

# WNBA Finals: Las Vegas vs. Phoenix

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Las Vegas Aces

Becky Hammon

A'ja Wilson

Jewell Loyd

Game 3: Postgame

Aces 90, Mercury 88

**Q. We've heard a lot today about the blind trust that is within this team. Can you guys give us some examples from today's game specifically of this blind trust we've heard so much about?**

A'JA WILSON: I mean, I just think just throughout the course of the game when Phoenix goes on runs, when we know we should have been there, it's kind of like we just continue to understand and hold each other accountable for big moments and don't hang our heads on the mistake maybe in the moment but just keep encouraging each other.

I think just blind trust comes from just understanding that your teammate is going to hold you accountable but they're also going to be there for you and they're going to be the first ones to root you on in these moments, and I think you saw that just throughout the course of the game.

I know when I had that turnover when I cut back door, the ball slipped through my hands and the first people I see are my teammates, and they're like hey, we got you, we are going to get it back. I think that's kind of the blind trust that you see. Also when it just come with layers of the defense, knowing if you do get blown by, you're going to have your teammate and another teammate behind you as well.

**Q. Jewell, this question is for you. Obviously I think A'ja probably had a big kind of expression when that shot went in, but my question for you is what were you thinking in that moment when that shot bounced in?**

JEWELL LOYD: Honestly, defense. I went right back on defense just to make sure I threw the ball in or whatever, but once they called time-out it was just find your teammates, celebrate that moment. It's a tough shot, but I



think the last play, I think I was still there trying to get a rebound just in case. So I got a pretty good angle of a shot, but a lot of it was just next play.

**Q. Becky and A'ja, what was the call for that last one? What did you say in the huddle before they went out, and A'ja, can you take us through it just from you on the floor?**

BECKY HAMMON: Give the ball to A'ja and get out of the way. That's all the play was.

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, I feel like in that moment if a coach has to tell me what to do, I'm not doing my job. She just drew up a play. It wasn't really even a play.

BECKY HAMMON: It was very basic.

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, it was pretty much what you saw. I'm appreciative that Becky trusts me in those moments. But those are playoff basketball moments. Those are moments you live for. So I'm glad I was able show up. I get all my (indiscernible) coming to work. So I'm glad that I was able to come to work.

**Q. When Phoenix is making that run to come back from down 17, they have done stuff like that before in this postseason. What are the conversations that you guys are having on your bunch during that run?**

BECKY HAMMON: It's a game of runs, but we threw a pretty good punch coming out, they crawled back. We threw another punch, they crawled back. I think to a certain degree, of course I want the game to be played out perfectly but you have to give them some credit for getting hot and giving themselves a chance to win at the end.

However, I thought we had control of that game for the majority of that clock, and it's really -- that's a desperate team. They understand they had to win that one. That's what it probably felt like in that fourth quarter was that desperation, and we were able to withstand that storm and that frenzy of pressure and the crowd and just be cool, calm and collected. Like you just saw A at the end, Jackie hitting free throws.



But that team effort down the stretch.

**Q. For the players, we've talked a lot throughout the series of how it is the first best-of-seven and historically you come into a Finals when it's best-of-five you win the third game and you win the title. Knowing you have to get to that fourth game, what does that do either now as you're one one away from winning a title but best-of-four kind of thing, how does that change the psyche, the mindset, anything like that?**

A'JA WILSON: Under Becky Hammon we've never won a Game 3 --

BECKY HAMMON: They do actually listen sometimes.

A'JA WILSON: This was a must-win for us just for that sake.

I feel like my biggest mentality and the things that I relayed to my teammates is just like, we just need to win one, just win one. We don't really look at it too big or too series, up this, whatever. Just win one game, win one possession, win the quarters and then everything else is going to pan out.

But yeah, I'm just happy we finally won a Game 3 because we've never done this before. Look at us.

**Q. Coach, can you talk a little bit about how you've switched some things up defensively going to the zone in Game 1, I don't think you played zone in Game 2, you did a little bit of zone and maybe a little junk today. If you could talk a little bit about that and then also you sort of said all season this group wasn't where you wanted them defensively, but are they there now with how well they've played, especially in the Finals?**

BECKY HAMMON: I mean, I'm incredibly proud of them. They've put a ton of work in off the court, and I think it really shows on the court. Like I said, they have -- A'ja will come into the meeting room and say, kick us coaches out, and they got the room together for 10, 15 minutes, however much time they need to kind of go through the game plan, discuss it. It's really brought a lot of ownership to the group.

They know what they're doing. It's like when they come out of the game and somebody made a mistake, it's their own teammate saying, hey, you've got to be up -- whatever it might be. That takes a lot of -- they've been very intentional about that, and I think that's really, really paying dividends for us down the stretch. I realize now I probably

did not answer your question at all. What was it again? I'm just rambling.

