

NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

Sunday, June 4, 2023

Miami Heat

Bam Adebayo

Game 2: Postgame



Miami Heat 111, Denver Nuggets 108

Q. Bam, a popular narrative before the series started was how Denver was maybe going to have a physical advantage in the paint. And it seems like you've really played well here in these last two games, 26 points in Game 1; had some very important plays in today's game. Do you feel like you come into this series with a little bit of a chip on your shoulder, everybody talking about Nikola Jokic and how he is going to dominate the paint and everything?

BAM ADEBAYO: Biggest thing for us, we heard the noise throughout the whole playoffs. Biggest thing for us, we had the will and we had the belief, and we keep finding ways to win.

Q. We have seen this lineup before with Kevin Love starting, what you guys used early in the postseason. But going from Game 1 to Game 2, how much did you feel the difference early on having his size out there? I know he only played 22 minutes, but overall how impactful was he for you guys?

BAM ADEBAYO: K-Love is impactful even when he's not in the game. You come to the bench, he's always talking to you, telling you what he sees. K-Love has been here, what, five times? Four times? So he has seen everything but the win at this point.

The biggest thing for us is, I'm glad he's on our team. He gives us that extra energy, that extra spark, whatever we need. He's all hands on deck.

Q. Spo talked when he was in here a little while ago about how you have the toughest defensive assignment in the series but you have an enormous offensive responsibility, too. Do you look at this as maybe the most important seven games of your career, just given that he is an incredible tough cover, but this team, your team, is best when they are running offense through you, and you're a big part of the

offense as well, and it's tough to do both at the same time?

BAM ADEBAYO: I mean, this is the Finals. This is what we live for. This is the opportunity that we have. This is the opportunity that we don't want to let slip away.

So biggest thing for me, man, I go out there, I play with a will, I play with passion and I try to leave it all on the court.

Q. This is not Gabe's first big performance in these playoffs. What do you think he's proven during this run?

BAM ADEBAYO: Undrafted players can start in the Finals, be productive and it doesn't mean anything that he's undrafted.

He's giving guys who are going through his path or down that road of, you're not this, you're not that, you're not this, and he's carving a space for himself.

I feel like a lot of people are going to know who Gabe Vincent is.

Q. At what point did you realize Gabe Vincent was going to become as impactful as a player as he's become for this team?

BAM ADEBAYO: Man, when he torched us in the Olympics, in the exhibition game facing Nigeria. He came out with that type of energy, that type of voracity and that type of anger. I felt like, from there, he's one of us.

Q. In Game 1 Jokic was efficient and had 14 assists. Tonight he had 41 points, but his assists were all the way down to four. Is there anything you guys did differently to dissuade the play-making aspect of his game?

BAM ADEBAYO: Just trying to take away the cuts. I feel like that's a big part of the offense, the cut, because he's a great passer, their cuts. He sees open guys and just making them all try to take difficult shots.



Q. In the fourth quarter, that three-man game that you guys did on that left side seemed to produce a lot of open looks for you guys. Did you see something with Jokic guarding you where you sensed maybe you could take advantage of something or you could see the defense being a little confused? Was there anything in particular strategy-wise that you saw that you knew would work for you?

BAM ADEBAYO: We just made winning plays. We know they are going to try to stop Duncan from shooting threes. You know they are going to guard him. Then you have Jimmy slipping to the rim. I feel like I'm one of the great passers in this league, so just making plays down the stretch.

Q. I know he's done it a lot in your time with Miami, but UD grabbed Spo's chair at one point in a timeout tonight. When he does that, first of all, what was the message tonight if you can repeat it in a PG-13 variety, and secondly when he does that, it has impact, but does he still pick his spots on when to play coach and when not to?

BAM ADEBAYO: I wouldn't even say it's playing coach. I think it's just UD being UD. He's in that role now where he's a vet. He's sharing wisdom. He's been in this league 20 years. He's won championships. He knows what it's like to be in these moments.

To have a guy like that on your bench, it's more important than people think he is. He doesn't change. You know he's going to be honest with you. He's going to say it like it is, so I can't even repeat what he said in the huddle because it will just be a couple words.

But he's so involved and so invested in us. He wants us to succeed. He wants us to have this great opportunity. He wants us to be successful.

Black lives matter, people.

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