

NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

Miami Heat

Jimmy Butler

Practice Day



Q. Jimmy, just a word about something that you say a lot, but I think it's important to revisit. Just the importance of Bam and everything that he does for you all on both ends of the floor.

JIMMY BUTLER: Yeah, Bam has been playing incredibly well this entire Playoffs, for sure this series, and that's when he's got like the toughest matchup by far on the defensive side of the ball.

He plays with so much energy. He never takes a possession or a play off. You've got to really respect him for that.

Then on the offensive end, he is doing everything for us. We need him to continue to be that. He has been there for us all year long, and like I said, he is going to be the reason why we win the championship.

Q. If we can rewind, you've talked before about having one D-I scholarship offer. What made you decide to go the JUCO route with Tyler?

JIMMY BUTLER: I don't know, but I'm grateful for Tyler Junior College. Taught me a lot about the game of basketball. I had so much belief in myself. Not to say that I would be up here talking to y'all in the Finals, but I just knew I could be a really good basketball player, maybe make a little bit of money doing basketball overseas.

They taught me a lot at Tyler Junior College about the game of basketball. And then, go to Marquette for three years.

I think JUCO just so happened to be like the best thing for me. I couldn't tell you that at the time. I was frustrated that I wasn't playing Division I basketball, but my goodness, I've got so much love for Tyler Junior College.

Q. With your previous Finals experience with the Heat being in the bubble, how much excitement do you have for this home crowd tomorrow, and was the

excitement level in Denver ratcheted up even more than the Conference Finals and other playoff games you've been in?

JIMMY BUTLER: It's always a blessing to play in the Finals, for sure, like in front of a heckling away crowd. But I'm so happy for the city of Miami, this organization. They deserve to be in the Finals. They deserve to win the Finals and win a championship. We will do everything in our power to make that happen.

I just know that the energy in there is going to be unmatched. It has been throughout this entire Playoffs run, and even in the regular season. I know they're going to show up. I know they're going to show out. I know we're going to do the same.

Q. When you guys talk about Heat culture, things like commitment to winning and sacrifice and playing with an edge, it seems like a lot of that is selection, who comes in and becomes a part of this team. You've been elsewhere; is it prevalent that there are guys who would not make it here because of their priorities?

JIMMY BUTLER: I don't know. I don't have too many bad things to say about any organization or any player that I've played with. I know that the guys that we have here fit that mold to the T. Everything that they do here is about winning. It's not about anything else.

So we ride with that. We think about that. Nobody really thinks about the past or where they have been, or the future where they might be. I think the best part about this squad, this time, is we're in it for right now, every single day, and that's what the Heat culture is about.

Q. Just to follow up, have you seen instances where the culture or you guys have been able to convert somebody and really make them appreciate what it is that goes on here, or do they just not show up at the door?

JIMMY BUTLER: No, everybody, everybody that walks through this door or a part of this organization, past, present, for sure the future, you have to buy in to



everything that we're about here, which is about one another, not about you, and about winning.

If you can do that, you can handle all of that, you're going to flourish here. Each one of the guys on this roster, everybody in this organization, front office, all the way down the line, it's about somebody else, and it's always about winning.

Q. There's a weird stat floating around where you guys are outscored in the first quarter, the second quarter, and the third quarter, but you outscored Denver by a miraculous sort of margin in the fourth. We saw what happened in Game 2. But is there something in particular you guys have coming into the fourth quarter? Do you take things from the first three? Is it some magical adjustment? How do you explain that?

JIMMY BUTLER: I don't know. It's just winning basketball. We just happen to win, and it looks like we're playing good in the fourth quarter. I can't tell you the answer to that question. I wish that wasn't even a thing.

I don't know if anybody knows that except for you. We definitely don't know that. We just want to win. I'm telling you, we just want to win, and if it happens to be coming back in the fourth quarter, then that's what it is.

If it happens to be holding a lead in the fourth quarter, I pray that that's what it is. At the end of the day, we've just got to find a way to win.

Q. I know it's only two games, but your own self-evaluation, how do you think you have played so far in these two games?

JIMMY BUTLER: I think I've done great. I think I've done what I've needed to do to get us to 1-1. I hope it was 2-0 in our favor; it is not. I don't pay attention to stats. Not going to lie, I've said that all along. As long as we win, everybody is playing great.

If we lose, and I hope we don't do that too often, everybody can blame me for whatever reason. I'm not worried about it. But nobody can blame anybody for anything whenever we win. That's all that we focus on.

Q. Coach was praising your defensive effort first game against Gordon, last game a lot of time on Murray. Wondering what it takes to be able to down-shift from a big like Gordon to a point guard like Murray and the specific challenges -- the importance of quieting down Murray in this particular attack?

JIMMY BUTLER: He is one of the heads of the snake. I think it's a two-headed snake in this instance. Bam has a really tough job to do. I think time and time again, I have a tough job on Murray. He scores in so many different ways. He has the ball consistently and he is making all the right reads, all the right passes.

But it's just about effort, contesting every shot, body on body, making everything difficult for him. I've got to continually do that because I know if I lead the way on that end along with Bam, everybody has to follow suit.

It's all about doing your job, doing what is asked of you on any given night and hoping, praying that you did enough to get a win.

Q. You've been able to create a ton of open shots for your teammates throughout this series. I was wondering from your perspective, is Denver defending you differently at all compared to the Celtics, Knicks, and Bucks in the first three rounds?

JIMMY BUTLER: Yeah, I think it changes from series to series, maybe even game to game. If my guys are open, I'm throwing it every single time. I hope I throw it on the money perfect to where you can just step in and shoot it.

Like I've always said, I've got so much faith in them. I can't win without them. I've tried that before in other places where I just think I can do it. No, that's not the answer.

Here, we understand that I need those guys. I hope those guys need me a little bit, too. But it's like, it's perfect basketball. We love playing for and with one another. If you're open, I'm passing it.

Q. Right along with this, you've been talking all series about making the right play, making the right pass. You haven't had that Jimmy game, I guess, since the first round or maybe the first game of the Conference Finals where you had 35. How do you know when those come about, and do you ever find yourself pressing to score like that when you haven't in a while?

JIMMY BUTLER: No. I'm not a scorer. Just because I score a lot of points one game, that doesn't make you a scorer. I'm not a volume shooter. I don't do any of that. I don't press to score. I only press to win.

If I pass the ball every possession, if we win, I don't care. If I shoot the ball every possession and we win, I don't care. This Playoff Jimmy narrative is not a thing. I just want to win along with everybody else. I don't worry about too much other things aside from winning.

Q. Bam Adebayo just told us the best advice he received for the Finals was from D-Wade in 2020. Can you tell us the best advice you received for playing the Finals and who gave it to you?

JIMMY BUTLER: It's always D-Wade just telling me to be myself and be who I am, create my own story and go out there and compete and do what you love to do, and that's win.

He's been in my corner for a very long time now. I'm very grateful. He is a huge reason why I'm here. I don't like to be compared to that guy, but the one thing that I do want to be like him is a champion. That's what I've got to go do.

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