

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Tyrese Haliburton

Game 3: Postgame



Indiana Pacers 116, Oklahoma City Thunder 107

Q. Tyrese, we caught up with your high school coach this week, Brad Weber, and one of the things I noticed from watching you at Oshkosh North and now is the ability to play with calm amidst chaos. Coach Weber was saying you were having conversations all the time. I'm wondering how much staying in your routine in those conversations with people back home mean to you as you try to stay grounded and in the moment and not let the noise creep in?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, it's important for me at a time like this to talk to people whose opinions I respect. Coach Weber is one of those, being my high school coach. Coach [Steve] Prohm is in the back right there, my college coach. I've had many conversations with those guys because they have seen me in many different scenarios and situations.

I'm just trying to play the right way. I think these games can get crazy and I think what I've learned from those guys as my coaches and Coach Carlisle is that people follow the leader and that typically is our coaches. When things are going crazy and those guys remain calm, it's easy for us to remain the same way. I try to look at it in the game that way, as well. I try to be as relaxed as I can, because if anybody is looking at me, I want them to feel confident no matter what.

Just trying to play the right way. There's good games. There's bad games, but I hate to say it like this, but it is a child's game, you know. Like this means the world to me, and I'm really excited to be here, and I love what I do and I love this game. But I do think it's important that, you know, you don't overreact at any point, just enjoy what you're doing.

Q. What does Obi mean to this group? He has the big put-back dunk late but the growth you've seen from him throughout the years and having him as a teammate?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: He's been so big for us all year, the past two years, his energy, and when we traded for him, I had a pretty funny Tweet. But I think that he consistently continues to bring pace into the game. That's what he does. When it's not going well and when it is going well, he continues to bring that pace to the game and he's flying up the floor and you're hitting him ahead. He did a great job today of making the right play. Had a huge tip-in dunk, and those are huge energy plays for this building.

He fits so perfect with what we do and when we traded for him, I was really excited not only because of our personal relationship but because of how well he can help this group.

He's going to continue to do that, and you know, he was really big. Our bench was really big tonight as a whole. So we need that consistently. We preach depth. We've talked about it all year. Our second unit did a great job of being prepared today.

Q. So you had that show on Shai where you forced a travel and then towards the end of the game, you guys were like a trash compactor, keeping those guys in. How hard is it to set the edge and keep a guy like that bottled up? The ball pressure on the screen was incredible.

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I think with Shai, he's so good. He's so slippery in between those gaps. It's like he splits screens, like I don't know how he's doing that. And I think in Game 2 specifically, if you watch a lot of my coverages, I did a poor job of being at the level. I was back and then he could come off and he had so much space. Now he's kind of manipulating me with in-and-out or he can just split and throw it through. I thought that was something we really had to clean up coming into today.

You're consistently trying to mix things up because if you give any good player the same look over and over, it can be really tough. So whatever it is, a show, at the level, I just can't be flat. If I'm flat, there's nothing I can do with him coming downhill.



So you know, just consistently trying to grow and as you know, it never is like always perfect. Sometimes you've got to figure it out. I think the big thing that makes it easier is when Drew is really blowing through those screens and I think more times than not, he's getting held and having to fight through and it's the Finals. It's physical basketball. But I thought he did a great job of really fighting through, and if I can just hold him for a second, give him more time to get back square, it makes things easier.

So just got to do a better job of being at the level and presenting myself as much as I can because if I'm back, you know, he's a really tough cover.

Q. Bennedict had 27 points in 22 minutes, I think five of those nine buckets were in the paint. There was so much conversations about getting in the paint. What did he bring to you guys off the bench tonight, and what did you see with his ability to get downhill?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I thought he did just a great job of playing within what we do so well. He did a great job of coming off handoffs, reading the pocket, rising up from the mid-range. This is a defense that will give that up. Analytically, that's not the best shot.

But I thought he did a great job of hunting that and getting downhill. What Ben does at such a high level is getting to the free throw line, and in this series we need to get to free throws. We need to get to the paint. I thought he did a great job of that.

Our bigs were great, Obi, Myles, Pascal, doing a solid job of getting in the pocket and giving us reads. I thought he did a great job in transition as well forcing the issue getting downhill.

He just made big play after big play. That's the great thing about the Finals, great thing about basketball is when you have a team with this much depth, it be can anybody's night.

I'm proud of the way he responded tonight. I think he's had a great series honestly and that was a big game and huge minutes for us, and it's a guy that we missed heavily last year in our run and we consistently talked about it all year how important it's going to be for him to be a part of this playoff run and you're seeing why that is. He was a huge reason for our victory tonight.

