

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

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Indiana Pacers

Tyrese Haliburton

Practice Day

Q. You talked about hearing some of the doubt over the last summer. It kind of continues a pattern of your career where you talked about being -- I think your phrase was no star recruit, 12th in the draft, Sacramento traded you, all those things. What is it about the way you play that you're underrated at times? What about your approach to the game makes it easy to miss what you're doing at times?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, it's a good question, I think it's unorthodox. That's a word that could be easily used. My jumper, the way it looks, that's always been criticized coming into the NBA. I think that was honestly a big part of it. And I think sometimes I have an effect on the game that isn't necessarily the gaudy box score numbers, and so the way our game is now, the way the game is digested by fans sometimes, I think it's a lot of box score watchers.

So if my box score doesn't look the way that it's supposed to, I think that that can be a part of it, as well.

So I don't necessarily know the answer, but I know that it's probably not going to stop anytime soon. So yeah, it's just part of it.

Q. So you guys won the first two games in Cleveland. You won the first two games in New York. Just won Game 1 the other night. How hard is it to do that? Is there a commonality between all these road victories you guys are picking up? And for the other side, it's hard if you're a home team in a playoff series to lose two and come back and win the series. Are you aware of all that in addition to speaking of how difficult it is to do what you've done so far?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, definitely aware. I think winning on the road is hard. Winning an NBA game is hard, and especially a playoff game, and let alone a Finals game, right. It's not easy.

You're just trying to be as present as you can. That's the biggest thing and biggest thing we've talked about as a



group, is this journey is going to be whatever it is, 18, 19 days, until, you know, if there's Game 7. You're trying to take it one day at a time. And that's how we've approached every playoff series as a group is how we can take it a day at a time.

Today it's about getting through the media stuff and getting to practice and locking in on what we've got to do better for tomorrow, but we want to have a good practice day today. I think that's just the way that we are approaching it because if we try to look too far in advance, I think that's where you have moments in today or yesterday that don't go the way that they should.

You're just trying to take it a day at a time, and that's the biggest thing that Coach has preached to us and we preach to each other as a group is how can we have a good day today to prepare us for tomorrow.

The journey to get here all year has not been about getting to the Finals. It's a day at a time, especially after the start of the year. And it's hard -- we have social media and friends and family that tell us all the numbers of if you can win the two games at home, whatever it will look like, or on the road or whatever the case it.

But again, you just try not to pay attention to it as best as you can and don't let human nature creep in and try to take it a day at a time.

Q. You mentioned the social media stuff, but your stuff is pretty funny. Anything you saw that tickled you? And could you reflect back on your courtship of Pascal when the team was considering trading for him?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: First question, yeah, I see a fair share of the absurd things that are on social media. Get a good laugh out of certain things. You know, I think that's just a part of NBA Twitter in general. It's pretty funny stuff.

As far as the stuff of Pascal, yeah, I can recall everything about getting him here. We were in Atlanta. Had a pretty great conversation with him while I was at a dinner. Stepped aside and talked to him on the phone for an hour. I wanted to have a conversation, hey, is this something you

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actually you want to do, do you want to be here?

Because I think that the guys who have been a part of the nucleus of this group, we cherish this organization and what we have been able to build here. I think every team, when you ultimately win a championship or play at a high level, there's a trade that happens or you bring in somebody from the outside to be a part of it and you don't want to make the wrong move, right. If you go in for Pascal, you want it to be about the right things.

And I didn't really know Pascal too well other than our small conversations when we would be at like Rico [Hines] runs or something. So we had a great conversation, and I think we just very much so aligned on wanting to win and that being the emphasis.

Obviously I told him that, hey, we could really play well together. I think I could get you the ball in space and allow you to do what you do. He preached that there's many things that he could do to help me succeed. We had many conversations about it. But, I mean, that being said, after that conversation, still don't know if it's going to happen because a trade has to be made, and all that stuff has to be aligned.

But this was just a conversation that I initiated because I knew the rumors and I wanted to talk to him about it. Very thankful I did, and we aligned on those things. And I think that's a big part of why we are where we are and that relationship that we have. We don't spend a lot of time together off the floor. He lives in downtown Indy and I live more up north; so it's not like we spend a lot of time together off the floor. But we talk very often. It's a lot of basketball talk.

And I think the biggest thing that I can respect about him is just his work ethic. He comes in the gym, I know he's going to be there every day. I know the exact hoop he's going to be on so I try not to take his hoop. I let him get his one-on-one work in. Seeing him work that hard makes me want to work harder, and I think that goes through our group. I love having him as a teammate.

Q. Obviously you guys are both very young teams. Do you feel like this is a moment that it's a changing of the guard where you guys are carrying the torch for the league and on to the future?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, I mean, I think that's definitely a conversation that is more so for media talk and those things. I think the changing of the guard really isn't necessarily fair because like guys like Bron, Steph, they are still playing at such a high level. I don't look at it that way.

I try not to think of the outside narratives that go into the results of them winning or us winning. Just try to approach it with we want to win, and whatever the conversation is after whatever that is, then it will be what it is. You don't really have control of that, as you know.

So yeah, I think it's cool to see young teams having success. Maybe what we're doing or they are doing could be a blueprint for other young teams in this league. But as far as those conversations, those are for the media. We just want to win.

Q. You know how much people love basketball in Indiana, and you've been reminded it's been 25 years since they have been here. What's the sense of urgency; it's hard to win a playoff series and to get here, and to seize this moment now when it's so close?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I mean, obviously the sense of urgency for Indiana fans and for everybody should be heightened because, you know, we always talk about you never know when you'll get this moment again or if you'll get this moment again.

I had a great conversation with Steve Nash a couple days ago, and he said, hey, you're in rare air, I've never been there.

I thought, damn, Steve Nash has never been to the Finals? That's pretty crazy. Some guys don't get the chance to do that.

So I'm trying to live in the moment every day. And I think we talked about it, as the season went on, especially early in the year, we weren't having success. I thought more and more about how I took last year for granted, the chance to go to the Eastern Conference Finals.

I felt like, wow, I didn't know what this year would be, the way we started the year. Would we be a Play-In team? Could we be a first-round exit? Could we not make the playoffs? All those things were on the table, especially the way the year started. I think you're just looking at it and trying to just live in the moment every day.

And this isn't -- that's not even just a Finals thing. That's a life thing, right. We take every day for granted as human beings. We go to sleep and we wake up, and we take that for granted. We take for granted that my legs work and that I'm breathing and I'm healthy and all those things. You can always look at it from a bigger picture perspective, and that's important.

But I think, yeah, that's why I'm just cherishing this moment
and just really enjoying what I'm doing right now.

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