

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Jason Kidd

Game 1: Pregame



**Q. Jason, it takes a lot of work for these players to get to this level. Part of that work is the experience that they have in the G League. What does it say that 22 alumni are represented in the Finals from the G League?**

JASON KIDD: Yeah, I think it's a great number. Also lets you know that the G League is doing the right thing. The development of the G League and being able to have those players participate on the biggest stage.

Again, 22? That's a lot. That's a great honor, and hopefully one of them can have an impact in this series.

**Q. Luka and Kyrie have seen a lot of different defenses, especially throughout the Playoffs. How do you expect Boston to defend them, at least to start the series?**

JASON KIDD: Well, you're talking about the second-best defense. We saw the best defense in Minnesota, so now we're going against the second best. Understanding they have a lot of great defenders one-on-one, so we expect that they're going to continue to throw different bodies at Luka and Ky. Those two as our quarterbacks have to be able to read who's guarding them and then being able to get the right guys in the pick-and-roll.

We truly believe those two will make the right decisions, but when you talk about individual defense, Boston is one that will read a lot of the pick-and-rolls but also in isos just play one-on-one.

**Q. There's been reports that the Lakers might be interested in Dan Hurley, which kind of raised the old questions about whether college coaches can succeed in the NBA. You went straight from playing to coaching without being an assistant. Everybody has had their own path. Do you think there's any one way to do this or any commonalities among coaches who have succeeded, regardless whether they were an NBA assistant first, a college assistant first, whatever the**

**path may be?**

JASON KIDD: Yeah, that's a great question. I think there's a lot of different paths. I'm happy when you talk about Hurley being mentioned as a candidate, JJ being mentioned, two different paths that could become head coaches in this league. Both basketball IQs extremely high. Whoever the Lakers choose, it's up to them.

But when you talk about championships, Hurley has won two at UConn. I've gotten to play with Hurley in high school. He is a warrior. He's a champion. Coaching runs deep in their blood in that family. So if he was to become a Laker, that's incredible for him and his family but also for the Lakers.

But JJ also has a basketball IQ and understands how to play the game the right way, and so either candidate is going to be great for the Lakers to choose from, but the path, there's a lot of different paths. Mark Jackson set the path for us, who've gotten older, who could not move, to figure out what we can do next.

So when you talk about the path, Mark Jackson set the path. I'll always thank Mark privately that he gave us old-timers a chance to do something and still be involved in the game at a high level, and so I chose that path and I got lucky that the owners believed that I could do it.

**Q. We all know how much winning the 2011 championship meant to you. Would becoming the first former superstar-turned-coach to win a championship match or exceed that for you?**

JASON KIDD: Yeah, that's a great question. I haven't really thought about that -- 2011, at the end of that game, just understanding what -- there's no one else to play. We're playing our best basketball, and being rookies, we didn't really know how to celebrate winning a championship.

But when you sit there and you digest the situation of understanding that you just won a championship, it's just surreal because as a kid that's what you dream about. As a kid, you're watching Game 1 Boston against Dallas, and that's all you're working for is to be able to win a



championship because you want to be like Magic, you want to be like Mike.

To be able to do that in '11 was incredible. It's something that I will always treasure. That group of guys that we're linked to with Rick Carlisle as a coach, who led us was incredible.

When we started that journey, no one had us winning a championship, so that was cool, too.

**Q. What did you tell your players, especially the younger players, about the stage tonight, those who haven't been here before?**

JASON KIDD: It's no different than the Western Conference stage. It's basketball. It's just a little bit more of you guys.

But to embrace, as I talked this morning before we started talking about Boston, was the guys who get all the attention or most of the attention, share it with the younger guys who aren't getting interviews. When it is time for them to get interviewed, they know how to handle it.

I just shared that with the team this morning, to understand Ky and Luka, this is also a great time to share how to handle things with the younger players because a lot of them haven't been in this situation.

Luka has been in this situation since he was born. Ky has been in this situation for a couple times now. For those guys to be able to share it with them is my message.

The basketball message is it's basketball, to have fun and embrace it and enjoy it.

**Q. Being a former All-Star, Hall of Fame point guard like yourself, how has that helped your relationship with Kyrie Irving, and how excited are you for him to be in this Finals and to see how he's been embraced in this journey through the Playoffs?**

JASON KIDD: Yeah, I think when you talk about Ky and Luka as our quarterbacks, the respect that we have for one another, understand we all three have played the same position. Those two are a little bit more gifted than I am.

The trust for one another for Ky -- myself, I've known Ky since I played in New Jersey, to see his journey, he's a champion. He's won, and now has us back into the Finals on the biggest stage. He's always enjoyed this situation.

He always gets to celebrate his birthday first, even though we're born on the same day. But just to understand what

he's gone through, that you can grow from different situations, and he's definitely done that, and he's really embraced Dallas, and he's playing his best basketball yet.

**Q. I was just curious, only three players I believe have won their first championship the year 17 or later. You're one of them. AI is trying to do the same this year. What have you made of AI's perseverance throughout his career getting here, and what do you remember about getting through that many years? I think both you guys lost in the Finals before you finally won one. What do you remember about trying to get there and persevering through all these years?**

JASON KIDD: Yeah, I think when you talk about AI's journey, it's been incredible. It just seems like he's getting younger. He's been on great teams. He's always been a great teammate from afar, from what I've heard. Just understanding his skill set, being able to guard everyone on the floor as a teammate, being able to also stretch the floor, being able to shoot the three, and so longevity, he's doing something right when you talk about eating and taking care of your body and also mentally, because it can become draining. It can become where maybe I want to get on with my life and do something different.

But again, his goal is to try to win a championship. Our goal is to try to delay that. But again, he's going to be one that's going to have an impact in this series.

**Q. With the amount of play-making guards Boston has on the floor at the same time, does that make it harder to want to put two on the ball, or do you still have to throw multiple different coverages at them?**

JASON KIDD: Yeah, they've seen every coverage just like Luka and Ky, so we've got to be able to change it up. We can't give them a steady diet of one thing. They'll pick you apart.

Again, when you get multiple bodies on the ball, that's when the three comes into play. Hopefully we can stay out of that situation.

**Q. Understandably you're getting a lot of questions about 2011, but it was 30 years ago this month that the Mavs drafted you. What would 21-year-old Jason Kidd think about what 51-year-old Jason Kidd is doing right now?**

JASON KIDD: Laugh.

No, I think that's a great question. I think when you talk about at 21, you're naïve in understanding that you think you're going to win a championship because of Jimmy

[Jackson] and Jamal [Mashburn], and you've got three young babies out there, and you forget about MJ and all the other great players in the league, John Stockton, Karl Malone. At that time the 21-year-old would say that you have to be crazy to get into coaching.

But to continue to keep working on your craft and understanding at some point you're going to be able to help a group of young men win a championship. I would have believed that, and I was hoping that I could get them across the finish line.

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