

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Practice Day



**Q. Shai, Mark has talked about Game 1 of the series being a feeling-out type of deal. How much better did you feel prepared to attack the Pacers' defense in Game 2? Do you feel like the more you see a team, the more maybe you know the answers to the test?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, Coach is definitely right on that. A series is so tricky. It definitely is a feel-out, but there's also so many adjustments made to where it's almost hard to predict and try to determine what they're going to do with you.

You kind of just have to be ready for everything and just try to be as sharp as you can. That's how I kind of see it. We've played well in certain games and teams have thrown different coverages at us as a group and a scheme. I find myself trying to predict what they're going to do before. It almost catches you off guard. I try to be ready for everything and let the game come to me.

**Q. Not sure you ever learned about Bruce Lee, one of Kobe Bryant's idols. One of his famous quotes is, the usefulness of a cup is in its emptiness. How do you look at that since the series is tied 1-1 at this time?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: The way I see it is, the series is 1-1. The goal is to win four games. After it being 1-1, now the goal is to get to three games. It's first team to three. Kind of like it's a blank slate, a scratch. 1-1, 0-0, and it's first to three.

**Q. You've wound up with some of the switching to Siakam. When you got him on a switch, what is job one for you?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, he's obviously a really good player. He can attack you in many ways. Very versatile. We've seen it throughout the Playoffs. He's won at a high level. He knows what it takes.

Honestly, with guys like that, you just try to make it difficult for them. They can almost check every box. You just try

to make it as complicated for them as possible. It's a hard job. But if you want to win, you've got to get it done.

**Q. When you're a young player coming into the league, you have a list of things you want to develop and get better at. Your coach mentioned that the team, as much as it has progressed, has a few more levels to go. Do you sense that there's more this team can do as a team collectively?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, absolutely. That's the way I view competition, the way I view everything as a whole. You're never going to do everything in life perfectly. No matter your age or your upside in whatever it is, you can learn and get better.

Now, us being younger, I guess the room is a little bit bigger. We definitely have not yet once played a perfect basketball game or had a perfect series. There's definitely plenty of room to get better.

That's one of the things we focus on as a building and as an organization. I think that's why we've been able to get better so quickly.

**Q. Maybe one of those things as an opportunity for you all to continue to get better through the Playoffs is performing at a really high level in one of these Game 3 situations. Do you view these boxes that you continue to check, maybe this is another one for you on the road in a Game 3?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, absolutely. I think we just have to keep finding ways to get better as a group. If we continue to do that, we'll be just fine. If we've struggled in an area, that's an area we can get better at. We have to attack that opportunity. I think Game 3 is a perfect example of that.

**Q. What have you come to appreciate about Alex Caruso as a defender that maybe you didn't anticipate before he became your teammate?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: His ability know where everyone is on the floor. Not just the defense or the offense when he's on defense, but us as well. He knows

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where all 10 guys are supposed to be. He plays defense off of feel and tendencies and awareness. Almost like a lot of guys play offense. It's pretty special to see up close and personal every day.

It's literally a talent of his to feel the game the way he does defensively. It's helped our defense a lot. No surprise why we're a pretty good defense.

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