

NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

Monday, June 12, 2023

Miami Heat

Bam Adebayo

Max Strus

Game 5: Postgame

Denver Nuggets 94, Miami Heat 89

Q. Bam, I know it's tough right now, but can you describe what this year was like and what this run was like with those guys to get to this point when so many times people doubted y'all?

BAM ADEBAYO: Man, it was a whirlwind because going into this season, we expected -- obviously we didn't get off to a great start in the beginning of the season, and then go through adversity, guys being out, playing with eight guys, still trying to find a way, missing shots, everybody counting us out.

You lose the first Play-In game, then win the second one and you go on an unbelievable run to the Finals.

The only thing I can say is, man, they need to put more respect on undrafted players. They are still basketball players at the end of the day, and obviously you've seen, they can take you there.

So for me, it was a joy to get this far and have these type of guys, undrafted, fighting to make a name for themselves. And they fought to the Finals. Came up short, but I don't care what anybody says. You can never count these guys out.

Q. Bam, you've been facing these big men in the postseason. How big is the physicality of Jokic? How difficult is it? I know it's a bit different from like Robert Williams and other guys, but is his size that much of a factor out there?

BAM ADEBAYO: No, he just makes the right play every possession. I feel like that's the biggest thing about the player that he is. He's going to try to make the right play every possession, no matter if he's scoring the ball or passing it, getting a high-key assist. It doesn't matter. I feel like that's what makes him dynamic.



Q. What stood out to you in that final stretch, just under two to play there, you guys are back and forth, and the opportunities were squandered away a little. What stood out to you?

BAM ADEBAYO: It definitely wasn't the last two minutes. That's what everybody usually tries to take away from the game, the last two minutes, what we did wrong or what happened. I think through the duration of the game, they got a lot of relief points, offensive rebounds, run-outs in transition. You know, us on missed communications and so forth. So I wouldn't say it was just the last two minutes.

Q. Max, for you, what made this season so unique?

MAX STRUS: Hard to put into words right now. Still trying to get over this. We didn't want to be done. I think the biggest part about that was the fun we had together, this group, after we picked up Kevin Love and Cody Zeller. It was just unique how we all came together and enjoyed this run together and just had fun.

I didn't want it to end tonight. Wanted to keep going. Through all the adversity we had all season, it's hard to put into words how grateful we are for the year and grateful to be in the position we had.

But we came up short. It's going to be a lesson that we've all learned, and we'll be better for our careers going forward.

Q. Bam, there's going to be a lot of talk about what you guys have accomplished over the last four years, but what do you think about the future of this team and how y'all can build off of these accomplishments going into these next few years?

BAM ADEBAYO: You take the experience of this season and if you can just bottle that up, and everybody just have their own portion or rewritten story of it. The No. 1 thing I think would be will.

So looking forward, I think this is one of my favorite teams I've ever been a part of because we willed our way through



ups and downs. We willed our way through the things that people said we couldn't do.

So for me, the future, I just take these lessons and I apply them to the next season. Whenever we go through adversity, I'm always going to look back and be like, we've been through adversity before. You know, having the 8 seed in the Finals isn't normal. It isn't easy. People think it depends on what seeding you are is how good you're going to be. To me, that's bull---, and obviously this season showed different.

So just looking forward, I'm always going to believe that we've got a chance.

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