

# NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

## Saturday, June 3, 2023

### Miami Heat

### Coach Erik Spoelstra

Practice Day



**Q. Tyler Herro's possibility for Game 2, where does that stand? Is it likely now that if not tomorrow, he will return at some point in the series?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: The status has not changed yet. I'm not trying to be elusive about that. I don't know where that report came out that he was playing Game 2.

All we are focused on right now is his process, continuing to do work and get prepared. Whenever that timeline is, where he's ready to go, I'll let you know.

**Q. The day before Game 1 you said he was definitively out. So a day before Game 2, are you not saying that he is definitively out?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Semantics. Semantics.

**Q. Is he definitively out?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: We're doing this game-by-game. I'll let you know tomorrow. The status hasn't changed. You can read into that.

**Q. Don't want to overstate that they are giving Bam space, but there obviously is like a pocket in the middle of the floor where he has some room to operate. How does what they are doing to Bam, their coverage, differ from what Milwaukee did?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, it's different than Milwaukee. Milwaukee is a little bit more two-on-two. Staying home with the shooter is probably a little bit more like New York, or maybe Chicago.

But what they do, they do very well. You have to make reads. You can't predetermine. You cannot be a robot. We want everybody being aggressive, everybody being a live option.

Obviously, we want to get J.B. and Bam involved as much as possible. They are our two best players. We have to

do it in different ways so it's not just a steady diet of whatever that may be. And there were certain aspects of what we did the other night were very good, and there are other areas offensively where we definitely need to improve and be more intentional.

**Q. Can you tell me what is it in your view that makes the two-man game with Jamal and Jokic such a difficult challenge?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, where do you start? You have two guys that can score 50 in a playoff game. One guy is a triple-double machine that loves to get guys involved. You go down the list of myriad of things you can do defensively, you have to check off some things that you don't really want to do because of both their ability to score and Jokic's ability to create something off-script.

But look, this is what the Finals is about. I said it before Game 1. You're not playing ducks. You're not playing easy competition. You have to find a way to overcome it, even if great players are playing great. We have proven that, and we can win and overcome regardless of how the game is going.

Ideal situation would be if it's on our terms and we are controlling the tenor of the game, but we have also won games where we haven't been able to do that for the entire game.

**Q. I know it's sometimes out of your control, but you only shot six free throws in Boston in Game 7 and only two the other night in Game 1. How much of an emphasis does there have to be on getting to the line more, and is that something you can prioritize when you can't really control it one way or the other?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, but the intentionality of how we want to attack and appropriate spacing and areas where we can be more aggressive, and whether that leads to free throws or not, you can't control that. But certainly the attacks, and we didn't have enough of them.

I thought the free throw disparity was appropriate. Maybe we could have got two, four, six more based on a call here



or a call there. But overall our attack numbers were lower, and that usually translates into lower free throw attempts.

**Q. First, have you revisited anything with your shooters to maintain their "let it fly" mentality, regardless of what happened on Game 1? And even though Denver shot over 50 percent, having them at 104 has to be positive, and where do you go from there?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: At the end of the day, it still ended up in a loss. So, yes, we felt like there were some things that we could do better defensively, but the game could be totally different in Game 2. We have to be open to the competition and do whatever is necessary.

In terms of the shooters, that's pretty simple. Let it fly. Ignite. Once they see two go down, it could be three, it could turn into six just like that (snap fingers). As long as we are getting those clean looks, that's what matters. And obviously we want to have a little more balance with our attacks and paint opportunities, against a team that does a good job taking it away.

**Q. You mentioned with shooters you handled things differently earlier in your career than you do now. I think you mentioned Shane. Can you go through how your approach has changed when guys are struggling?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: I continue to make so many mistakes. It wasn't Shane; it was Mike. But that was from a century ago. I barely remember those times.

Shooters need clarity and a great deal of confidence. And they get that from -- who cares if they get it from the head coach. Yeah, the coach is telling them to shoot it. I'd rather get the volume up and we'll play the percentages.

When you see a bunch of reds in a row, and I'm one of those guys, let's double down and you're going to get a black. Those guys have proven time and time again they are ignitable. That's one of the things they have learned, that you're not going to go 10 for 11 every single game. You still have a bunch of ways to impact the game.

Then that symbiotic relationship between our attacks and our spacing and our shooting that has to be more aligned. We all love the looks that we got, but our attacks were a little bit lower. Want to find a little bit of a better balance with that.

The best thing about it is Bam and Jimmy just infuse a ton of confidence into those guys. They are not going to stop shooting. That's the first hurdle in this league. You can't

get sick at sea when you miss a few. You've got to double down and keep going, especially when they are open, clean looks.

As far as the Mike story, I'll let you tell that another time.

**Q. You had mentioned running into the Denver Nuggets often inside the bubble and having conversations. I'm wondering if there's a lasting lesson that you take away from that 2020 bubble?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Pertaining to the Nuggets?

**Q. No, in general.**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Not necessarily. There's respect. It's moments in between, like, hey, how do you tie this line so I can fish? Those are kind of the conversations (laughter). Certainly wasn't X's and O's or schematics.

**Q. For you personally, given the unusual circumstances that that was --**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Probably more than anything, it was just an incredible life experience, something that hopefully will never happen ever again in our lifetime. When we entered into that bubble, we were just as out of our element as you could probably imagine from the outside. You just did not know how long you would be there.

There was an incredible emotional and mental challenge every single day. I think probably our two groups had real consistent spirit about, all right, this is different. Let's make the most of it, and we have a job to do here. But it was just an extraordinary time and experience.

When you don't know how long you're going to be there -- we ended up being there 98 days -- and you touch down the first day, you're like, all right, what is this going to be like?

But they were just somebody we would bump into a lot.

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