

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

**Boston Celtics**

**Jayson Tatum**

Game 3: Postgame

Boston Celtics 106, Dallas Mavericks 99

**Q. Jayson, after the game was over, you and Jaylen had a long kind of embrace at halfcourt. Can you share any of what that was, and kind of what was going through your mind at that moment?**

JAYSON TATUM: Just you know showing the emotions of the game. Two guys that was excited, tired, that you know, after the game, we just -- we're not necessarily saying like one more or anything like that. We are just saying, however long it takes. Nobody is relaxed. Nobody is satisfied. Just at that moment, you know, just told him I was proud of him and he said the same thing; that we've got to keep fighting. We can't relax. And that was basically the conversation.

**Q. Along those lines, I know you have not gone through this, so you don't know what the next two days will be like, but how difficult do you envision making between tonight and Friday night seem normal, just a game to play Friday night?**

JAYSON TATUM: Honestly, not too difficult from the standpoint of last year we were down 0-3 in the Conference Finals, and we really felt like we were going to come back. We almost did. You know, we were a sprained ankle away from having like a real shot.

So, you know, we are not relaxing or anything like that. You know, not even focusing on winning or Friday or whatever. However long it takes, that's our motto. However long it takes, that's what it's going to take, and nobody is not trying to relax at all.

**Q. If I could take you away from basketball for a moment. Father's Day is coming up on Sunday, and I know it's something that's very important to you. As you begin to face this obstacle of fighting for a title, what will you tell your son about facing obstacles and overcoming them?**



JAYSON TATUM: That's a great question. I would say that life is about roller coasters, right. The game of basketball and life and whatever your occupation is, right, we all go through ups and downs.

In the toughest moments, that's when your true character comes out and essentially being the same person all the time, that's what I try to do, in the best of times and in the worst of times. That's what I'm going to try to instill in him. You've got to be the same person. You've got to be a stand-up guy through thick and thin.

**Q. There was a point in the first quarter where Jrue pulled you guys in, Luka and Kyrie were going on a run. What did you say in that moment, and how did that affect your guys' defense in particular for the rest of the game?**

JAYSON TATUM: Yeah, they came out swinging. That was to be expected. They were at home, and their crowd was behind them. This is obviously a big game. So we expected their first punch. You know, it's just in that moment that Jrue kind of brought us together and just clapped his hands like, Yo, we got to wake up, we got to lock in. We got to get some stops. Because at that point, they had like 25 points. In the last five, six minutes, we held them to like five or six points.

But to start the quarter, we weren't getting any stops. You know, we are not going to win a game like that. We just have to reset and lock back in at that moment.

**Q. Until the ten-minute mark in the fourth quarter, you guys had complete control of the game, and then a four- or five-minute stretch when things went completely haywire, and you reset again. What happened in the early part of that fourth quarter where they made a big run to get back into it, and what allowed to you reset yourselves?**

JAYSON TATUM: Not really trying to look too much into it. The game of basketball is about runs, and this is at the highest level. You know, it's the best team in the West at this point. They are going to make shots. They are going to go on a run, and it's just all about how do you respond.



You know, we talk about it all the time. 20-point leads, none that have is ever safe. It's never time to relax. You never want to give up a 20-point lead. Obviously we wish we would have got some better shots, took care of the ball. But things happen. It's never going to go how you expect it, and we talk about that all the time. But if you want to be a champion, you have to be resilient in those moments, and we showed that tonight.

**Q. Before the game, your coach said to us, if you've been in a fight with someone, and you think you're about to beat them, usually you get sucker punched. The closer you are to beating them, the closer you are to losing. Does he say that to you players on a regular basis, and how demonstratively does he say it, and what are you expecting from him the next couple of days going into Game 4?**

JAYSON TATUM: Joe does a great job of showing us clips and things from different sports, right. He's a big UFC fan. And you know, showing us fights of people that -- I don't know like the terminology of UFC, but put them in a chokehold and s--- like they about to tap out. You just see the guy or the woman who is winning relaxing because they feel like they are about to win, and then, you know, you give the other person life.

Just trying to translate that to the game of basketball; that, you know, the closer you are to winning, the closer they are to surviving. Basically just trying to remind us in the group that we've still got a long way to go. We still have to play the right way. We've still got to win. They are not going to quit, and we should expect the best from them from here on out.

**Q. When they are making their run and it could have been from the past, oh, here we go again, in the past, Game 4 against Golden State when you guys were close. What mentality has changed where you and Jaylen are like, let's go get this. Let's make plays, let's make buckets, forget what happened the last six minutes, let's go be heroes?**

JAYSON TATUM: You just alluded to it; that we've been in that situation. We've been in a close game where we were up, and we almost went up 3-1, and then they tied it.

And experience is the best teacher. We learned from our mistakes. We learned from a team at the time that was better than us, that had been there and been over that hump and mentally tougher at the time.

We've grown from that, we really have. It was on display tonight.

**Q. You were down one at halftime. Did you feel okay about that after the punch you guys took from Luka and Kyrie, and then what went into executing throughout the third quarter? Joe said you guys made a lot of first reads during that stretch. But what went into that as you kind of pulled away?**

JAYSON TATUM: Yeah, I've got to watch the film, but that was excellent basketball we played to start the third, especially on the offensive end. I don't know how many possessions in a row that we got a great shot. We made most of them. We might have missed a few.

But the way that we started the third quarter was incredible. You know, everybody else on that court, the mindset we came out to start the third in our execution, we did a hell of a job in the start of the third quarter.

**Q. Ever since Joe came on board, you guys have taken a ton of threes, and we all have been asking: Is there such a thing as too many threes? And tonight you took so many more threes than Dallas throughout the game that even as Luka and Kyrie were scoring, you were able to keep up. What did you think when Joe came in, was it to maximize your three-point shot margin, and how has it gotten you through tough times over the years to get these kind of wins?**

JAYSON TATUM: I don't know if it's at cut and dry as we need to shoot a lot of threes, but with the group that we have and playing to our strengths, being able to beat guys off the dribble, and the luxury that we have is, you know, with our starting five, whether it's KP or AI, everybody can space the floor and shoot.

So it just puts their 5-man in a tough position. 5-men are known to usually help at the rim. But if we have guys that can attack you off the dribble and get all the way to the rim, you want to help. But we've got 40 percent three-point shooters all around the paint.

So it's just all about making the right reads. We're never like, we need to shoot 40 threes a night. But if we play to our strength and space how we're supposed to, it just finds the right person, and we don't turn down any great shots.

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