

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Sunday, June 9, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Daniel Gafford

Game 2: Postgame



Q. Daniel, where do you think this Celtics team's depth ranks, and what is the key to stopping so many teams that can create off the dribble and for others and themselves?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Stay consistent on defense. Our communication is always tested when it comes to games like this because of how much they want to play on the perimeter. We have to make sure we get those guys inside the line and make sure our rotations are top-tier.

Q. You had two points at halftime but 11 in the second half. What do you think you guys were able to get going inside? Because it's kind of been a missing component in the first game and a half.

DANIEL GAFFORD: Just got to play to the physicality. At the end of the day, you know, they are pushing us around. We've got to be able to do the same thing. That's kind of like what the message was when we came out the second half: Set the tone physically.

Q. Jason talked about just finding offense outside of Luka and Kyrie, obviously the lob threat is a big part in that. You guys were able to get a couple of those. What can be done to make sure that's sustainable going forward?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Having poise offensively and making sure we get the right guys downhill. Well, pretty much any guy downhill to be honest with you. We've got a lot of guys that can drive to the basket and score the ball that gravitate a lot of attention from anybody that's the low man.

So we just have to make sure as bigs, me and D-Lively, make sure we get the guys downhill to where they can get a shot off, or we get a rebound if they miss it, or just throw the lob over the top.

Q. Kyrie mentioned winning the first and the fourth quarter; there are some positives there. What do you take from this game and bottle it to try to take back to

Dallas and get things in your favor?

DANIEL GAFFORD: For sure we are focusing on the positive things at the end of the day. I know Luka said it was a lot on him when it came down to it. It's a team; it's a team game. You know we can't have one person taking the blame for everything because you know we all have faults in certain areas on the floor and we make up for that trying to just really continuing to play through this as adversity, any obstacle that we face, we always have to play through that as a team.

So he missed free throws; I missed free throws. There's a lot of guys that missed free throws tonight, and that hurt us. So it's not just on him. Not on Kyrie. It's a team thing, and we just have to come out with the same mindset that we had tonight and try to win all four quarters.

Q. There was a lot of guys on this roster that did not have experience in this round coming into this series. You seem more comfortable as a group tonight. Now that you are two games into the series, even though you did lose both of them, are things that you feel like you learned about what this stage is like and can that help you at all going forward?

DANIEL GAFFORD: For sure, this is the biggest stage in the NBA. Everybody wants to be here at the end of the season.

So we just have to come prepared, shake off the nerves, get the butterflies out. It's going to be crazy atmosphere, crazy energy. It's the NBA Finals. Everybody wants to be in this situation.

Q. You mentioned the crazy atmosphere that it's going to be when you get back to Dallas. From a media standpoint, we talk about home-court advantage. From a player standpoint is that something that you guys can lean into at this stage?

DANIEL GAFFORD: For sure. They got their crowd into it when we came here and they did their job when it came to protecting home court and we have to do the same thing.

Q. First time you guys have lost two in a row in the

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playoffs. Is the psyche okay for this team, and how do you gather yourself going home?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Just focus on the positives. At the end of the day, we just find ways to just make adjustments to what we kind of lacked in certain areas, most definitely. Watch film, learn from it and be ready for the next one.

Q. Kristaps exploded in Game 1 and Jrue in Game 2. Is that because you concentrate your defense too much on Tatum and Brown?

DANIEL GAFFORD: No, I don't think so. I feel like they just made plays at the end of the day.

Q. What's the biggest thing you guys need to improve on to turn the series around?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Our poise. Be comfortable in the situation. Embrace the atmosphere and really embrace whatever's going to be thrown at us. This is a great team that we are playing against, and they are going to throw everything they can at us to just rattle us in any given circumstance. So we just have to take our time.

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