know how I ended up on Team USA. We'll talk to Adam on that part.

But I don't know. I don't know.

Q. Do you know where you're going to be for this one?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I have no idea.

Q. Do you get to have any say?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I don't believe so. But I think it's going to be fun, and I think that it also shows the growth of the NBA, to have such an international presence now in the NBA, and it shows that the game is truly global and the NBA brand is global, and we truly have the best players in the whole entire world being represented by whatever country and how far it may be from America, that they're still being recognized by NBA organizations and talent and scouts and being brought here to the NBA to showcase their talents to the world. I'm also really happy that their countries get to be represented on an Olympic stage like that in February.

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