

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Isaiah Hartenstein

Media Day



## Q. Question about the Thunder's camaraderie.

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: We have a unique core of guys that are very close. You can compare to maybe an AAU team. There's no agendas. Yeah, we know the NBA is a business, but we're so supportive of each other. I don't think that you find that a lot in the NBA. That's what makes this team unique.

## Q. People talk about this year might be the year when you clicked. It seems like it. What happened over the last couple years?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I only been here for one year (smiling).

Ever since I got here, I think it starts with Sam (Presti). He built the right culture. Easy to come in and fit right in. He also finds the right people to build that culture.

Yeah, I think we just have a great group of guys, a competitive group of guys. That's what makes everything click.

## Q. When the Playoffs started, Mark talked about how you were going to get a lot better as the Playoffs went on. It was going to be a growing opportunity. It's an opportunity now to win a championship. How do you balance those two? Do you feel like now it's sort of a grab this opportunity with both hands?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: Yeah, I think we do a good job of just focusing on the present moment. We have a 0-0 mindset. I think we also take stuff from past series. I think the Denver series probably helped us the most, to be honest. I think the Denver series, there were games we should have won, but just didn't execute at the end of the game. Being in those situations, going through those things together helped us get better.

Again, we have to come in -- like Mark says, go hunt again, be that dominant team, don't take anything for granted.

## Q. Is this what you envisioned when you came here?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: OKC was a team I looked at and I thought I could help them a lot to get to this next stage. I think, again, you can't skip steps, so I wasn't going in to the season saying, Hey, we're going to be in the Finals. I knew we had to go through the steps, get to where we're at.

I think we did a good job all season just having that 0-0 mentality, getting better each day, but then also doing it as a team.

## Q. Question about being an NBA G League Finals MVP and developing his game in the G League.

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I think that was one of the first things -- after we won the Conference Finals, I was talking to my wife about it. It was four years ago I was in the G League Finals, and now having an opportunity to be here, having a big role, I think it's something special. I think also a lot of different guys that may be in the G League, may be the guys that are fighting for minutes, can kind of see my journey and build off that and know if you just put in the hard work, you do the right things...

## Q. What is the toughest part of your journey before this?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I think the mental part of it. I think the mental part. I think everyone comes in the league, before you were the guy. I think especially my role, I had to figure out my role, figure out how can I get on the court, how can I help the team.

I think the biggest thing for me is I took accountability why I wasn't playing. The worst thing you can do is blame other people why you're not playing. I really just sat down, watched a lot of film. Watched a lot of --Draymond (Green), he helped me a lot defensively, just kind of helping me get better at that because that was one of my weaker points why I didn't play.

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