Q. A point early in the first quarter, you fell down 15-6, quick timeout. What was said during that break and how does this group keep finding the spirit to come from behind in games?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: The conversations was we have to wake up. That was the biggest thing. We had a couple bad turnovers there. We were playing a little antsy, probably, is the right word.

I thought we did a great job responding. It's the NBA, 10 points is nothing, 20 points is nothing. No lead is safe. You just have to put your head down. One play at a time, whatever it is, one play, one quarter try to look at it in increments that way so you can stick with it.

We didn't start the game the way we wanted to. I thought our first quarter was poor but our second unit did a great job of giving us energy to start that second quarter, and we just rode the wave from there.

Definitely have to get better starts. The first three minutes and last three minutes of every quarter are so important especially in a time like this. We weren't good to start the third quarter either. So watch the film and see where we can get better and continue to improve.

Q. With due respect to T.J. when he comes in and loses his mind the way that he likes to do, what does that mean? We see the impact on the crowd. What does it mean in the huddle, the room, that he's still willing to play that way, that he's one of one in a lot of ways? He did stuff tonight that's never been done off the bench in a Finals game. What does he mean top to bottom for this group?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I think his energy is unbelievable. You guys know he's definitely a crowd favorite. I joke with him, I call him the "Great White Hope." He does a great job of bringing energy in this building. And I think people feed off that. And he had a couple unbelievable steals.

I think in a series like this what's so important is the margins. You have to win in the margins. It's not necessarily who can make the most shots or anything. It's taking care of the ball, rebounding, little things like that. I thought he does a great job of giving us energy plays consistently and getting downhill and operating. I mean, nobody operates on the baseline like that guy. I thought did he a great job of consistently getting there and making hustle play after hustle play, and sticking with it, and I thought we did a great job of just feeding off of what he was doing.

So he's been like a big brother to me since I've gotten here and a guy, you look at T.J. McConnell and his story is unbelievable. So I just enjoy being able to play alongside him and the energy he gives his teammates in this building is, he's a lot of fun.



Q. I thought Furphy was the Great White Hope.

TYRESE HALIBURTON: It's in a slow transition right now.

You see the energy that he gets when he comes in the game, too. We have two Great White Hopes currently.

Q. You talked between Game 2 and 3 about the importance of mixing things up and playing off the pitch. What do you like about the way you attacked their defense and get the ball in the paint and get yourself some downhill rhythm in this game?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: We did a great job of just playing off the pitch off handoffs, screening, all those things. I thought we did a great job of -- this is a defense that you can't consistently give them the same look. If you try to hold the ball and call for screens, they crawl into you and pack the paint. It's not easy. It's really tough. That's why they are such a historical defense. They do such a great job of that. You just have to continue to give them different looks as much as you can.

I thought we did a great job of just playing and continuing to play random basketball. Against a team like this, there's not really play calls. You've just got to play.

I thought we did a great job of responding. Now we have to watch the film. See where we can get better. Still room for improvements. We have adjustments to make. They have adjustments to make. You've got to consistently play pace, random basketball and good things will happen. I thought we did a great job of just doing that tonight.

Q. You impact the game a lot of ways but when you don't score, there's chatter. How cognizant were you of the chatter the last couple days? Is it conversations you had with coaches and how do you calibrate the balance between playmaking and scoring in general?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, I think the commentary is always going to be what it is, you know. Most of the time, the talking heads on the major platforms I couldn't care less, honestly, like what do they really know about basketball?

I think as a group and watching film myself and seeing where I can get better is important. You know, I mean, at a time like this, I'm not really on social media as much. I try to stay off it as much as I can. But you know, you see it, and ESPN might be on in my house and there it is. You know, it is what it is.

But I think just seeing where I can be better is the most

important thing, and having that reflection with myself, I talk a lot obviously with my trainer, Drew, and Coach Carlisle and all those guys, and it's a constant conversations of seeing where I can get better. There was adjustments that had to be made coming into today for me and I thought I did a better job at that and I watched film again and see where I can get better.

But you know, I think there's going to be ebbs and flows. I'm never going to be, you know, super great and shoot so many shots every game consistently. There's going to be games where I don't and I've got to be able to find the right balance between the two. But I mean, I think experience is the best way I can learn from it.

So seeing where I can be better is important through the first two games and just trying to be better today. You know, taking what the defense gives me, trying to play the right way and watch film and see where I can get better and be ready to go for Game 4.

But the commentary is what it is at this point. It doesn't matter. We're here in the NBA Finals two wins away from an NBA Championship. You know, just got to stay with it, put my head down, keep working and as a group we've just got to keep learning from our mistakes, see where we can get better and take our time.

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