

NBA Eastern Conference Finals: Heat vs. Celtics

Monday, May 29, 2023

Boston Celtics

Derrick White

Marcus Smart

Game 7: Postgame

Miami Heat 103, Boston Celtics 84

Q. How do you guys kind of put this into words after losing your third home game in a seven-game series?

DERRICK WHITE: I mean, it's disappointing, obviously. It's disappointing. We got to go out there and compete and, I mean, honestly, losing four games in this series means a lot more than that.

MARCUS SMART: Yeah, to repeat what D-White said. Words can't really explain it. It's tough. But it's the playoffs; it happens. They did a good job. You got to tip your hat off to Miami. They did a good job. So, it is tough, though.

Q. Derrick, it looked like you left kind of grabbing at your leg. What was the issue there and are you all right now?

DERRICK WHITE: I'm not sure. I'll find out more tomorrow.

Q. Is there a potential for you to get an MRI or something tomorrow then?

DERRICK WHITE: Yeah, I mean, I'll be fine. I'm not too worried about it. But I'll find out more tomorrow.

Q. For both of you guys, what was the issue, obviously you guys missed a bunch of shots, but it seemed like they were getting you guys out of rhythm really from the jump. What was the biggest thing that tripped you guys up offensively tonight, aside from the missing shots?

MARCUS SMART: I think that's it. Missing shots. And then they're coming down and hitting shots. It puts a lot of pressure on our defense to get stops. And they were hitting some shots and they got going in a rhythm and we



weren't making ours. So they did a good job of that. They did a good job of that. I think they were, what, 14-of-28 from the three. So, they made a lot of shots tonight and we didn't.

Q. Marcus, how do you assess the consistency of this group as well as the season you ended up having here?

MARCUS SMART: I mean, we had a lot of ups and downs this season. Starting the season off with, obviously, losing our coach and then getting a new one. And we just continued to fight. Things weren't always perfect for us, but we continued to compete.

So, yeah, we were a little inconsistent this year, but I'm still proud of the way we fought. We just got to get better. We will. It happens. Like I said, you credit Miami for this one. They did a great job coming out, executing at the right time and we didn't.

Q. What are the next steps for you individually and this team? What is it going to take to reach that next level?

MARCUS SMART: We all got to go back and look at the film, see what we need to improve and go out there and do it. We've been doing this for a long time, a lot of us have, and that's the beauty of it, we get another chance. We're blessed. God has blessed us with an opportunity.

We just came up short. We get another chance next year and we get to go start -- obviously not the way we want -- but we get to go start to figure out what we need to do next year. I don't know what individually for everybody else, they got to figure it out on their own. But me I got to continue to work on my outside shot, continue to get these guys some avenues to pass to. And just continue to be me. Just continue to lead, continue to be vocal and lead by an example.

Q. Marcus, you talked about the start of this year, obviously an unusual season in a lot of ways. What kind of will stick with you from this season? Obviously, it's like you know more than anyone it's hard to get to this point. These opportunities aren't promised. What's going to stick with you about how this all unfolded?



MARCUS SMART: Just how hard we fought. We put ourselves in a hole down 0-3 and we fought our ass off. We just came up short. Obviously, we didn't reach our goal, but I'm proud of the way we came back and we just didn't give up. We kept fighting. That's all you can ask for from this group. But you definitely tip your hat off to Miami.

Q. Marcus, the defense this year, I mean obviously Defensive Player of the Year, defense was on a string last year, what made it take steps back? How do you guys improve it, how do you guys become a defense-first team again?

MARCUS SMART: We just got to continue to put defense first. We were so bad on offense last year that that was a main focus for us this year. Unfortunately, it took, our defense took a hit from it. We picked it back up, but it happens.

Things happen. Guys inserted to the lineup, taken out, guys get hurt, it's part of the game. It is part of the game.

So we'll be all right. It's something that we're just going to go watch the film and we're all going to come back and talk to each other [about] what we need to get better on, see it and go out there and work on it.

Q. Malcolm was just saying how he felt this team had an offensive identity this year after it was defense for so long. So how do you think that needs to change and what was the issue of having that type of identity?

MARCUS SMART: We're just going out there and put our defense first. Not really worried about shots. Make or miss, defense is key. Because even though you miss shots your defense can save you a lot of the times. A lot of times our defense has been our kryptonite when we're not making shots.

So I think that's it. Just, we just got to understand that shots aren't always going to fall but our effort on defense, we can always control that and you can't control the shots not falling or going in. You take the open ones, you take the right ones and you continue to play defense.

Q. Jayson looked like he got hurt in the first play of the game with the ankle. From your guys' perspective just his effort night and how much do you feel like you guys were pressing more just trying to pick it up for him, knowing that he wasn't able to handle his usual load on the offensive end?

MARCUS SMART: I mean, yeah, he took a fall early. He hurt his ankle really bad early. He could have came out

the game. He stayed in, he tried to fight. Obviously, you can see he wasn't himself. He wasn't as explosive. The ankle was really killing him. He tried to fight, it just didn't go in his favor. It didn't go in any of our favors but we continued just to fit and help him and try to get through.

Then D-White goes out with a knee injury as well and then obviously we know about Malcolm. So, it's tough. At the wrong time. But it's part of the game. Certain things you can't control and getting hurt like that is nothing you can control. So, it just happened at the wrong time.

Q. Can you describe the emotions of this moment, because you mentioned it's been quite the journey for guys to get to this point and just kind of what are you feeling in this moment about the group that obviously everybody enjoyed being around each other so much?

DERRICK WHITE: Yeah, I mean, like we said, it's disappointing. Fell short of the goal that we set at the beginning of the year. But that doesn't change the fact that this is one of the best locker rooms I've been around and I got a lot of love and care for everybody in that locker room. So those moments we had off the court, I'll always remember, and on the court we were pretty good. But we fell a little short of our goal and we got to find ways to get better.

MARCUS SMART: Like he said, we got to find ways. This team has been through a lot. I've been here the longest, obviously. We continue to fight. I love these guys. I love going to work with these guys every day. The coaching staff, the organization is great. Just got to find a way. We fell short. That's part of it. You move on. We continue to fight and that's all we can ask for.

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