

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Tyrese Haliburton

Game 1: Postgame

Pacers 111, Thunder 110

Q. Tyrese, the only lead change of the entire game was your game-winner and they say one time is luck, two times is a habit, three times it's the truth. So, what's the fourth time that you're able to take control of a game like that in the NBA Finals?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I don't know. I don't know. I think we're just a really resilient group. We do just a great job of sticking in and just settling into the game.

You know, through the course of the game it kept getting -- it felt like it could get ugly, who knows where this game is heading. I thought we did a great job of just walking them down. When it gets to 15, you can panic or you can talk about how do we get it to 10 and how do we get it to five and from there.

All series that's what we have preached as a group is when we get down big, let's just find a way to incrementally get it down and we got it to 15 and we got it to eight pretty fast and that gave us confidence. We kept getting stops. Myles and Andrew made play after big play down the stretch. Myles got a wide-open look on the wing and missed that one but we stuck with it.

Andrew was huge down the stretch. We got a got a big stop there and had a lot confidence in me to make that shot.

I don't know what you say about it but I know that this group is a resilient group and we don't give up until it's 0.0 on the clock.

Q. Did you know it was going in?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I had a good idea, yeah.

Q. Rick mentioned that you guys huddled up during the challenge and said if we get a stop, we're going to go. How much confidence and faith do you have in



those situations to not need a timeout to stop? And was that a spot on the floor you were trying to get to? We see you trying to go to the middle of the floor.

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Our conversation was more of a hypothetical because we thought Pascal got fouled there. Surprised there wasn't a call there. We didn't really know with time on the clock, we saw it reset to 14 rather than a full shot clock. At first we were talking about do we trap twice and foul, and then we said there's a difference on the clock. Just be solid and get a stop and rebound and run. Obi came up with it -- I don't even know who came up with the rebound. I just know the ball ended up in Obi's hand and he passed it to me.

I just thought we did a great job of sticking with it and staying solid and in that situation, I mean, we had a couple dumb fouls. I had a couple dumb fouls late in the fourth sending them to the free throw line. We just showed our chest. We're solid. Had to get a big rebound. That's a big rebound especially with the guys they have on the court crashing the glass with Dort and Caruso crashing the glass. Got a rebound and made a play on the offensive side.

I'm obviously confident in my ability and feel like if I can get to that spot, I feel very comfortable in there. So yeah, just it's a shot I've worked on a million times and I'll work on it a million times more. Just have confidence in that shot.

Q. You guys turned it over 25 times, Shai goes for 38. This team is 36-1 in this building with a 15-point lead this year. This is not the formula to win a game. And some guys don't have these moments once in a lifetime and you've had four in six weeks. What is the secret sauce? Where is this coming from, from this group? And you can say you believe, and obviously you do, it seems like the belief is much higher in this group than it is in probably a lot of other groups over the last few years.

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, it's a great question. The secret sauce today was these [shoes]. No, just playing.

As a group, like I've said many times, after you have a run like last year and you get swept in the Eastern Conference

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Finals, and all the conversation is about how you don't belong there and how you lucked out to get there, and that it was a fluke, guys are going to be pissed off. We're going to spend the summer pissed off.

You come into the year with all the talk around how it was a fluke. You have an unsuccessful first couple months and now it's easy for everyone to clown you and talk about you in a negative way, and I think as a group we take everything personal as a group. It's not just me. It's everybody. I feel like that's the DNA of this group and that's not just me. It's our coaching staff does a great job of making us aware of what's being said. Us as players, we talk about it on the locker room and on the plane. We're a young team, so we probably spend more time on social media than we should.

I just think we do a great job of taking things personal and that gives this group more confidence. We turned things around in January, which you guys know, and we just stuck with it.

Really proud of this group. And we just all got each other's back at every point. Any negative thing that's said about anybody, we got full belief in each other. So the more that's talked about, like right now, we're whatever underdog that gives us more confidence as a group. We enjoy that.

But there's still a lot of work to be done. This is an exciting time. Again, another big comeback but there's a lot more work to do. That's just one game. And this is the best team in the NBA and like you said, they don't lose often. So we expect them to respond. We've got to be prepared for that. We got a couple days to watch film, see where we can get better.

This game if you look at all the numbers, it's not the recipe to win. We can't turn the ball over that much. We have to do a better job of being in gaps, rebounding, all over the floor but come May and June, it doesn't matter how you get them, just get them.

We'll take it. We'll enjoy this one tonight. But understand we have another game coming up in this tough building and we have to be prepared for that.

