

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Saturday, June 7, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Jalen Williams

Practice Day

**Q. After you looked at the film and everything else, did you take anything away in terms of what you can take into Game 2, like shot selection, things of that nature after they went on a 12-2 run? Anything you can take away or they made shots and made plays?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Probably a little bit they made shots and made plays to a certain extent. You never want to overlook the fact that a team made shots, and you try and look back at the film and see why they did that, like what kind of defensive breakdowns we had to allow them to get the looks that they got.

I think that looking back at our offensive process, I thought we were pretty good throughout the whole entire game. Trying to find the balance of improving on offense and the little small things that beat you late game, you know what I mean. These games really come down to, like, one or two possessions. So it's like the more we can find throughout the game little things to, like, lock in on and tighten up, the better we'll be.

**Q. Mark was up there talking about you and Chet being third-year players and third-year players are not typically counted on at a moment like in the Finals. Do you feel that responsibility, and how have you managed it, knowing that you are just in your third year and typically, like what Mark said, this isn't something that someone like you or Chet would find yourself in so early in your career?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: I try and think of myself as somebody that's very uncommon. I don't ever think that I'm in my third year because then that allows me to make excuses. I should just go out there and play. Pressure is a privilege. So I enjoy being counted on and doing that, and I just think I've been counted on since, I feel like, last year, to be totally honest, just in regard to being there for the rest of the guys. And now we're here in the Finals.

So I don't really see it that much different. I'm never really like, oh, this is my third year. The only time I think about



that is there's so much more I can do and how much stuff I can get better at. But I never really try and use it as this is my third year and use it as an excuse, you know what I mean.

**Q. It was one of Shai's highest usage games of the season, highest shot totals of the season. A lot of that is they are loading up so much to him. When you know that that's there and you are the release valve for a lot of that, does that impact at all the way you think about those possessions? Does the ball feel heavier? Do you have to press more? When you know that you are the release valve option there, does that impact the way that you think?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Not really. It's not like really any different of a position that I've been in since I've been here.

But no, the ball doesn't -- the ball only feels heavy when you get like a grenade or something from anybody. And I feel like I've thrown my teammates plenty of those in the year I've been here.

A lot of it is more staying ready to be the release valve or, like, be ready to make a play. And that's kind of the mindset that everybody on the team carries out. That doesn't always mean I have to go jack up a shot or create for others but get the possession moving in a different direction. There's a lot of things that I can do on the court offensively that don't involve, obviously, scoring for that possession.

I like to think of it that way and just try to make the right play.

**Q. We just asked Shai about a video of him and Kobe where the plays were similar, the pump fakes, the turnaround jumpers. Have you seen that, and what do you think of that? Now that we are one game into the series, you talk about winning the days in between. Can you take us through what that means, and do you feel like you've won in between?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, first, the Shai question, there are a lot of similarities there. I feel like if you are really paying attention to basketball and watch the way he plays, there's a lot of similarities. It's cool that he can pick certain

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aspects of his game to mimic that a little bit and then add his own touch to it. That shows the player that he is, to be able to steal bits and pieces from his favorite players and be able to put it into a game and work on it. There's a lot of work behind the scenes that goes into him being able to do that.

And then, yeah, winning the days in between, you never really know if you won them until you play your next game. But all you can do is try to have the same routine that you've had throughout the season, throughout the playoffs, and try and mimic that as close as possible, eliminate distractions and not focus on where the series is at. Focus on how you can get better.

Like I said earlier for the first question, you try to figure out small things to get better at during the playoff run, during the Finals. And basically whatever team can, like, figure out how to get better each and every game, each and every series, usually ends up winning. That's what we try and do, and that's what we focus on.

**Q. I know these matchups are never really one-on-one, but you've had a fair bit of covering Pascal in Game 1. How do you feel about that matchup against a guy who is just a little bit bigger and has kind of a three-level game in a way?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: It's fun. You can't really ask for more than to guard an elite player in the finals. Obviously he's definitely battle-tested. He won with Toronto, correct? Yeah, so he's done this. This isn't like his first time going through it.

So I try and take that into account. And like I said, for me, I'm trying to get better every time we play. And then obviously him going at me the way he is, like unconsciously is making me better. I try relishing that opportunity and just compete. There's going to be mishaps, there's going to be mistakes. He's going to score. He's a good player.

You just try and make it as hard as you can, and they try and do the same thing on the other end.

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