

NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

Friday, June 9, 2023

Miami Heat

Coach Erik Spoelstra

Game 4: Postgame

Denver Nuggets 108, Miami Heat 95

Q. Jokic exited the game and you went on a quick 5-0 run, cut it to five. From your view, what happened from there that allowed them to hang on?

ERIK SPOELSTRA: It felt like we had opportunities offensively to score. Some strange things happened on some of these possessions, or just misses in the paint or some untimely miscues that led to turnovers. It's not as if they are scoring 130 on us. Just the context of when they would score or a breakdown that just kind of kept things at bay.

Every time we felt like we got it to six or eight, they were able to push it to 12. That was certainly a frustrating part of the game. Brown was a big part of -- some of his random drives and plays in the middle of the paint when you're expecting it to be Murray or somebody else.

Q. Three out of the four games in this series, your team has been under 100 points. Part of that is slower pace, but what have they done to really disrupt you guys on offense?

ERIK SPOELSTRA: It's been a little bit different each game. Tonight it was probably those quick hands, either stripping us when we had advantages on drives, the kick balls that Jokic does very well, deflected passes or just some miscues. It's not like we had 25 turnovers. But whatever the turnovers were -- 16 15 or 16 -- they just led to scores that were deflating going the other way when it felt like we had an advantage.

So it's probably a combination of some of those timely against-us turnovers and then some makeable shots that we didn't make during those stretches when the game was in the balance, when it felt like it was four, six, eight, during those moments.

I'll have to go back and track that, but that's where I felt like probably the advantages were missed the most during



those moments.

Q. Neither Murray nor Jokic shot particularly efficiently but do you feel like you got a real containment on their actions and what was being produced for the other guys off their actions?

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, it's tough to say because Jokic was in foul trouble so they went to other things. Jokic shot some threes. That changes the dynamic a little bit.

For the most part, I thought that that part of the game was okay. It's the Gordon dunks or cuts; Porter had a couple cuts; and then Brown, when Jokic was out, those drives and plays that were kind of just random plays, attacking plays, which he is fully capable of doing. Those were probably the most costly things.

Q. You praised the will of the group throughout this whole stretch. What is the biggest message you want to impart --

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Everybody is already talking -- sorry to cut you off. Everybody is already talking about it. I've been in those games, Game 5. Those are not the easiest games, at home.

All we're focused on -- I told the guys, feel whatever you want to feel tonight. It's fine. You probably shouldn't sleep tonight any amount of time. I don't think anybody will. We have an incredibly competitive group. We've done everything the hard way, and that's the way it's going to have to be done right now, again.

All we are going to focus on is getting this thing back to the 305. Get this thing back to Miami. And things can shift very quickly.

It's going to be a gnarly game in Denver that is built for the competitors that we have in our locker room. By the time we are getting on that plane, all we're thinking about is get this thing back to Miami.

We get an opportunity to play a super competitive game in a great environment. That's going to be an awesome



environment. Our guys are built for that. They love that, and particularly, I'm sure, everything in the next, whatever, what do we have, three days in between. Yeah, we understand what the narrative will be, but that's the way it is with our team.

Q. Considering how much you guys have already overcome this postseason, how much confidence does that give you, obviously heading into a three-win

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ERIK SPOELSTRA: It doesn't matter about confidence or not confidence or how we feel or what our mood is. Our guys love to compete. Our guys love to compete. We get another opportunity to compete and take this thing one step at a time. Get this thing back to the 305. We do that, all right (snapping fingers). That's how quickly things can change.

Obviously, we have some things to figure out, but we have an extra day to do that. The mindset, you don't have to question that. That's what everybody is already thinking about.

Q. The energy that Kevin Love gave you to start the third quarter, gave him a pretty vicious slap when he came out. Those stretches, is it that simple, that's what's required?

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, it's going to be inspiring plays. You stack inspiring play after inspiring play. Right when I took him out, because that's when he was going to come out, it was about four and change, that was one of the most impressive multiple-effort rebounds. It reminded me, that's something Dennis Rodman would do.

Then we are going to stack a bunch more of those kind of plays in Game 5. Our guys love this kind of deal with the stakes and the context of everything. We're not even going to think about what's after that. All we're focused on is getting this thing back to Miami.

Q. You mentioned Gordon earlier. I believe he was the leading scorer out of everyone tonight. Seems like a lot of times he takes advantage of his size in the paint. Just in general when a player like that has a size advantage and they are using it, where do you kind of begin to counteract that? How do you begin to counteract something like that?

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, I felt like the size was more of a factor in Game 1. I think there was miscues, lack of communication or rotations tonight.

Now, he is fully capable of doing what he is able to do.

He's big, he's athletic, he's a great finisher and he has a real good synergy, all that stuff. So you have to respect that, and then conquer it.

Tonight, there are some more relief points that I think we could have handled better. That doesn't guarantee that we would have been able to get the stop. But my instinct says, before I got to the film, that it felt like more of those kind of things.

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