

NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Thursday, June 13, 2024

Boston Celtics

Al Horford

Practice Day



Q. I know it was a long time ago, but what do you remember about Jaylen and Jayson's first season playing together when you were there with them, and did you ever them reaching this level together when you saw them then?

AL HORFORD: Yeah, I think just looking back at that first year of both of them playing together Jayson's rookie year, just remember two very extremely talented guys that right away had an impact on the team that year after losing Gordon, and those guys just taking up on the challenge.

I feel like that year we started the season, we lost the first two and then we won like 15, 16 straight, and they were a big part of that. So right away, I just saw the potential there.

To be at this point right now, this is what we expected. I know it doesn't always work that way. But once you get to know those two guys, the type of people that they are, their drive, they want to be great, and I just -- I saw this for them.

I think probably it's come sooner than expected. They're still relatively young. But it doesn't surprise me.

Q. Where have they grown over the years?

AL HORFORD: I mean, since then, there's been a lot. They came in trying to figure things out, and just offensively they've grown, defensively.

But more to me, it's been the leadership, being more vocal with our group, also understanding that there's more than just playing basketball. There's a whole other element, preparation, consistency. That's where I've seen their growth. That's paying big dividends for them.

Q. How much of a challenge has it been for you to stay present yet know that that one goal that you have had for so many years in the league is one game away from happening? How do you balance that?

AL HORFORD: Yeah, I think it's pretty easy because what we're focusing on is on our day-to-day, and today we had a good film session before coming here. We're going to practice right after this. It's really just focusing on the work.

We've continued to do this. We've been doing this all season. This is just the point of the season that we're at.

We're not allowing ourselves to think ahead. We're just trying to lock in on what we have to do. The job is not done yet.

Q. Over the last several years you've had people say, let's win it for Al. You've heard that mantra several times. Do you take that as a compliment or do you take it as having one foot in the grave, one foot on the banana peel?

AL HORFORD: So I don't really -- I guess I've heard it before. But basketball is a team sport. It's a team sport. When you are fortunate enough to play for the Boston Celtics, you quickly realize that it's more than just the team that you're representing and the things that you're trying to do.

For me, being in this opportunity, I give the glory to the Lord because he's put me in this position, and for me, I know that it's more than me. We have a lot of fans. We have a lot of people. They have been waiting for this opportunity, for these moments. We've been through a lot of adversity as a team these past few years.

To be at the cusp of doing this, it's something special.

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