

# NBA Finals: Celtics vs. Mavericks

Friday, June 14, 2024

Dallas Mavericks

Dante Exum

Game 4: Postgame

Dallas Mavericks 122 Boston Celtics 84

**Q. From a personal standpoint, what is that like for you when you're in a groove like that and have everything going your way?**

DANTE EXUM: I think for me, it's just come in and do what I do with my minutes. I think obviously Luka creates a lot of attention. Just using that to my advantage to get downhill. I've been super confident in my shot all year. Unfortunate that one of them was taken away. I just have to stay confident and keep shooting.

**Q. What stood out to you that was different about Luka's Game 4 versus the rest of the series thus far?**

DANTE EXUM: No, I think just the energy that we showed throughout the team. Even when stuff didn't go our way, it wasn't heads down. It was next possession, next possession. That's something we've kind of preached the whole series. I think we were finally able to do that.

**Q. I won't ask you about the confidence level of this team because you have never given us a reason to think you're not confident. I will ask you about the work ethic. How would you describe the work ethic of this team?**

DANTE EXUM: Yeah, I mean, you said it. A lot of the times guys go through ups and downs. It's just about getting back in the gym, doing our craft, what we know. Whether that's lifting, shooting, extra reps, anything. You see everyone on this team doing that. And it shows on the court.

**Q. Before the game, Jason had termed criticism that had come Luka's way as personal attacks on him. Were you aware of him taking heat for the way things had gone particularly in Game 3? Did that factor into tonight, in your opinion?**

DANTE EXUM: No, no. I think obviously Luka has to hold



himself to a high standard. Him fouling out doesn't give us the best position to win. Obviously we need him on the court, and he knows that. I know he's going to, as a competitor, hold himself accountable. We did, too.

**Q. The three-guard lineup, you, Luka and Kyrie on the floor, has been successful on both sides of the floor throughout the season. What do you think is the secret sauce to how you can be so effective together?**

DANTE EXUM: One of the biggest things is I go on the court and I think I'm going to be on Tatum or Brown. Kyrie is, No, I've got him.

I think that's huge. I can press the ball, be up and play on the help side. I mean, just for Kyrie to kind of step up and say, I'm going to take that defensive challenge, it's huge for us.

**Q. Any Mavericks fan watching this game tonight would probably ask, Where has this been in the first three games? Where would you say this has been the first three games?**

DANTE EXUM: Like I said, there's a lot of ups and downs that go through a series. Just the Playoffs in general. I think we knew kind of what we can do and how we can be. Obviously, we know not every game is going to be like that. I think if we stick to kind of who we are as a team and stay positive, we just need to take one game at a time.

**Q. A lot has been made about the criticism of Luka. Whether it's Luka, Kyrie, Coach Kidd, whoever, when they get that criticism, is there extra motivation from the whole team to step up and have their back?**

DANTE EXUM: I think criticism is always going to come when we lose. I think if we won a game or two, the criticism isn't as bad.

J Kidd, he played, so he understands it. All competitors, they're going to take it on the chin, come out. That's the challenge that we have to do every game. Obviously, we watch it because we're on our phones a lot. It's just coming out and playing our basketball, and that's what we did.



**Q. You mentioned wanting to get downhill more. The pace was noticeably better tonight. How much of that was a point of emphasis as a team or you just taking it upon yourself to push the ball up court more?**

DANTE EXUM: Yeah, I think it's contagious. I come in, I do it. Everyone starts to build that pace. Everyone's running their lanes.

I think also it's getting defensive stops. That helps it a lot. I think my main focus when I go in, even when they do score, All right, let's go get it, try and push it during those times. It's easy to push when you have an advantage.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports