

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Sunday, June 9, 2024

**Boston Celtics**

**Jayson Tatum**

Game 2: Postgame



Boston Celtics - 105, Dallas Mavericks - 98

**Q. When you were sitting at that podium last time, we were asking you about Jason Kidd's comments about Jaylen and you said it was a smart thing for him to try to do, to try to drive a wedge between you guys. Tonight you guys came out, you combined for 19 assists, made it pretty apparent you were going to try to move the ball as much as possible. So what did you think of his attempt to try to do that and how do you feel like you guys responded on the court?**

JAYSON TATUM: I think that we responded really well. You know, the way their defense is set up and how much they're loading up and converging at the rim, it just puts us in positions to attack and find the easy kickout reads and just to keep the ball popping and things like that so we can get good to great shots on each and every possession.

**Q. Were those reads something that you went into tonight anticipating, a little bit premeditated, or did you get out there and see it and then make a kind of conscious switch slip in your head that I'm going to be spraying the ball tonight?**

JAYSON TATUM: I mean, every time I'd take a couple dribbles, there was, like, three people were right there. So we got a bunch of shooters on our team and guys that can space the floor. They kept leaving Jrue open. So it wasn't like I had to do anything spectacular. It was just about finding the open guy.

**Q. Jrue led you guys in scoring tonight, led you guys in rebounding tonight, you're up 2-0 in the NBA Finals. Where would you guys be as a team without him?**

JAYSON TATUM: Good thing we don't have to find out. We're very, very fortunate to have him and he was excellent tonight.

**Q. Building off of that, when you guys got Jrue this offseason, I heard a lot from Milwaukee fans the one**

**gripe about him was the defense is always there, offense is there in the regular season, tends to fade in the playoffs. Did you guys expect to get this offensive production from him at this point in the season?**

JAYSON TATUM: Yeah. And you guys are smart enough to know the way our team is set up. Like, we have so many talented guys on both ends of the floor, that it could be a number of guys on a given night. We have a really talented team, and that's how we win games.

**Q. How much did you feel them adjust at either end tonight from Game 1?**

JAYSON TATUM: Yeah, the way they started the game, right? They were playing faster. You could tell that they wanted to shoot more threes. Neither team really shot the ball well from the three, but you could tell that that was part of their plan, just to play faster and shoot more threes and crash the glass a lot more as well.

**Q. How does it affect your mindset in knowing that you have all those weapons in a game like this where you're getting blitzed, you're seeing guys come at you? How does it affect you knowing that you don't have to quote-unquote be the guy?**

JAYSON TATUM: I mean, there's different ways, I guess, to phrase that. It's not all about scoring. I can be the guy rebounding and getting assists and drawing attention, right? I'm going to have the ball in certain spots, right? I draw so much attention. It's not always -- I'm not always going to be the guy to get the shot, but sometimes sacrificing, being in those spots to make the play that we get the best shot possible, knowing that what they want to take away in their schemes and things like that. So being the guy in different ways. Maybe you don't score all the points, but you do all the things that put your guys in the best position to win.

**Q. What's the journey been like to get to this point here for you as a playmaker? A couple years ago I me challenged you to be more of a playmaker. You accepted that, you have grown into a person now that's in the NBA Finals and the spotlight's on you. You could very easily try to score on a matchup that**

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**you can score against, but you're doing more and more of the playmaking. How have you grown as a player to get to a point on this stage that you're still willing to make what is known as the right play?**

JAYSON TATUM: It has a lot to do with that I've been here before and we didn't win, and it's just like, you know, we're so close to what we're trying to accomplish, why would I let my ego or my need to score all the points gets in the way of that. There are going to be times where I need to score, and obviously, I need to shoot better. Golly. But you know, really, we always talk about do whatever it takes for however long it takes. If I need to have 16 potential assists every single night and that's what puts us in the best position to win and it doesn't mean I'm the leading scorer, by all means, if that gives us the best chance to win, sign me up.

**Q. Can you take us through, okay, the dunk, I don't know if it was blocked or you kind of missed it, then the chase-down from Jaylen and Derrick. Like, what did you see? Were you in position to see that play and how pivotal of a sequence was that?**

JAYSON TATUM: That was a big-time play for those guys to get back. I fell on the ground, so as soon as I just turned my head and looked up, I seen that they made a play at the rim. That was big, guys making winning plays at crucial times on both ends of the floor.

**Q. One more Jrue question for you. He came in here and said you guys have been a big help, sort of helping him get acclimated here. He mentioned that there were times throughout the season where you or other teammates would come up to him and say, okay, this is what I think I could need from you. Is there a point in time or a moment that you remember with Jrue that sort of everything really clicked or was that sort of just a natural chemistry between you guys throughout the season?**

JAYSON TATUM: I think, from a team aspect, it's just a natural process. There's a lot that goes into joining a new team, from a personal standpoint and then, you know, you've been so used to a different organization, now you come to a new team and having to learn personalities and play style and things like that. I've had a relationship with Jrue from a few years ago, we won a gold medal. So I would just, I guess, check in or always remind him, I guess, that, you know, to be yourself and, we're going to need you in big moments, obviously like tonight. Not that maybe he didn't need the reminder, but just letting him know throughout the season how much we value him and things like that.