

Emirates NBA Cup

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New York Knicks

Mike Brown

Championship Postgame



New York Knicks 124, San Antonio Spurs 113

MIKE BROWN: You know, it was a great win by our guys for a lot of different reasons. One of the things -- excuse me, I just had a beer [smiling]. Kind of sits in my throat a little bit, so sorry about that. Excuse me. Excuse me, mom [smiling].

But yeah, you talk about a team. That was a team win. Everybody always talks about next man up, next man up, and everybody thinks that's just a BS coaches' saying. There is reasons behind us saying that and doing that.

Our group has done a fantastic job of staying ready. My coaches, unbelievable. I got player development coaches from Peter Patton to Jordan Brink to Charles Allen. I got a lot of guys that are behind the scenes that work tirelessly every day of keeping these guys locked in, focused and ready to go whenever their number's called.

To be able to see Jordan Clarkson go in and contribute the way he did, especially when we're struggling to score. Then defensively coming up with some huge deflections on the defensive end of the floor.

Mitchell Robinson, he had 10 offensive rebounds in 18 minutes. That's unbelievable. We had 23 offensive rebounds for the game. He had 10. OG had four. KAT had four. That was probably the biggest difference in the game when you're scoring 32 second-chance points. For him to come off the bench and do that...

Even Ariel, his minute and 52 seconds was huge for us. He got a 50/50 ball. Went vertical at the rim one time. But just as importantly, Tyler Kolek. We were struggling to score. We know that these guys were going to collapse their defense when you touch the paint. We told our guys to keep touching the paint, try to spray it.

Tyler came in and he paired with Jalen, just did a heck of a job touching the paint and spraying the basketball for us, while hitting some timely threes. Then defensively he was awesome.

We could have gone with a handful of guys for the Defensive Player of the Game. But at the end of the day De'Aaron Fox, I mean, I coached him. You don't really realize how good he is until you coach against him. You can feel his speed and his power and all that.

To be able to have a guy like OG go guard him, just to try to make it a little tougher, man, that's a blessing. OG was our DPOG, Defensive Player of the Game. But to have OG switch onto him and make it a little tougher for him to get great looks, again, was a blessing.

A great team win. Obviously the MVP is Jalen. I hope now on this stage you guys, when you start talking about MVP candidates, his name is one of the first that come out your mouth because on this stage, to go get it done while winning, again while winning, is what in my opinion an MVP is about.

Q. Tyler, Mitch and Clarkson, a key stretch in the fourth quarter. What went into the decision to give those guys significant minutes? How much did they flip the game on its head?

MIKE BROWN: They did a great job turning the game. They brought a level of physicality. We told these guys San Antonio is a great team, well-coached, and they do a great job in the pick-and-roll game. They know having a guy like Korneet and Wemby, those guys are huge. When they set the screen, they do a fantastic job of getting out and getting to the rim.

We told our guys that these guys are getting to the rim quickly. Slide over, take a charge. Tyler took that hit, okay? It caused a timeout and we got a technical from it. Even something small like that, bringing the physicality to the game, putting your body out there and getting ran over, helped change the game.

Mitch's ability to challenge Wemby's shots, then put pressure on Wemby and Korneet on the other end of the floor offensive rebounding. That changed the game.

Jordan's ability to knock down timely shots, then the deflections that he got, that changed the game. We went for Ariel for the minute 52. He was big giving us a lift.

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All those guys brought something to the table. It was an easy decision for me going down the stretch that these guys are the guys that had given us a lift, so we're going to stay with them.

Our standards are about sacrificing, connectivity, competitive spirit, a belief in the process and a belief in each other, which is huge. No matter who's out there, belief in each other while holding everybody accountable. That's what we did throughout the course of this ball game and that's why those guys were able to finish and play extended minutes.

Q. You talked about you're learning Jalen. Not only does he do what he does to win the MVP, he gets handed the award, your thoughts on the first thing he does is mention Mitch, Tyler, OG, basically says they won the game for him?

MIKE BROWN: He's an unbelievable competitor, but an unbelievable teammate. I've been around those guys. You're talking about Tim Duncan, Steph Curry, those guys. Foxy, Bron. Those guys all mention their teammates because bang, bang, bang, they know this is a team sport at the end of the day.

That's why he is not just the MVP when it comes to hooping, but he is the MVP in a lot of different ways. I'm just lucky, fortunate, blessed, however you want to call it, to be able to work with a young man like that.

Shoutout to his parents for sure, and his sister and his wife.

Q. You've obviously been in several Finals. Could this be a catalyst, confidence booster, an experience that you think can help this team get to perhaps a place that it hasn't been in a long time?

MIKE BROWN: For sure. During the course of the year, you try to find situations to put pressure on your group. We divvy the season up into five-game segments. We try to tell our guys that we'd like to go 5-0. 4-1 is pretty good. We'll take 3-2.

I do that, again, to try to put pressure on them, let them know where we went during those five games. To manufacture it during the regular season is tough because you have so many games. You have to give Adam a lot of credit, the NBA league office, to create an environment like this. It helps us coaches add pressure to your group early in the season.

This is a single-elimination tournament when you get to a certain point. Every game counts. There's pressure on

every game if you expect to be who you think you are.

That pressure is manufactured without you as a coach having to try to do it all the time. When you're able to have success doing it, it breeds confidence in everybody within the organization. That can propel you come the right time when you're in that environment to be able to handle the pressure because you've already been through it.

There's a lot of positives about it. But the most positive is being able to hang a banner up in MSG, the most iconic arena in the league.

Q. When you first got here you talked about throughout the regular season you might try different things with the ultimate goal of making sure you understand your team, guys are confident. Tonight Jalen, Jordan, Kolek. How important is it or good that you're able to experiment and win at the same time? How much has that boosted your ability to try stuff even more?

MIKE BROWN: It's huge because you want to give guys an opportunity. But when they step up and they produce during their opportunities, what it does is it, A, gives them confidence, but it gives everybody else confidence around, from the coaches to their teammates, to be able to say, Okay, we can play three small guards at one time because we're able to do certain things out there with those three guys.

You want that for everybody on the team whenever they're thrown into the game. It was evident that we were able to get it done by mixing and matching and with different lineups tonight. I'm proud of everybody in that locker room.

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