

NBA Finals: Heat vs. Nuggets

Monday, June 12, 2023

Denver Nuggets

Nikola Jokic

Game 5: Postgame



Nuggets 94, Heat 89

Q. Nikola, after the Lakers series, you were asked who are you most happy for, who are you most excited for, and you said Jamal. Now that you guys are NBA champions and you look around the locker room and look at your teammates, who are you most happy for?

NIKOLA JOKIC: All of them. I think it's all of them. I'm happy for DJ. I'm happy for Jeff. I'm happy for Ish. Literally for everybody. Mikey, he had three surgeries and still came here and helped us win a championship. Jamal, who had surgery and didn't play well at the beginning of the season, like I told you guys, but we all know what he's capable of.

KCP, he brought us the championship, Bruce, Christian Braun. Literally every single player. Every player on this team.

Q. Nikola, 41st pick in the draft. It's been an incredible journey for you to get to this moment. How would you describe the emotions of this all?

NIKOLA JOKIC: It's good. It's good. We did a job. I think we played the best basketball I'm not going to say in the postseason, but I think we were there playing the best basketball. Today we didn't make shots, but still, we defend.

I think it's a great journey. Like you said, 41st pick, but that doesn't matter. When you're here, you're a player. They have a couple guys that weren't even drafted and they're still playing and contributing to them to win.

Q. You've often talked about how you don't care about MVPs; you care about a championship. What does this championship mean for you compared to the MVPs, and Finals MVP, and when you look at the future, what is this team capable of because I think you have the starting five locked down for the next couple of years.

NIKOLA JOKIC: I didn't know that. That's great. But to be honest, I don't think about the next year. I'm going to ask the coach to give me a couple weeks more off so I can be ready for the season.

That's supposed to be a joke, and you didn't laugh. Good job, guys.

Yes, but we have -- it's not the starting unit. It's the whole team. Since day one in San Diego, it was something different about this team. I felt it. I felt some different energy and every day since then I had the same feeling. I'm not really optimistic guy, but that gave me hope that we can do something.

Q. European basketball, so much success in the NBA. You're one of the best players to come out of Europe. Can you talk about what Europe's impact is in the NBA right now?

NIKOLA JOKIC: Yes, we have an impact on things, but of course Americans are the majority of the league, and they're supposed to be because they are -- USA won I don't know how many gold medals in a row and then Spain won it last year. But I think there are some European players and there will be some European players contributing to win and giving that edge to the good teams to win championship.

Q. Coach has talked a lot about part of the reason this group is here is because the organization was patient, that you guys have all been together for quite a while and that you were patient through the injuries and through the last couple years, but even stretching further back. How important was that, and how important is that for a player to know that the organization believes in the core and believes in the group that you've had for quite a while?

NIKOLA JOKIC: Yes. I mean, especially if you're a young player. I came here when I was 20. Jamal came here when he was 21? Or 20? Where is he? I don't know. I'm by myself?



Yes, the core, but if you want to be a success, you need a couple years. You need to be bad, then you need to be good, then when you're good you need to fail, and then when you fail, you're going to figure it out.

I think experience is something that is not what happened to you. It's what you're going to do with what happened to you.

Yes, Jamal was injured. Yes, we lose the first round or second round in the Playoffs. I don't even remember. Who remembers. But there is a process that you need to -- there is steps that you need to fill, and there is no shortcuts. It's a journey, and I'm glad that I'm part of the journey.

Q. You said after the Lakers win, you said you were surprised that you didn't feel more. I'm curious what you are feeling right now and if you're looking forward to a parade coming up in Denver.

NIKOLA JOKIC: When is parade?

Q. Thursday.

NIKOLA JOKIC: No. I need to go home. (Laughter).

I mean, we succeed in our jobs, and we won the whole thing. It's an amazing feeling. But like I said before, it's not everything in the world. I think. Okay, I won it. Okay, not I, we won it. But I think it's not the most important thing in the world still. There is a bunch of things that I like, that I like to do. Probably that's a normal thing. Nobody likes his job, or maybe they do. They're lying. (Laughter).

But it's a good feeling when you know that you did something that nobody believes, and it's just us, it's just the organization, Denver Nuggets believing in us, every player believing in each other, and I think that's the most important thing.

Q. Special to have your daughter up there on the stage with you?

NIKOLA JOKIC: Yes, not just daughter, my wife who was with me since day one, even in Belgrade, my brother that I live with my brother. Actually, we all lived together in one moment, so it was a circus. But they are somebodies that are in my life. It means a lot, and without them I'm not going to be here 100 percent.

Q. Nikola, there was a timeout in the third quarter when you guys were down, and you're slamming the chairs, you're yelling over there. What were you so fired up about, and how do you feel like your

teammates and you guys responded after that?

NIKOLA JOKIC: I didn't slam the chair, but I like how you make it bigger. Yes, I yell at them because we were just shooting threes, and I think it was like 4-on-3, we could just get an easy layup or score the ball. In that situation, it means a lot -- like to score a ball. Especially it's a low-scoring game, we didn't make shots, they didn't make shots. It was 90-something, 80-something game. I think easy points are something that kills it.

In that situation, emotions, yes, I yell at them, but I think they're used to it. Sometimes I yell at them, sometimes I cheer them but that's part of the family, part of the team.

Q. You got KCP pretty good up there. I'm wondering if anyone got you as well in the locker room?

NIKOLA JOKIC: I don't remember, but -- yes, I think Sparky got me. But it's a great emotions. Everything is in a good positive way.

Q. Novak just won the French Open, you just won the Finals MVP and the championship. Is this the greatest year of Serbian athletes?

NIKOLA JOKIC: Got to be. Congratulations. I'm going to see if he texted me, no? I don't know. Oh, my phone.

Q. How many texts do you have?

NIKOLA JOKIC: A lot. A lot. I'm not going to -- I'm going to turn off the phone.

Sport is something that always in Serbia was something that put in front of us everybody, even like 10, 20 years ago, whatever, but now when we have Djokovic who won, probably the best ever. For us he's the best ever of course, and now we have our NBA championship, and I think it's a really good moment to be a Serbian.

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