

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

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Oklahoma City Thunder

Jalen Williams

Practice Day

Q. The team had 700 different five-man lineups during the regular season, more than many other teams. You've been on the court even in these Finals with a five-man group that had never played together. What is it like from your perspective that we have this group, my role has changed, have to look out for this? What gives you confidence that whatever the coach throws at you you're ready?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I'm going to try to keep this, like, not as long of an answer.

I think just over the course of my time here, I've had to evolve really fast. I think that's made me a really good player. So I've been in so many different positions on the team that it's helped me get to the point where when you say your lineup was different, I don't even really notice that. You know what I mean?

We have a group of guys that are just ready to play. Everybody is kind of waiting for their opportunity. Like you said, we have so many different lineups throughout the course of the year that nobody is shocked by when Mark wants to go small, change this around or do that. We have a bunch of guys that have experience doing that.

Over the course of time, you don't really notice it. You're more ready to play and ready when your number is called. I think that's what makes our team special, and just kind of from there it's just go out and play and do whatever it takes to win. I think everybody has kind of accepted where their role is and how they can help the team.

Q. You have used some different things over the course of the last few years, it's like a challenge to overcome. Even in these Playoffs, coming out of the locker room at halftime, playing better in third quarters. How do you view this experience on the road for Game 3, having an opportunity to play at a really high level?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's no secret our Game 3s



haven't been the best. Also to your point, it's an opportunity. Mark is always talking about how if it's the Finals, if it's the third week in January on a random Tuesday and we're not even on TV, how can you get better through the experiences that we play? That's kind of how we look at it. We're just trying to get better every single game. Obviously we're trying to win, as well.

Every single time you try to go out there, you look back at your film, we got better tonight or we got worse. We're always trying to get better.

Q. You've seen the bulk of the Siakam matchup defensively through the first couple of games. What do you know about him now that he didn't know two games ago? When you're trying to deal with limiting his paint touches, how have you been effective in doing that?

JALEN WILLIAMS: For me, defense -- I don't really notice having the bulk guarding him, just because defense is so team-oriented. I can only do my part correctly, which is just make it tough for him. Obviously there's some scouting and analytical stuff that goes into playing defense against somebody that good and somebody that can affect the game with their scoring.

I think it really just revolves around when you have other guys on the team that are talented, you try to make it really tough as a unit for them. I think my team has done a good job just being there for me when I'm beat. You try not to get beat as much obviously.

I think it just comes down to team defense, getting ready to rotate. He's a good player. He's going to find shots, make tough shots. It's how hard can you make it over the course of a series to get to the spots he likes, that sort of thing.

Q. You guys are such a young and talented team, reaching the Finals in the early stage of your career. People can't help but draw comparisons with the Thunder with Kevin Durant, James Harden and Russell Westbrook. Does it give you added pressure or extra motivation?

JALEN WILLIAMS: No, it doesn't really do too much for



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me except for the fact that it's just cool. Growing up, what was I, probably like 12 when they were playing, around there. To go from watching them reach that point and then to end up being on the team that's in the same position as them, it's more of like a blessing and a dream come true.

I just played Russell Westbrook in the Playoffs, and obviously he's a cornerstone of this organization. I just try to take those little things that come with it, be really happy and thankful for it. It doesn't really add any pressure or any kind of motivation. It's just really cool that I get to be in this position.

Q. After the Memphis series you credited a new mentality and mindset, being more aggressive. How has that evolved and how have you been able to maintain that through four rounds?

JALEN WILLIAMS: It's kind of like one of those if it's not broke, don't fix it things. I think once I got my mentality to switch and just understand how the Playoffs are called, the consistency, the physicality in the Playoffs, it's something I found that works.

You can't really come out soft or timid during these because everybody is playing like their life is on the line. I think just me being able to play that way and shift my focus to that has helped me evolve throughout the Playoffs. There's ups and downs throughout the whole thing. If I can stay pretty consistent and even throughout it, I'll be fine.

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