In Game 2 I didn't like our starts. Defensively they had jumped out on us. Today I just wanted to have to think, do something else to where I didn't have to call the first time-out. Make them do it.

Even when they did score those couple seven points, I felt like it was us with some little slippage here and there, and once we were able to lock that in and address that, they went out and executed and didn't get those same runs.

Yeah, we threw a little junk out there a little bit here and there.

**Q. For Jewell, every game this series -- Game 1 it was Dana and then it was Jackie with that later counter-punch in the second half and Game 3 it was you earlier. What do you think opened up for you to get that counter-punch early on?**

JEWELL LOYD: I think a lot of it's just our pace. We're going up and down really quickly, running the corners. We get told a lot to get to the corners, corner pin over here apparently. So I know my role really well.

But I think for me just being active is very key. I kind of get going from my defense and let everything else go from there, but when the ball has energy and moves around, we're really hard to guard.

**Q. Before the game you said you wanted to get a birthday dub for Chels, since you got one for Jewell just a couple days ago. How much meaning does it add to get one for her as well?**

BECKY HAMMON: I mean, does anybody have a birthday on Friday? (Laughter).

No, I mean, listen, if we would have dropped that game, Chelsea would have been -- she would not have been happy even though it was her birthday, she would not have been happy about that.

We just want to play with energy. We want to play solid. We just want to play with each other and for each other. Honestly, they did that. Like, they did that. They withstood a couple really big throws. Like I said, we worked that lead up a couple different times and they just would not die.

Chelsea is obviously a big part of that. Maybe she'll have one drink tonight maybe to celebrate her birthday and the win. I don't know.



**Q. Jewell, obviously you got loose tonight. When you think about this run so far in the Playoffs, is there anything you feel like you've learned about yourself or just about winning in general throughout this run?**

JEWELL LOYD: I think I've been probably more vocal in the Playoffs than regular season, just understanding just paces and the details and I'm pushing myself to do that more. Sometimes your mind can drift on so many things and you're trying to analyze things, but just being present in everything that we do and just reminding people of who they are, seeing our coverages, but really be the best motivator I can be. That's really been my mindset going into the Playoffs.

**Q. Becky, you mentioned the slow starts. Obviously the three-point shooting in the first half definitely helped with that, especially from Jewell when she checked into the game. Can you just touch on how vital that stretch was, that run in the first quarter, and especially how big of an X-factor Jewell was going on that stretch that she had?**

BECKY HAMMON: Yeah, she was the main one getting lit from back there. I think she had four in the first quarter. That's huge.

Every minute counts, and I think the one thing that I've really grown to appreciate Jewell with is, A, she's super easy to coach. Just wants to do whatever it takes to win. If that's shooting shots, she's going to she's going to shoot shots. If that's going to be crashing, she's had some huge offensive boards in the Playoffs for us this year. Defense, like all those little things that help you win. I know everybody looks at the stat sheet, oh, she had four. But she's doing so many other things, just her sprinting to the corner gets space for everybody. It's such a selfless thing.

I never want to take those little things for granted that she's doing without ever touching the ball for everybody else. She's a great screener.

But getting her going early, she's that -- I think her and Dana, you're so loaded up with -- these are the ones that actually throw the kisses of death, right, to the team is her and Dana getting out there because you think you're doing a good job on Jack and A but and all of a sudden you've got this next wave, and she's a big part of that.

We know what she's capable of. We want to get her as many shots. I wish she would have shot more. I wish we would have found a way because when she gets heated like that, I want her to stay heated. It just didn't work out today. She got to the free-throw line a little bit.

Even when she's not, she never once pouted like, damn, y'all. I'm on a heater and I can't even get -- she just keeps playing the game and the next play, and that's really great as a coach but I think also as a teammate, like, she's just about the next play and winning the next play for the group, whoever that is.

**Q. A'ja, throughout all the momentum swings, throughout all the changes in the game and things going different ways, it seems like your offense was the one thing that stayed consistent. What can you tell me about your persistence and consistency down low to get the ball in the hoop whenever you want?**

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, it's just what you work on. Like these are the little things that I work on in the off-season or just during the season, just to put myself in situations that I can get to my spots and make it a little bit easier on our offense.

But I always have to credit my teammates because they give me the basketball in the right space at the right time. When Jewell was saying the ball has energy, you would just -- players understand it's something different when you get a pass and it's like, no, this is a pass to score the basketball. That's what you saw today. We were just playing -- the ball had energy, it was popping, it was moving, we were moving, and it makes the defense kind of have to go side to side and struggle a little bit.

