

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Mark Daigneault

Game 3: Postgame

Indiana Pacers 116, Oklahoma City 107

Q. A little bit of a two-parter. 19 turnovers I believe. Didn't feel like the team we've watched. How would you characterize the turnovers? Where did you feel Indiana gained the upper hand down the stretch?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I mean, the turnovers were uncharacteristic. Obviously we're usually pretty clean there. I give them credit. I thought they played really well. They played with great energy. They were physical. They pressured. They sustained it for much of the 48.

I thought we did some good things. We got off to a really good start, then got off to a really good start in the third. We really controlled the first and third quarters and had a really hard time in the second and the fourth.

We'll watch it. It wasn't all bad. But we definitely have to play our style and impose our will for more of the 48 minutes if we want to come on the road and get a win.

Q. Seemed like a lot of switches tonight. Do you feel like that gave them a little too many good looks on their end?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I mean, we'll watch it. Every possession is different. There's definitely possessions where I thought they were the aggressor and we weren't in the ball enough. There were some possessions that were really good. I thought specifically to start the third quarter, our pressure and physicality was right where it needed to be.

They had more good stretches than we did, outplayed us over the course of 48 minutes. Obviously we need to play better if we want to give ourselves a better chance in Game 4.

Q. What did you see from your offense in the fourth quarter, specifically from Shai?



MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, they really outplayed us in the fourth. Give them credit. I thought we were in really good shape coming out of the third quarter, five-point lead. They weathered the storm of the second quarter. That was a rough quarter. We were only down whatever we were at halftime, four or six. We got control of the game coming out of the third.

In the fourth quarter, I just thought they really outplayed us on both ends. I thought they were in character in terms of their physicality, their pressure on defense. Then they were in character in terms of their pace on offense. They just stacked way more quality possessions in the fourth quarter than we did.

Q. Shai has seen everything under the sun. Did you sense additional physicality with him, more double teams coming quicker? What do you have to adjust going into Game 4?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I didn't think they really changed their schemes very much. I just thought they were sharper, like I said, with the physicality and the pressure. Their physicality was stronger than our force in a lot of those possessions.

Not all of them. Obviously we had really good stretches of the game, but not enough good stretches of the game to stack up to a win on the road.

Q. You don't often see a stolen inbound in the NBA. I think McConnell got you three times for layups. How inexcusable do you view those turnovers? How much do you think that snowballed?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I mean, those were big plays, obviously. In terms of inexcusable, everybody is out there competing and trying. I'm not going to place blame on those plays. I just thought their overall tone was better than ours for the majority of the game.

Like I said, I thought we had some really good stretches, but we just made one too many mistakes and had one too many possessions on both ends of the floor where they were more tied to their identity than we were.

Obviously those are costly plays.

Q. They say role players play better at home. What can you do to reverse that trend? What specifically was so difficult about Mathurin tonight?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: He's had games like this in previous series. He seems to have a game like this in every series. He's a talented player.

He was really aggressive tonight. He did a great job. McConnell did a great job. Their bench really came in the game and was excellent. I thought that he had a lot to do with the second quarter, the start they got off to. I think it was 15-4. The start of the fourth quarter as well. Those guys were the catalyst to that. So they outplayed us tonight. We got to learn from it, then try to go be a better team in Game 4.

Q. They seemed intentional on getting into the paint early and often. How much of a challenge was that for you guys?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I thought just the pace of their offense was sharper than our pressure, physicality tonight. I thought that's just what it came down to. They got the ball ahead of us more easily tonight than they did in the first two games. That led to a lot of the downstream effects of their offense, our defense tonight.

We'll look at it. We think we have some solutions. But we got to go out there and do it. In the meantime, give them credit. They went and got that game. They outplayed us the majority of the game and they deserved to win.

Q. After you go down eight, you give yourself some opportunities, but really didn't capitalize. Is that a microcosm of some of the bigger picture issues you saw or...

MARK DAIGNEAULT: Yeah, when you're down eight with that little time, your margin for error is really thin. The solution to that, first solution to that, is don't be down eight with two and a half to go if you want to win. It's hard to win that game in that situation. We're always going to try to do everything we can to try to close a gap, put game pressure on the opponent.

They did a good job holding us off down the stretch. Their execution, even late in the fourth quarter when they had a lead, was really strong. They did a good job slamming the door on the game.

Q. Your guys had some missed free throws in the fourth. Do you feel that played a big factor? Do you

credit that to the inexperience of the players or the environment?

MARK DAIGNEAULT: I don't really know, to be honest with you. Usually we're a pretty good free throw shooting team. We've been in a lot of environments, stepped up in a lot of situations. I have the utmost confidence in the team.

I thought it was an uncharacteristic night in a lot of ways for us. We got to learn from it and then tap back into being who we are in Game 4. If we do that, I think we'll have a much better chance to win.

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