

NBA Eastern Conference Finals: Heat vs. Celtics

Monday, May 29, 2023

Miami Heat

Jimmy Butler

Game 7: Postgame

Miami Heat 103, Boston Celtics 84

Q. A year ago to the day, we were sitting in a conference room in Miami, and I asked you what you thought you guys needed to get over the threshold, and you said, in part, you knew you could get it done. Why was that belief in that moment so strong, and what does it feel like to be right?

JIMMY BUTLER: I just know why Coach Pat and Coach Spo wanted me to be here, and that's to compete at a high level and to win championships.

I know that the group that they put around me at all times is going to give me an opportunity to do so. So I was always very, very confident in that. I work extremely hard with the team, with (Chris) Brickley, I can score on Remy (Ndiaye) all day every day, as I've posted on Instagram.

I'm just confident. I know the work that we all put into it, so I know what we're capable of. Nobody is satisfied. We haven't done anything. We don't play just to win the Eastern Conference; we play to win the whole thing.

Q. Have you been taken aback by some of the shots Caleb Martin has made? Some of the shots he was hitting tonight and even earlier in the series, did any of them surprise you at all?

JIMMY BUTLER: No. That might have surprised y'all. To the untrained eye, he just looks like he's an undrafted guy who has been in the G League, who has started with Charlotte and now he's here. Started on a two-way contract. That's what it looks like to y'all. To us, he's a hell of a player, hell of a defender, playmaker, shotmaker, all of the above.

Everybody has seen Caleb work on those shots day in, day out. It doesn't surprise us. We have seen it every single day. I'm so proud and happy for him. I think he's going to be even better in the next round, and I don't think he's going to be a surprise to anybody any longer.



Q. Spo was just saying Caleb has the respect of you guys being a competitor. How has he earned that aside from what he's done on the floor for you all?

JIMMY BUTLER: I think that everybody sees what he's doing in the games. But the real work is done when he's in the gym by himself with his trainer, all the countless amounts of reps to prepare him for this moment. He doesn't shy away from it. So many guys on our roster, they never shy away from the big moment. We love them for that and want them to continue to be that. He's been huge for us. He really has been. He's kept us in the game and won us some games on both sides of the floor. If he ain't showed y'all now, he's going to be in this league for a long time.

Q. This was the third game in the series where you guys shot 50 percent from three. Obviously you made some threes, too, but the other guys on the team stepping up and just with incredible shot-making throughout the series.

JIMMY BUTLER: We stay with it. We stay the course. Shoot the open shots. Stay confident. Even when they are not going in, you have to take them. You have to take the right ones. Every one that everybody takes, everybody thinks is going in, and then if you get that same shot, the next possession down, you've got to take it again because we all think it's going in.

Everybody's confidence is so high. We have belief that we can do something incredibly special. So we are going to hit the ground running when we get to Denver, and I like our chances.

Q. I want to ask about something that's been talked about with the Heat for literally decades. You guys came in as an 8 seed, and you survived losing three in a row, and all the history that was coming down at you. How does that apply to Heat culture, what you have been able to accomplish this particular spring?

JIMMY BUTLER: I'm not going to say losing three in a row is part of the Heat culture we like to talk about, because we don't play to lose and we don't want to lose. They are an incredible team over there and they will be for a while. I just think the guys that Coach Spo and Coach Pat put



together, when a guy goes down, the next guy could fill in that gap and do exactly what that guy that went down did, and do it at a high level.

Then be humble enough to know that when that guy comes back, you've got to take a step back and get back in your role. Nobody ever complains. They always do exactly what you ask of them to do, which is why you want to play with guys like that, which is why they are the reason we win so many games. I don't call them role players; I call them teammates, because your role can change any given day, especially how many games I've missed, in and out of lineup, off nights, whatever you want to call it.

But we have some hoopers. We have some real-deal basketball players that can score, can defend and can pass and can win games for us.

Q. You know in order to win a title and in the next round, you're going to have to get everybody to raise their game up, especially on the defensive end. But specific to Jokic, what do you think the key will be to slowing him down in this series?

JIMMY BUTLER: I don't know. I've got two days to figure that out. We have two days to figure that out before Game 1.

So we will lock in on them. But I think we get to enjoy this until midnight, which is right around the corner, and then it's time to lock in on the Nuggets. So I'll be answer that for you when I talk to you on, what, Wednesday I think.

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