When it comes to the offensive game, I just have to be patient. I need to be more patient with myself. But it really is just getting to your spots. These are spots that I work on a lot, so it's just muscle memory at this point.

**Q. A'ja, Jewell Loyd is now 9-0 in the Finals, I think. She came with her reputation attack but playing with it and seeing it live in the Finals, talk about how real that is.**

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, I had a front row seat to a sweep in the bubble with Jewell with gold Kobes on. So when I saw with Jewell with gold Kobes on, I said yeah, it's been cool.

So I had a front row seat as an opponent to it, and it's beautiful to watch when she gets in that -- I'm glad she got all A1s now.

But no, to be able to play alongside Jewell and just to see her work, it's truly magical what she does. It's her footwork, her work ethic. It's to the T. I think everything that Jewell shoots is going in because I've seen her work on these shots. I've seen her make these shots. It's a method to her madness. It's been a joy to play alongside and to watch. My jaw has dropped. I'm like, that's that

damn Jewell Loyd.

But her record in the Finals shows the work that she's put in, and I'm grateful that she's now with us for sure.

BECKY HAMMON: And it's not coincidental. She just didn't happen on these championships. She's put in a ton of work and she's about winning. That's why the winning happens.

A'JA WILSON: For sure.

**Q. A'ja, you've had so many moments. Does this feel like one of them big ones, a Finals on the road, or is this just another Wednesday shot for you?**

A'JA WILSON: A mixture of both. Feels a little bit better obviously because these are the Finals. These are the moments that you dream of. These are just the times that you see on TV sometimes. You're watching you're like, oh, my God, to be in that building, and it's truly powerful. But like I told Holly, this is God's work. I wish I could take the credit but it's all Him. He's blessed me to be able to be where I am today with people that I love, and that ball goes in the basket and I'm like oh, yeah, that has nothing to do with me. It's the work that He's done through me, and I'm grateful that I can share that gift with everyone, honestly.

**Q. A'ja, I saw your Labubu. Naomi Osaka actually brought a different Labubu throughout the US Open. Is there any special story behind -- I saw the A'ja logo?**

A'JA WILSON: Yeah, my little Labubu got a little -- a lovely fan gave me my little Labubu. It's got a little A1 drip to it. She got a little beanie to her.

This is really -- a fan gave it to me. I was grateful for it. I'm always grateful for fans' gifts. But she's cute.

BECKY HAMMON: What the hell is a Labubu?

A'JA WILSON: Should get y'all some Labubus. We need a hoodie blazer Labubu. We got work to do.

**Q. Becky and A'ja, point of clarification on that final play, you said you drew it up to get A'ja the ball. There was Megan Gustafson setting an off-ball screen for Jackie Young while that was happening. Was that just a live read for her, or was that part of the call?**

BECKY HAMMON: That was just hopefully she just gets some movement behind it so they didn't load up on A. They loaded up on A anyway. AT completely left Megan and went over, but it was -- it did make her a little late. She paused for a second while Jack was coming off that, and

when she went back to go get A, A was already up into her spin and shot, and by that time she gets the eyes on the rim it's going to be tough, especially in that area of the floor which she's used to doing a lot of work there. We're used to see her doing a lot of good work right there.

So it was really just, A, I wanted her to get the last shot, the very last shot possible. That's why I called the time-out with about five seconds left and then it was just about getting her to her spot as clear as I possibly could. I wouldn't say it was some crazy play. She just made a crazy shot.

**Q. How does that shot compare to the one against the Liberty in Game 4 in 2023?**

A'JA WILSON: Ooh, that's tough. Oh, yeah, this one got to be over that one only because it's just, yeah, we got the dub. It was the one that sealed Game 3 for us, and we've never won a Game 3 under Becky Hammon before.

**Q. A'ja, just to circle back on what you talked about to start the press conference and that turnover on the back-door cut, you don't always get a chance to get it back in a game. To get it back that immediately, for it to be the game-winner, what's the feeling? Is it relief? Is it satisfaction? You knew it was going in? Jewell, how much confidence did you guys have in that moment, her getting the ball?**

A'JA WILSON: My biggest thing was just I have to get it back. I said, I don't know, it may not necessarily be me to get it back, but I knew either it was going to be on the defensive end or something. I had to get that one back because that would have crushed my whole soul to know that because that's just something I don't do.

But when I saw the play was for me, I was like, Becky trusts me, so I've got to make something happen.

JEWELL LOYD: Yeah, we have 100 percent confidence in A'ja and the coaching staff. Anyone who's on that bench, honestly. I remember right before going out, I'm like, we're winning this game. Like we are. Thanks, A'ja.

A'JA WILSON: Happy birthday, Chelsea.

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