Just a confident group and we got each other's back. I really don't have the full answer, I can't tell you everything. I said a lot of words but I don't know if I said anything. But yeah we just stick with it.

Q. At what point tonight did you guys collectively believe that you could win this game? Was it early in the fourth quarter when you start to make a little bit of a run? What was the point where you are like oh this

game is not just competitive, we can steal this game?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: That's a good question. When I got off the bus, when I put on my shoes. I mean, there was never a disbelief as a group, honestly. You have a half like that where you're throwing the ball to the other team, we like chaos. We like controlled chaos but that was just chaos, ugly. But I think we, as a group, came today -- we got like 20 turnovers in the first half. We only gave up, I don't remember how many points -- nine. That's not that bad, you know, if you think of it that way, try to look at it glass half-full.

I think as a group, like we never think the game is over, ever, honestly speaking, ever. That never creeps in. I think we just keep talking as a group, how can we walk this team down.

So it's at 12 going into halftime. We talk about if we can win quarter by six, one quarter by seven, we'll be in a great spot. We got it to a six-point game at the end of the third quarter, and Shai hit a three. But we liked where we were.

And they went on a big run to start the fourth and we just said okay, it's at 15, let's get to 10. We got it to eight and they called a timeout. So we just stayed with it.

This group never gives up. We never believe that the game is over until it hits zero, and that's just the God's honest truth. That's just the confidence that we have as a group, and I think that's a big reason why this is going on.

Q. Your teammates have extreme confidence in you with the game on the line because of what's happened the last couple years, I wonder what your confidence is in Drew defensively in similar situations guarding the MVP, most of the time without much help the whole night and you need to get a stop to have a chance to win the game?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Appreciate you for asking that question.

I mean, I have the utmost confidence in him. We all do as a group. We have to. He's our guy. He's our guy. He's been our guy all year. If there wasn't the 65-game rule, he's an All-Defensive guy, plain and simple.

So we got the most trust in him. Shai is the hardest guard in the NBA. You know, he's hardest guy to cover one-on-one in the NBA. There's no one look we can give him that is going to be, you know, that is going to be -- that's going to work every time.

But we trust Drew in those situations. We are showing

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help as much as we can. But, I mean, he's doing a lot of the dirty work. He's done a lot of the dirty work for years now, and that's his calling card in this league and he's an elite defender.

So, Shai is not an easy cover by any means, but Drew is just doing an unbelievable job. You have to understand, Shai makes a lot of tough shots, like a lot of tough shots, and you can't overreact to them. You just can't because there's no way to live that way. I think if he's going to make those, you've got to just get the ball out and go right back at him. So that's the way we look at it.

And I thought Drew did a great job tonight. Aaron did a good job, when Shepp had to guard him. There's many situations where different guys are having to cover him. We're just trying to make it as tough as we can. I mean, the guy still finished with, what did you guys say, 38? I mean, that's unbelievable.

But I thought we did a great job of showing bodies and that starts with Drew and his persistence over 48 minutes. That's his calling card, and we have the utmost trust in him to get stops.

Q. You guys have been in crazy environments, the last series, this is one of them, and it's the Finals. Most of you guys haven't been in this situation before. Did the moment lead to any jitters? Do you think that could have been part of the turnover situation?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, for sure. I'd be lying if I said it wasn't. I felt like I was a little jittery in the first quarter. Getting off the ball quick. Flying off ball screens with no real setup. I felt that myself.

So I'll admit that I felt that way. So I'm sure other guys felt that way. I mean, this crowd is amazing. They are all standing up doing claps and synchronized clapping to the beat before the game. I mean, this is an unbelievable crowd. It's the best crowd we've seen on the road all playoffs, and you know, it felt like it was just us in there, you know.

Thankful for our organization for flying our families out and our full-time employees all got a chance to come. I've been showing videos of them on the concourse, and I saw them in the upper level after the game.

But out there, it's so loud in there. It really feels like it's just us in there. We do a great job of leaning on each other, understanding that this crowd and this environment is amazing. They love basketball here, similar to how it is in Indiana.

And now that we've got a game under our belt, and I thought we did a great job of responding in the second half. We didn't turn the ball over as much in the second half. That's more of a recipe for success for us in the next game.

That's going to be a big point of emphasis when we watch film, is how can we take shots more, get more shots at the rim. That puts us in a better position to win. I mean, you have 25 turnovers, you usually don't win those games. Your odds are probably really low. Just got to stick with it, stay confident as a group, and yeah, we look forward to Game 2.

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