

# NBA Western Conference Semifinals: Timberwolves vs Warriors

Saturday, May 10, 2025

San Francisco, California, USA

## Minnesota Timberwolves

### Chris Finch

#### Game 3 - Postgame Media Conference

Timberwolves - 102, Warriors - 97

**Q. Chris, that was a battle of a game. What did you see from your guys offensively in the fourth to find that final push that you needed?**

CHRIS FINCH: We started playing through Julius a little bit more and got great spacing. I thought for the first time consistently all game we actually like went somewhere.

We were in each other's way all night long. I mean, they were very physical and aggressive on the ball, but I thought we were able to kind of get better spacing and go somewhere quick with the ball.

**Q. We've talked about it all, but Julius, a triple-double tonight. He wasn't on early with his shot at least, but how do you see him just find his way in these games to make the impact he's making?**

CHRIS FINCH: He's playing with so much force and determination. He's going out there early and aggressive, and he's exerting a ton of energy on the defensive end with his body and his rebounding. He's playing a complete game for us no doubt.

Sometimes when it's really sticky on the perimeter, like the holding all the time everywhere and they're really handsy, we play through him. He just kind of gives us a pressure release.

**Q. Three kind of clutch wins in the postseason for you so far. What has this team found comfort-wise, running through Julius and Ant in these moments, that has really benefited them?**

CHRIS FINCH: We're making some shots for sure. We're getting stops. We were getting stops throughout the regular season. We're just winning the possession battle in

clutch time now. We're just not -- we're not giving the ball back on cheap turnovers. We're not giving up as many or any second chance opportunities.

Today we actually were really big on the boards in clutch time ourselves, getting some second shot opportunities. That's it. That's really, if you had to boil it down to one thing, it's getting more looks at it.

**Q. With Ant tonight, quiet first half, comes out in the second half, how did you see him navigate the game?**

CHRIS FINCH: I like the way he started. I thought he was aggressive and doing the right things. The first half, when he was putting the ball on the deck, he was drawing such a crowd we were actually able to find some cleaner looks.

But he really got himself going with the dunk. We needed to spread the floor for him a bit more. He needed to just go downhill. I thought there was, again, too much traffic around him at times, and we just needed to kind of open up the floor for him.

**Q. Did your court IQ meet your standards, or do you think that they just made you play ugly in many respects?**

CHRIS FINCH: They made the game ugly. They did a great job of just being super physical and trying to kind of, like I said, take it into the mud.

We could certainly obviously do things better and smarter. We'll look at the tape to try to see where we can, but I was proud of our guys because we got right down there in the mud with them.

**Q. That shot distribution, Ant and Julius took a lot more of the shots than usual. Is that just because what the game was giving you?**

CHRIS FINCH: I think so. It was hard to get somebody else into the game. I felt, with the physicality out there, we were turning it over a lot. We turned it over a lot for the game, way too many in general.



Those guys were our best players on the floor tonight, and we needed the ball in their hands because it just felt safe and strong.

**Q. Chris, with Julius obviously it gives you guys scoring consistently, but it seemed like he was doing a lot of the other things too. The rebound late in the game, deflections, the 50-50 balls, how much did you need that part of him too?**

CHRIS FINCH: We need it all. We needed everything from Julius, his hustle plays. Sometimes he does a great job of just kind of chasing down rebounds and stuff like this. We needed it all. His ability to stand up some of those really physical offensive guys out there. We need it all.

**Q. Can you take me through the evolution of your strategy defensively today? You only gave up five 3s in the first half, and then they get loose for more 3s in the third quarter, but by the fourth you're really contesting everything in the paint, forcing misses. Did you make a change there at halftime? How did that evolve?**

CHRIS FINCH: No, we didn't make a change. They did a couple things to try to shake loose. They got out in transition a little bit, got some matchup advantages for them and stuff like that.

We just kind of fell asleep on some things we knew were coming that we should have been a little bit more aware of. Generally we try to take away the 3, but they made a couple late when we were guarding them.

We've just got to get up a little tighter, and we've got to know better that they're going to try to shoot 3s when they're down at that point in the game too.

**Q. You've seen it so many times before, but Ant with the dunk in the third quarter, what's the impact on the group with a play like that? Are you numb at all at this point with that kind of play with him?**

CHRIS FINCH: I wouldn't say numb. It doesn't surprise me anymore when I see his spectacular plays, but it just infuses our group with so much energy. He kind of gets going too, and we really need that from him.

He's been working hard on finishing. He knows that there's opportunities to get to the rim against these guys with their lack of size at times, and he's been on himself to finish better. That was kind of, I think, his message to himself.

**Q. Chris, you had 11 assists for Randle in Game 2, 12**

**tonight, 5 in the fourth quarter, and they were different types of reads. The swing to Jaden. He went to Ant a couple times to dump off to Rudy. How big is his decision-making for this group right now?**

CHRIS FINCH: It's extremely important. It's really what's turned our season around, his playmaking, his decision-making, playing through on different spots of the floor. It took us a while to figure it out.

I've always known he was a good playmaker. Our time in New Orleans, he played a little bit like this. He's just -- he gives us just another -- almost another point guard like out there. It's everything for us. It's been everything for our turnaround. It's everything for our team.

**Q. It seems like, if you guys defend the first 10 seconds of the shot clock against this team, you're in a really good spot. Does that take a little bit of adjusting to?**

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah.

**Q. And I guess Julius' methodical basketball in the fourth just sets a pace. Did that maybe help out defensively as well?**

CHRIS FINCH: Sure, sure. Getting controlled offenses, kind of slow the game down. We always felt it would give us another guy in those moments to give the ball to. He does a great job of getting a foul or creating his own shot. Obviously we just talked about what he can do for others.

Then these guys are -- they're a super smart basketball team we're playing, and they're going to try to push it at you all the time. If you can't get connected early against them, you're going to spend the entire shot clock chasing them.

**Q. Is that what it feels like these will be games of runs because, if you're not scoring, they have a chance to go the other way and vice versa?**

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah, scoring against these guys is huge because it keeps them out of transition a bit more.

**Q. The bench scoring was up in the last game, only 11 points from the bench tonight. How good does it feel to still come out with a win when you don't get the production that maybe you're looking for from the bench?**

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah, we need those guys, but tonight just wasn't their night for one reason or another. They were doing other things out there. Certainly Naz out there on



the floor, I thought he did a lot of other good things in the game and just helped us spread the floor at times.

Those guys will bounce back. We rode the guys that were kind of playing a little bit better tonight.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports