

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

P.J. Washington Jr.

Game 1: Postgame

Boston Celtics 107, Dallas Mavericks 89

Q. Luka just came up here and said they were playing you guys one-on-one, he had one assist and you guys had I think one corner three going into the fourth quarter. What effect did you sense that that had on the offense?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I don't really think the offense was our problem tonight. I think they hit a bunch of threes that we need to do a better job of contesting. Had a bunch of offensive rebounds that led to second-chance points. That's what we need to focus on.

Offense will come. We are good enough to score. So not really worried about that side of the ball.

Q. You guys had a stretch there early on in the third quarter where you cut the lead down to eight. Seemed like you had built some momentum. What can you point to from that stretch that worked, that allowed you guys to carve into the lead and how do you replicate it going forward?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I feel like we guarded better in the second half. Got downhill. Got in transition and we settled down.

Obviously had a week off. So tough game coming in here Game 1. But we'll be better Game 2 and we know what we need to work on.

Q. When Kyrie is having a game like that, and obviously he's hearing it from the fans, I guess how does that impact you all on the floor? And then I guess what do you say to them in that moment to lift them up?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: Keep going. He's a special player. He's a special guy. So at the end of the day we've just got to keep encouraging him, like he's encouraging us.



We're not really worried about the crowd or anything like that. We're here as a team and we're going to stick together.

Q. In the third quarter, we saw you going full court and going for a tough left hand layup. Can you share some thoughts that you had in that moment? Because it really looked like you didn't give up and you still believed in you as a team. I thought it was a very intense moment. Can you share some thoughts?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I was just trying to take some of the pressure off Kyrie and Luka bringing the ball up. I feel like I can get downhill versus some of those guys pretty easily.

Just trying to use my power and my strength and get downhill and make plays.

Q. You talked about that stretch where you cut the lead to eight. Luka said that's a time period where you guys were having fun. How do you maintain that for a full 48 and make it simple and have fun?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: We just have to stay connected, stay together. I felt like we let the crowd get to us a little bit, let the refs get to us, let them making shot get to us. But at the end of the day we just have to stick together and be ourselves.

We are a great team. They are a great team at the end of the day. We're all right. It's only one game. We'll be better and we'll be better for Game 2.

Q. I think you touched on it a moment ago, in the beginning of the game, was the stage a little surprising, you talked about being in the Finals but until you actually do it, it's different, and then the other question I wanted to ask you, the pace of the game, favorable or how did you read that?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: I mean, I think the first quarter they hit a bunch of shots. We felt like we could have contested better, played better defense but obviously they got going in the first. I think our pace was good in the second half. Not so much in the first half. We've just got to



stick with that in the second half and keep putting pressure on them in that end.

Q. Obviously KP came off the bench and gave them a big lift. What can you guys do the next game to slow them down?

P.J. WASHINGTON JR.: We just have to be better not give them open looks. We let him get comfortable and let him get warmed up in the mid-range, and it kind of led to them obviously getting a big lead. Just have to be better and be more locked in to their tendencies and just be more focused on that end.

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