

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 8, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Jalen Williams

Game 2: Postgame



Oklahoma City Thunder 123, Indiana Pacers 107

Q. Between you, guys like Alex and Lu, you have a number of high-level defenders. How do you determine the plays on which you want to switch the screen or want to stay attached in real time?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Communication. Just communication. I think it's the biggest part of that. Obviously we have schemes in place. I don't want to get into too much matchup-oriented stuff. A lot of it is just being physical up into the screen, making sure our communication's early and loud. That's been kind of the biggest thing.

From there, like you said, we have really good defenders that can sniff a lot of plays out. Being able to talk it. I think there's an old saying, talk it, touch it, switch it. That kind of thing. Probably replace the 'switch it' part. A lot of it is being able to be close enough to your man to hear the coverage call and all that.

Q. I'm sure you got a thousand things to worry about getting ready for a Game 2. Minutes is not one of them. Aaron Wiggins, not that way. Has a game like he has. How much do you respect a guy that can come out and cold call play like that?

JALEN WILLIAMS: It's the hardest job in the league, I feel like. I think he's underrated -- that's a really good question. That goes underrated. It's really hard to stay engaged and stay ready. For him to be able to do that on the biggest stage he's ever played on and have a really good game, very special player.

I always keep that in mind. Yeah, it's a really tough job. He does it very well.

Q. Obviously you competed against Alex Caruso as an opponent. I'm sure there's times where drills on opposite teams. What is that feeling like when you have to dribble and Alex Caruso is right in front of you?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Oh, no, I be frying AC, so I don't really know (smiling).

No, he's a really good defender. Great hands, good feet. Physical, smart. When you add all that together and the amount of years he's been in the league, I can imagine it's probably a little uncomfortable.

Q. There was a stretch there in the fourth where Tyrese got going a little bit. With the exception of that, you held him well in check. What's key against him? What has to happen to keep him at bay?

JALEN WILLIAMS: A lot of it is just trying to make his life really difficult. Kind of the same way they're doing me and Shai, just us in general.

He's a good player. He's going to affect the game, even if he has an off night. Him being on the floor, he's going to have some type of impact on the game. A lot of it is trying to make it really hard for him to get to spots, understanding what he likes to see, try to turn that off.

Like I said, he's a good player. Just him being out there, he's going to affect how we play defense. I think taking that into account is big for us.

Q. You have talked about how you really have to stay engaged. Lead is never safe with them. Is part of the problem that they really test your defense? They've got five guys that all can score.

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yes, like I've been saying, they're really similar in how we play, too. We've been able to understand that. I think the last game they had a lot of guys in double figures. That's what makes them dangerous.

The same way that we have, like, Aaron Wiggins and guys that don't play that can come in at any moment. They kind of have the same thing going for them. We just got to understand that and be ready throughout the whole entire game.

Q. With Shai they're throwing a lot of stuff at him.

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What did you think of his decision making tonight as far as when to attack, split double-teams, get off the ball and let you other guys make plays?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Just getting better and better, which is very impressive. Obviously he's the MVP of the league. For him to continue to get better is good. He just trusts us to make plays.

I think when your best player is out there and he trusts you to make a play, it just gives you more confidence. He understands that. I think that's one of the roles he's gotten really good at and grown at, and it just makes our teams better.

Q. Able to convert shots in the paint and around the rim. What went into that?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Focus (smiling).

Some of it, too, you got to stick with it. Basketball, you're going to have games where you don't make shots, have you bad games where you miss layups. It's more about the process of how you're getting to the rim and how you're going about certain offense. I think if we just continue to stick with that. Mark always says just getting better through every game. I think we'll be in a good spot.

A lot of it is just being persistent with it.

Q. I asked Shai about if the momentum will carry over into Indiana or it's a reset. I'll ask you how do you go into Indiana reset and keep that extreme focus?

JALEN WILLIAMS: The biggest thing is understanding your opponent and where their heads are at, try to put yourself in their shoes. The good thing is, now it's 0-0 for us, so you just got to kind of understand what energy they're going to come out with. Them being at home, them in the Finals, what kind of punch they're going to throw, and be ready for that.

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