

# WNBA Finals: Las Vegas vs. Phoenix

Friday, October 3, 2025

Las Vegas Aces

A'ja Wilson

Dana Evans

Game 1: Postgame



Aces 89, Mercury 86

**Q. A'ja, Becky made mention that Dana and Jewell came in and did what they did at the right time. She sort of felt as if you and Jackie maybe were still feeling the effects of Game 5 and carrying the team. But you talked about it numerous times this season in terms of what they bring off the bench, especially Dana tonight, if you can just expound.**

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, they are our key factors. I've said multiple times that Dana is our battery. She makes us play at a difference pace. I tell her we go, she goes. That's a quick pace but we are always going to try follow her because we know she's very hard to stop in this league, very hard to keep in front of. When she's able to get downhill and get good looks, it plays into our favor.

Also when it comes to Jewell, this has always been Jewell. These two people particularly are two of the most hardworking people that I see in practice every single day. They want every drill to be perfection.

So when it comes to these type of games, it comes as no surprise to me because I'm blessed to see it every single day. But I'm so glad they can share their gift with the world because I know they probably go unnoticed a little bit, but they show up on time always, and we're grateful for that.

**Q. Dana, when you hit that three to put you ahead for the first time in almost forever, what was going through your head? Following it up, hit another three to put you back ahead to 85-82. Overall when you hit those two big threes, what was going through your head? And how are you feeling right now?**

DANA EVANS: I'm going to be honest, I don't remember. I'm just in a zone in the game. I don't remember exactly, I just want to win really bad. Whatever that looks like, whatever my teammates need from me, I'm going to do

whatever it is to win.

We're not satisfied with this -- obviously we need to win Game 1 and Game 2, but it's just the first game. So we don't want to get too high and we don't want to get too low. We've got to stay steady and stay locked in and focused.

**Q. A'ja, what do you feel like was the critical moment in the fourth quarter that actually turned the tide for you guys? Because you guys were trading buckets out there. I wanted to ask from your perspective, was there one play that stood out that you said, okay, this is our chance to go and pull away?**

A'JA WILSON: Honestly, I can't even remember the fourth. I'm going to have to go back and look. I think it just was multiple times and situations where we understood our defense has to win the basketball game. We can't go basket for basket with this team. They're too good. They were shooting 50 percent, dang near, from the field. So we knew we couldn't go basket for basket with them, but I think we just started to string defensive stops together. Even if it was just like, okay, a good bucket here or there, I think our zone really helped us a lot.

We were able to kind of play on a string, and I think that kind of gave us the momentum to then play out of it, because I think everybody knows we're going to play out of our defense, and I think the zone allowed us to do that.

But we'll go back and tweak some things on the defensive end, but I was very pleased with our zone considering we haven't had a lot of practice time to really be in it. So yeah, it looked pretty decent.

**Q. Dana, I feel like since you came into this league you have known that you will one day take over a Finals game and maybe not everybody else knew that or maybe you didn't always get that opportunity. But I have seen that inner belief from you. I want to know more about what this moment means to you being a difference maker?**

DANA EVANS: Like I said, I want to come in and be a spark. I want to do whatever my team needs from me,



whether that's getting out there defensively, getting us organized, getting buckets, whatever that looks like. But this is what I've worked all my life for, to be in this position, and I'm so grateful and blessed to do it beside someone like A'ja, Jackie, Chelsea. I can go down the list, we have such a talented team.

But just more so doing it for each other. I feel like that's what we were -- that's really brought us so much closer together. We really want to do it for one another. I probably got off topic, but this is a unique group. I really enjoy this group. We just really want to do it for each other.

**Q. Dana, for you, just building off of that, just take us through what was Becky's vision for you when the Aces traded for you and how maybe tonight sort of illustrates maybe what the idea was.**

DANA EVANS: Well, when she told me that she wanted me -- she basically told me that she wanted me to be aggressive, she wanted me to get in the paint, make good rim reads, whether that's me getting lay-ups or getting people open shots. But just being aggressive. I feel like that's the main thing she wants from me, and defensively picking up full court, causing havoc.

So defensively getting in the paint. Just being a pest, getting downhill. And shooting the ball. She's been telling me to shoot the three more.

So just staying aggressive pretty much.

**Q. A'ja, you were saying that you guys weren't able to practice the zone much. When Becky is saying, we're going to zone, and you're in the Finals, what does it take to actually execute the zone to the extent you were able to do so successfully?**

A'JA WILSON: We still have our principles and zone rules when it comes to just making sure everyone is in the right spot. The biggest thing when it comes to the zone is you don't want any open looks. So we just go back to our rules. Even though we don't practice it, we still understand our rules when it comes to a zone.

