

# NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Miami Heat

Coach Erik Spoelstra

Practice Day



**Q. I drew the short straw today so I'm going to ask -- any update on Tyler, his availability? Has he passed any contact tests?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: I'm not that irascible, am I? (Laughter.) Ramona and I are in a great place. I was not talking about Ramona. Sometimes people read me wrong.

So we're talking about Herro. No new update. He's doing another contact workout today. I probably won't have anything for you tomorrow morning -- oh, we don't have a shootaround.

**Q. So go through the same song and dance tomorrow?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, somebody else draw that next straw.

**Q. Today Novak Djokovic, after he won the French Open and his record 23rd Grand Slam title, he said, "Believe it and create it, that's what I've done." So as Miami Heat, you guys believed it, during the playoffs, during the Conference Finals, and right now how do you create it?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, we were actually just reading that. He was talking about the Mamba Mentality. What a spectacular win and career. He's talked about that mental side of the game.

We have a very mentally tough team. We do believe in that. We have a big goal and, from our standpoint, nothing has changed. It is extremely challenging to accomplish that ultimate title. We have a very stubborn and defiant group, and I think it's good to have a little bit of defiance from time to time.

**Q. I know the three-point arc has been a bellwether in this series, and as the series has gone on, the number of open threes you guys have gotten has decreased a little bit. What do you feel about the process the**

**offense has been generating as opposed to the results? How do you feel about the execution of it?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Yeah, we need to do a better job, just overall, with our offense, some of the details and how we can shift their defense. They definitely made an adjustment to try to stay at home on three-point shooters. It's not the first time we have faced that. I think that's a great compliment to them and how important they are to our offense.

We just have to do it better. There's certain things that I thought we did great in Game 3, and then there's different things we did great in Game 4. We just need to put it all together. It might not be perfect, but put more things together that are in our strength zones, even against what they are trying to get accomplished.

That's what the deal is. They are trying to take away certain things. We are trying to get to certain things. How can you get to it and how can you get it on your terms.

**Q. A few days ago Jamal Crawford said that Nikola Jokic, he is so good that he's not even playing against Miami Heat players, he's playing against Spoelstra. What do you think about those words?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: Look at me. I look ridiculous. I'm not out there playing. He's not playing against me (laughter). That's absurd. No.

**Q. Speaking of absurd, it's the first time I've ever asked a question like this. What does it say about your mascot that he can take a punch from Conor McGregor, bounce back and still be ready to go likely in the next home game?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: That's the Miami Heat toughness that we're talking about (laughter). He should have been allowed to take the first swing. Yeah. We won't reveal who that is, but yeah, he can take a punch and get back up. He's not going to miss any time.

**Q. Somewhere along the same lines, you like to use the word "gnarly." You say you have a gnarly team.**



**You said Game 5 is going to be gnarly. What do you mean by that, and where does that come from as it relates to this team?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: We have just -- I've used this term before, savage competitors. They love the ultimate challenges and the ultimate competition. Some of the fiercest battles were back in training camp when we were competing and splitting up teams. We could barely get through those full-contract practices without everybody screaming at each other, yelling at the coaches that are officiating, arguing about the scores. It's that level of intensity when they are playing and competing for a score.

Love playing in these kind of environments where the crowd is going to be great tomorrow. Everybody is counting us out. We're used to that. But ultimately it has to be decided between those four lines. The crowd is not going to decide it. The narratives are not going to decide it. Whatever the analytics are about 3-1, that ain't going to decide it. It's going to be decided between those four lines, whose game can get to whose game and ultimately win at the end. That's what our guys love.

So we're looking forward to it.

**Q. The other day after the game, you said let the players feel how they feel, they probably shouldn't sleep. How did the players take the game, the flight and getting here? What was that range of emotion like?**

ERIK SPOELSTRA: By the time we got on the flight, everybody was great. We get to compete in this kind of game tomorrow night. Everybody is looking forward to that. If you're a real competitor, you want this. You want the feeling that you have today, tomorrow, leading up to the game, how you feel in your heart and your stomach when that ball gets tipped up.

Yeah, we've had setbacks. That's part of the playoffs. Tough losses. Our group has shown a resilience to bounce back and show that defiance time and time again.

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