

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder Isaiah Joe

Media Day



Jaylin.

ISAIAH JOE: Yes, sir.

Q. Isaiah, you're from a small town.

ISAIAH JOE: Yes, sir.

Q. Not big markets here. How cool of a deal is it for two of the smaller markets in the NBA to be in the Finals?

ISAIAH JOE: I mean, I think it's cool. I think it just attests to anyone can make it to this point, putting in the work, all that.

Me personally, it's really cool because I'm from, like you said, a small town. I'm only three hours away from here, so my family gets to come in here and enjoy these moments with me. Stuff like that.

I will always cherish these moments. This is a journey we've been running on for a long time. Just to be here is a good feeling.

Q. What makes Alex Caruso such a special defensive player?

ISAIAH JOE: I think it's just his will to win. I think you can see it out this. He's gritty. He's laying it on the line every night, all 48 minutes. Every minute he's out there on the court he tries to make a difference. He does a hell of a job with that.

I think he's a leader. He leads with his voice and he leads my example. That's AC.

Q. How has he helped you personally?

ISAIAH JOE: I think he just kind of brings that leadership role to a team. So he's always willing to drop down knowledge. He's been in positions like this. He knows what to expect. He's a veteran. He's been around. He knows what goes on.

Q. People may not know, you went to high school with

Q. Were you tight in high school?

ISAIAH JOE: We played a year together. I was two grades above him. When I was a senior, he was a sophomore. That was one year that we got to actually play together. We grew up both in Fort Smith. He played a lot with my younger brother growing up.

Just being in this position with a guy like Jaylin is pretty cool. Moments like this don't happen too much.

Q. In a million years, did you ever think you'd be in the NBA Finals with him?

ISAIAH JOE: Yeah, it never crossed my mind. Now that we're here, it's a dope experience. I think it's something that's probably not going to hit until later in life. But it's cool.

Q. You go back to Fort Smith pretty often. How important is it for you guys to get back to that community and represent it?

ISAIAH JOE: It's very important. Born and raised there. Always have to show love to the people that supported me along the way. Without my hometown, I wouldn't be the person that I am today, wouldn't be in this position. Any chance I get, all the love, I love to give back.

Q. What do you remember about the last Thunder team that made it to this point?

ISAIAH JOE: Energetic group. They were lively. They went out there, you knew that they were on a mission. They played hard. They were fun to watch.

Q. What have you learned most about yourselves through the Playoffs that has helped you get to the Finals?

ISAIAH JOE: I think our ability to grow each and every moment, each and every game. We take everything as a



learning experience. So in doing so, we get better after each game. I think that's something that's kind of helped us along the way throughout the entire season, is we never settle, we never get complacent. We just want to keep rising.

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