

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Mark Daigneault

Game 3: Pregame

Q. Mark, I know you don't intend to necessarily force turnovers, obviously the disruption and the points that come from that have won you a lot of games. What makes you comfortable winning games and leading games this series maybe without that going for you?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Well, every game's different. So that's the first thing. Indiana is a great ball-control team. They do a great job of not turning it over. That's been one of the strengths of their team throughout the course of the season.

If we try to overdo that, it could throw us off kilter. We just stick with our stuff. Try to be disruptive, be hard to play against. Sometimes that yields turnovers, sometimes that yields tough shots, sometimes that gets teams going deeper into the shot clock. Whatever it is, we don't care. We just want to try to get stops. However they come they come.

We'll see how it goes tonight. It can't be, like, a focal point for us.

Q. At Game 101 or whatever it is of the season, in theory both sides have seen everything. Is there any way that one can surprise the other with something they throw out? When is the last time somebody rolled something out and it caught you by surprise?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Well, I think you kind of know the menu, but you don't know what teams will go to and when. I think the element of surprise is more timing than it is, like, something novel. Denver played a 1-3-1 coming out of the gates. You don't see that every day.

Other than, that you just got to be ready for everything. Just like teams build their defensive, offensive menu, we try to do the same. We try to have attacks ready for everything, different detours we can take depending on what the opponent does. That's kind of how we play it.

Q. I know this isn't your area of expertise, your



organization brought its entire business office, 250 employees today chartered a flight. What does that say about the organization and just the fact they would do that for so many of your fellow coworkers?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I have the privilege of working in a first-class organization, starting with Clay [Bennett], all the way on down. It's first class in every aspect. There's really nothing that isn't first rate with our team. That's not to say that we're better than anybody else. Certainly working here for as long as I have, I have a great appreciation for that.

We talk about our players like invisible work. There's a lot of, like, work that goes in that is unseen. There's a lot of invisible people that help you run a great operation from a business standpoint and from a basketball operations standpoint. We have great people that are in the backdrop with their heads down that have their fingerprints on the team and the success of the team that don't necessarily get a lot of shine.

Happy they're here. We're going to need them to be really, really loud tonight in this place.

Q. You saw how important the home crowd was in Oklahoma. What do you expect from the crowd from Indiana?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, it's a great home court. They play very well here. They play fast here. They play with great physicality and pressure here. That's been seen even in the regular season coming here, this has always been a great crowd. We know this place will be live tonight.

But we got to take care of what we have to take care of in between the lines. It's a really, really tough environment that will be ready to go.

Q. Indiana puts a lot of reads and improvisation on the floor. You said they're more of a conceptual team other than keying on one player. How do you prepare your team to face some unpredictability?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I really believe that. They're a



... when all is said, we're done.®

conceptual offense. They play with a lot of flow. They play with a lot of spontaneity. They don't overcontrol the game, their coaching or their players. They just go out there and play. So it requires a conceptual approach defensively.

If you go out there and you're like, hey, we're trying to stop this one player or one player, they're going to get you somewhere else. You kind of have to approach the game the way they do on that end of the floor, which is unique. It's one of the unique aspects of playing them.

One of the hardest things about playing this team is how different so many things they do are from a normal middle-of-the-belt curve NBA. That's why they're here. It's why they're successful. We have a lot of respect for them. It's why they're a tough opponent.

Q. There is a new generation of Canadian players coming into the league, like Shai and Lu. Is there anything that stands out to you about their identity, the way they are, the way they play, their mindset?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, I mean, I can only speak to them, Shai and Lu. I don't want to, like, generalize across the entire country of Canada.

They're incredible people. They're great competitors. They're great workers. They're total team guys. They play for the front of the jersey. Even when they were playing for national team, they took a tremendous amount of pride in doing that.

I have great respect for them. Being around them as long as I've had the privilege of being around them, I've only gained more respect as time has gone on. It's been a privilege to watch them grow as people and family men now, certainly players and competitors, leaders.

Yeah, I obviously can't say enough about those guys.

Q. This series is kind of the bench game. What do you expect from the bench from OKC tonight?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I mean, we want guys to go out there and be who they are, play to their individual identities. They don't have to be more than who they are. They can't be less than who they are. That's across our roster. They got to be ready to go at any time. They always are.

Those guys have delivered for us time and time again throughout this season and throughout these Playoffs, including last game. We're going to need everybody. Those guys have done a great job.

But yeah, I mean, it's the same expectation with the bench as we have with everybody.

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