

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

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Indiana Pacers

Myles Turner

Media Day

Q. Tell us how philosophically you felt the imprint and progression of first Nate McMillan, then Nate Bjorkgren and then Rick coming in, and what it took to get to this point with the offense?

MYLES TURNER: Yeah, Nate seems a little different because I think we had more of an iso team, you know what I mean? Yeah, we passed the ball, but we had more isolation players, if you will. I think that's where we thrived a little more.

When Nate [Bjorkgren] came in, I think he came from that Toronto Raptors system where they thrive off of junkyard dog or junking the game up. We would just try so many different, I don't know if you would call them sets or actions, whatever you want to call it, but we wreaked havoc on defense, that was able to supercharge our offense.

With Rick, Rick was a coach that he used to like to call a play every single possession. Even Rick's first year here, we had a game where he did that, he stopped us and called a play every single possession.

In the dawn of this new NBA, especially in the playoffs, that stuff doesn't work. It's easy to scout. But when you have random movement on offense, guys that are someone like Tyrese who wants to pass the ball, it makes the game a little bit easier, especially for a guy like myself who thrives with space.

Q. Myles, the challenge of this Oklahoma City defense, where it seems like they can kind of be whatever they need to be on any given possession, when you know that there's a full menu available to them, how does that impact your preparation?

MYLES TURNER: Well, the fact that they play similar to us, I mean, we've been seeing that every day since training camp, you know what I mean? I realize that this is a different stage, this is a different team. We prepare and train so hard for moments like such.



Yeah, we know where they had their calling card, swarming the ball defensively, wreaking havoc. At the same time when you prepare that way, when you go into battle that way, nothing is really new.

Again, it's going to be an adjustment period. Got to get your baseline Game 1 and you take it from there. Again, I think we're looking forward to the challenge.

Q. Myles, you made a point when you won the Eastern Conference Finals of shouting out Pascal as G League MVP. I wonder why that came through your mind at that point? Maybe you as a veteran here, how has Pascal complemented and become part of the leadership group here?

MYLES TURNER: Yeah, well, for your first question, the G League is a grind. People don't have enough appreciation for what it takes to work your way up from I guess a lot of people want to refer it as the bottom. I don't see it as that. It was a developmental league. You go there to develop. He was able to develop into an MVP on a championship team there.

You take those same habits and you apply them to this level, and they're already ingrained in your head. He was able to do the same thing at the biggest stage.

Yeah, I think Pascal is someone who actually has been there before, has actually seen the ups and downs, the highs and lows, knows how NBA Finals Media Day works. Which I didn't. Little stuff like that helps. It helps bring that into your locker room. He's grown himself into one of the better players in our league's history.

Q. You said earlier this playoffs is the most fun you ever had playing basketball. What is it with this team to allow you to have fun as a group?

MYLES TURNER: We rely on each other so much. The pressure isn't as heavy as it once was in my career. I feel like any given night, anybody can go off. This roster, one through 15. I feel like a lot of players just say that but I actually mean that. I think that's been on full display for the past month or two months of the season, whatnot.



No, man, it's just exciting times. I'm just taking every single moment, just taking every single moment in. You never know if you'll ever be on this stage again. While I'm here, I'm going to make the most of it.

Q. Myles, I know that you are a huge LEGO fan. Does it help to control your anxiety before those moments? I want to know if you already have a Larry O'Brien or is this the next one on your list?

MYLES TURNER: Well, to answer your first question, it is definitely something that helps me center myself, helps me get grounded, just putting together LEGO, puzzles, Rubik's cubes, crosswords, whatever it is, that just takes my mind away from work.

We all need our escape. We all work hard, you guys write your articles. You interview players and everything. But just like us, we have to get away, try to find a way just, to I don't know, feel human again.

There's a way of dehumanizing us with just hoops. You see us on TV, think we're just machines. We all have that same emotion. It can be good to chill, get away.

As far as Larry O'Brien, after you win, that's when you do stuff like that. I like what LEGO encompasses because this entire process is a brick-by-brick thing, you build day by day by day and at the end have a beautiful picture of it.

Q. You cited the power of friendship.

MYLES TURNER: Yeah.

Q. One of these teams is going to win a championship building a roster in an unusual and different way. What are the potential headwinds to that, whether it's money, shots, acclaim, wanting to be the man, all of the things that conspire against the power of friendship?

MYLES TURNER: Absolutely. So when you come into this league, you're the man everywhere you go, right? High school you were the man. In college you were the man. You get here, you have to fall into a niche or a role.

When you're building, trying to build a championship roster, a lot of stuff gets in the way. You have individual accolades. Everyone wants to be MVP, All-Star, the glory that comes with this.

I've been in this league long enough to know that's a phase, you know what I mean? Championships are forever at the end of the day. You sign a big shoe deal, that deal is up five, six years. Championships are forever.

That's something that's huge to achieve.

It's easy to have players come in and whether it's your circle, whether it's your people, whether it's online, they get in your head a little bit. It's like you should do this, do that, do this. When you start spending so much time with a group of people, like more time than you spend with your own family. I don't have any kids, but your own kids, people around, you have to learn tendencies, what makes each other go.

Yeah, man, that power of friendship is real, because especially when you get in moments like these, you know can you rely on each other as opposed to being an All-Star, shoe deal, this and that. So yeah.

Q. I asked Pascal this and I want to get your opinion, too. You guys got off to a slow start, but you turned things around. What were those things that allowed you to turn it around? How can it help you this series? One other note. You're from Dallas. How many friends and family you got coming up?

MYLES TURNER: Yeah, I think the beginning of this year was the best thing that could have happened to us. You come off of an Eastern Conference Finals run, start to feel good about yourself a little bit, like you've actually accomplished something.

For a lot of us it was huge. I had never been there before. Pretty much everybody on the roster's first time in the Playoffs last year. That adversity that we hit, it kind of slapped us back into reality a bit.

I think we needed that. I think we needed that as a group, to see some adversity. Once you got past that, we started again, started to build towards where we are now. We kept the main thing the main thing.

And yeah, Dallas is, what, three hours away. I have plenty of friends and family that are supporting me back home. I'm not buying tickets for everybody. I got about three or four people coming, that's about it [smiling].

But I know I have a lot of love and support down the road, man. Texas and Oklahoma, the ties run deep. It's a beautiful time of the year.

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