

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Coach Jason Kidd

Game 3: Pregame



Q. Wondering what might be your best memory or memorable interaction with Jerry West?

JASON KIDD: That's a good question. There's a lot of them.

When you talk about the Logo, Jerry was a gentleman to everyone. He was the best. When you talk about history, you talk about the game of basketball and what he stood for.

I guess one of the stories is when I was with the Nets and Rod Thorn, we were going to Memphis to play Memphis. I've never seen a grown man drool before. I asked Rod why was he drooling. He was like, That's my idol. I was like looking for Michael Jordan, but Michael wasn't anywhere close. I said, Jerry West?

That's when I learned a little bit about West Virginia. It was an incredible moment because I'd never seen Rod in awe before. So to see that, to see Jerry and the way he handled Rod was very impressive.

When you talk about West Virginia and basketball, (Mike) D'Antoni, Rod and Jerry West, it was a historic moment for me because I was learning -- I knew about Jerry, but just about West Virginia. They're all very well put together, educated and very smart.

But I just never saw Rod in that atmosphere before of being silenced and listening. He was like a little kid.

Q. Jason, with Kristaps being out tonight, what opportunities does that open for you guys on offense and defense? How do you expect them to adjust with not having his presence out there?

JASON KIDD: Well, I think the adjustment is no different than the Indiana series. They didn't have him. They're used to not having him. The adjustment with Horford or Tillman, someone that they can go to. I think there's not a big adjustment.

They just came out of a series without KP. We look for them to continue. Maybe somebody's minutes goes up.

For us, understanding what KP does at the rim with the shot blocking or changing shots. So we have to be aggressive when we take the ball and understand their smalls are pretty good at blocking shots, too. We have to account for who is at the rim.

Q. Another non-game question. I wondered if obviously you're tunnel visioned on what you guys have to do tonight, but any time in the last couple days or today, did it dawn on you that today is the anniversary of you guys winning the championship?

JASON KIDD: It was just brought to my attention. I didn't even know. Talking to Mike and Doris from ABC, today was Game 6. Just to understand time flies by.

But it was a surreal moment to be able to win the championship. To do it with that team, with Dirk being our leader, Jason Terry. They were asking, What did you think when the horn went off? I was like, We wanted to keep playing, but there was no one else to play.

When you're playing so well, you don't want it to stop. So talking to them, there was no one else to play. We were playing well. As an older player, you want to keep going because you just don't know if you'll ever get back there.

Q. You guys have obviously had a lot of good production out of your center position, paint protectors. How much experience do you have or how comfortable are you going with maybe P.J. at the five, spacing the floor out at the five position?

JASON KIDD: I think we're comfortable with P.J. at the five. We're comfortable with Maxi at the five.

Boston has done a great job in the sense of taking the vertical game away and living with the layup. When you look at our quarterbacks, Ky and Luka, getting to the rim, we have to take that and at some point, if we can make enough to see if they can make that change.



If they don't, we can look at Maxi or P.J. at the five. We're comfortable with that. We've done that during the season.

Q. We had another local legend die today in Robert Hughes. I'm not sure if you had any interaction with him.

JASON KIDD: I did not, unfortunately.

Q. The guys have been talking about needing to communicate more on defense. When guys like Lively and Gafford are up guarding the stretch five, who is the second guy you want to be in charge of your back line communication?

JASON KIDD: That's a great question. Everybody. The game of basketball is about communication. For our guys, that's one of the things, as much as communicate, the next step is listen and be able to process what's being said.

For us as a group, we've been a little bit slower with that. Hopefully we've made that adjustment and can be better with that tonight.

Q. What are some other things that you saw when you ran back the tape from the first two games that you feel the team should be doing tonight?

JASON KIDD: I think talking about the last game, we put ourselves in a position on the road to win. That's all you can ask for.

When you talk about one possession or two possessions, we have to take care of the ball. Just way too many turnovers that lead to points for them. If we throw it into the stands, at least we get a chance to set our defense, and we feel confident that we can get the stop.

I'll use the example of Exum, with the pace, was trying to make a play. It goes out of bounds. We get to set our defense; we get the stop, come back. It's the live-ball turnovers that are hurting us.

If we do turn it over, we need to give the prize, basketballs, away to the stands and not to Boston where they can get out and run and get layups or wide-open threes.

Q. We know you're very close to Dirk. Kind of thinking that maybe you talked last night about being home in Game 3. Maybe you can share some thoughts or something that he said to you going now into this must-win game.

JASON KIDD: I haven't talked to Dirk here in the last week. He has FIBA obligations. He has tennis lessons

and everything else (smiling). He has more important things.

We'll talk when we're at home and he's here hopefully for Game 3 or 4, just to get some advice of what he sees here as we go forward.

But I haven't talked to him since the Minnesota series.

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