

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

## Oklahoma City Thunder Chet Holmgren

Practice Day

**Q. We know SGA broke the record for most points scored in a player's first two Finals games. How has that opened up more looks for you guys?**

CHET HOLMGREN: Obviously Shai has been balling. No different than what we've seen from him all year, all throughout the Playoffs.

He does a really good job of making the right play when the defense forces him to. He's been creating lot of good looks for everybody else on the floor.

He's done a really good job of finding the right balance between punishing the defense when they don't make him force in the pass, then making the right play when they do. It's been good for us. We got to keep it going.

**Q. What do you think makes you guys so good at rim protection and paint protection?**

CHET HOLMGREN: I'd say it's kind of our defense as a whole. It starts with pressuring the ball before it crosses halfcourt, stopping teams from scoring in transition so we can set our defense. Defeating actions, the screens, slide-outs, whatever, kind of controlling them within those. It makes it harder to get to the paint in the first place.

It starts early. Making sure we have each other's back at the rim if somebody does get beat.

**Q. How long in your conversations with Mark did you realize that that was his thing, protecting the paint and keeping teams away from the basket?**

CHET HOLMGREN: I wouldn't say our whole identity is that. At the end of the day the best shot in basketball is the dunk, the highest percentage shot. You want to make shots at the rim tough, then you want to try and eliminate them as much as possible.

You eliminate a lot of opportunities with fouls, as well, when you keep players from getting down near the paint.



It's a lot easier to guard without fouling the farther you get from the basket. It's just about forcing the least efficient shots and trusting that over the course of the game, that gives you the best chance to win.

He has different philosophies on how to get that done. It changes depending on who we're playing and what they're trying to do. At the end of the day, the goal is to force teams to do things that give us a chance to win.

**Q. Last game was the first time you have two bigs in the lineup against the Pacers. How comfortable were you?**

CHET HOLMGREN: I felt good out there. Obviously, it's easier to play with another big on the floor when they're skilled, they can move around, communicate and kind of flip-flop places, which is big for us to have Hart out there, next to me at times.

At the end of the day whatever Coach asks us to do, it's our job to be ready for that and go out to execute. That's what we try to do.

**Q. What is it like to guard Myles Turner in the single-big lineups, with his age and experience?**

CHET HOLMGREN: I'd say the biggest key is understanding what they're trying to accomplish as a team, then understanding what we're trying to accomplish as a team. From there, you can try and break it down to situations where you need to understand what he's trying to do, then you're trying to counter that.

Obviously, he's a skilled player. He can step out and shoot it. He can keep put the ball on the floor a little bit, make some scoring plays. You just have to understand what his tendencies are and try to take those away.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