I think we've played it enough throughout the season to trust one another they're going to be there. So when she called it, it kind of threw us off a little bit because we haven't practiced it. But we've done it enough to know exactly where the spots are we need to take care of.

**Q. Speaking about the defense, that final defensive possession of the game, curious what you saw there that let you guys blow up what they were trying to run**

**and also having Kiah come in and execute like she did, what you saw from her?**

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, you just answered your question. Kiah Stokes for the win always. She is our defensive anchor. She played literally 14 seconds and did exactly what we needed her to do.

I feel like that's the sign of a good pro. You've just got to be ready when your name is called. These are the moments that it's not always going to be about the stars. Normally stars kind of cancel each other out. It's the next man up. Obviously all of us tried our best and did exactly what we needed to do, but when you have someone like Kiah come in and just know their role and know their spot, it's truly special.

Like Dana was saying, I think we are just starting to just play for one another. It's nothing about anything else on the outside. It's literally what's in our locker room, and we're just trying to take care of each other.

**Q. Dana, yesterday your voice was really, really hoarse. You could barely talk. Do you remember why or how you lost your voice, and overnight from yesterday to today, did you do anything with honey, cough drops, anything of the like?**

DANA EVANS: I've been doing everything but God wasn't going to let me not have a voice in the Finals. So I knew I was going to be good.

Honestly, I don't know what happened. I don't know if I was screaming too much during Game 5 or what. But I woke up the next day and I just didn't have a voice. Yeah, just prayed about it and did the things necessary to take care of it.

**Q. At what point today did you feel it, start to feel like this is kind of one of my days, whether it was a shot that fell in early or earlier in shootaround, but when did you feel like today was the day that you could get going?**

DANA EVANS: Honestly, I feel like I really get going with my defense. When I get steals and I push the ball and I see something easy go in and get a lay-up, then I know, all right, like I feel good.

But I've got to let my defense dictate my offense. I feel like it can't be the other way around. Always got to be ready defensively and the offense will come.

**Q. A'ja, of all the pairs you could have went with tonight, you went with the Rugrats PE. Why that pair,**

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**of all the ones you could have went with, and do you feel like you channeled your inner Susie Carmichael tonight?**

A'JA WILSON: Susie Carmichael is that girl. I don't know. It's just a funky fun pair to wear, and I love them. All my shoes I love, obviously, but Susie Carmichael, there's always an inner child that comes out of us. And it's crazy because today Becky showed us a video of us from high school and college and just it was kind of storytelling us to where we are now. Like all the things that we done in high school, the championships we won with the people we won them with, and it brings us now to the women that we are and we still have that heart of a child, and we still have that heart of wanting to win with our sisters.

So it fell into that as well. Susie did not play around with Angelica. She was that girl. Her parents were amazing. It's just like that young Black girl that I wanted to see. It gave me to dream and kind of see myself in Rugrats.

**Q. Keeping AT off the middle is obviously one of the things you want to do. That requires your teammates to be in some tough spots. Dana is one of the people digging down. What does it take, what are you seeing from your teammates and getting in there and being willing to mix it up?**

A'JA WILSON: This is what we've worked so hard to get after. This is why the times we have practice we put ourselves in a lot of different hard situations, so we're prepped for these moments. It is tough. AT has great basketball IQ. She can pick the game apart. She sees things before it even happens. So you've just got to try to make it a little bit junky and doing all that without fouling.

We just try to slow the game down a little bit, but it does put us at -- I felt like I was defending out of position and then we had our guards defending out of position.

But this is the Finals. We've got to buckle in and be comfortable with uncomfortable, and I think you saw that today.

**Q. A'ja, I asked about your switching the other day. You had to navigate a lot of screens tonight. How do you prep for such a drastic shift in role like that?**

A'JA WILSON: You honestly can't. I'm grateful that I'm able to kind of bet on myself and just go with what I go with from a defensive standpoint, but it's very, very difficult. Obviously coming off of having to guard Nneka, then having to guard Aliyah, then having to guard AT, those are three different players, and you have to guard them very differently.

So it did put me in a little funky position this game, but I'll go back to the drawing board and see things that I want to change and kind of be different, but it is different. I don't go over screens. I don't go under screens; I'm a big, I don't do that. But this is a game that I might have to, so I'm going to buckle in and see how I can still, like I said, be uncomfortable in my comfortable situation, and then my guards always have my back as well. So I'm not worried when it comes to that.

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