

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Tyrese Haliburton

Practice Day

Q. Tyrese, you guys were up 2-1 in every other round. Game 4, 5, no drop-off. You kept your edge. Why are you making that look so easy when it is something that the human condition says you're going to let go of the rope?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I think it starts from Coach Carlisle, just keeping our attention on the main thing, taking it a day at a time, focusing on what's in front of us. I think that just trickles down.

I think our jobs, me, Pascal, Myles, James, as leaders is to continue to share the same message that Coach has. There's nothing to get excited about right now. We're still a long way away. You just got to take it a day at a time.

We're excited to play another game in front of our home crowd, approach this game the same way we approached yesterday. Just control what we can. I think the biggest thing is just playing hard. If we can do that, we can figure everything out from there.

There's no need to get super giddy or excited. There's still a lot of work to be done.

Q. T.J., if he was not known to be an NBA player, could probably walk into the Y and people would think, who is this guy? How has he been able to impact the NBA Finals? Both him and Caruso, when they don't have an impact, you think what's going on.

TYRESE HALIBURTON: Yeah, he just does the little things so well. He always talks about it like he's in year 10. The biggest thing for him that he knew he would have to do to stick would be just to play harder than people. That's his calling card, MO, how hard he plays, the energy that he plays with.

Obviously he's a very skilled player, as well. I think he just does a great job of just playing harder than people. That has created such an unbelievable career for him. He'll continue to do that.



I think our fans have really taken to liking and are loving him. Same with Caruso and OKC. Same thing with T.J. in Philly. Hard not to root for a guy like that that plays so hard.

Like you said, he's an NBA player, but if he walks in anywhere, he can get away with it. People have no clue.

He plays so hard. I think that's the biggest thing. He controls what he can. That's the biggest example of it. Make and miss shots, that is what it is. He plays so hard and that makes up for things.

Q. Rick just called playing and beating Oklahoma City a daunting task. He seems to have the weight of the Finals on him. From your perspective, how much are you enjoying this? What are you enjoying about it? You'd rather be here than not playing at all. How much of it is stressful compared to the regular season?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I think the biggest thing with right now is this is like a really exciting time. To play against these guys is an honor. It's a lot of fun. This is a 68-win team, historically one of the best defenses ever. This is a really good team. They have the MVP. They have a bunch of dudes who are going to be in this league for a long time having a lot of success.

I can't say enough good things about their team as a group. I think the most fun part about basketball is if you're going to win, you don't want to do it any other way than have to beat the best. This team has been the best team in the NBA all year. They consistently respond when their backs are against the wall.

It's a lot of fun. As competitors, you want to compete against the best and these guys are the best. I think I'll say that to answer that part of the question.

As far as stress, I think that should be heightened right now. You're playing in the NBA Finals. There should be a higher sense of urgency, a higher level of stress. Your spit should taste different. All those things, right (smiling)? This is a lot of fun. This is a lot of fun.



After games, I'm struggling to sleep -- good games and bad games. I'm watching a ton of film. I'm doing, us as a group, we're texting more in the group chat about basketball-related things more than we probably ever have. This is a lot of fun. You don't want to take these moments for granted.

We got a few people in our organization who have won a championship or played in the NBA Finals. That's all that we consistently hear about, is don't take this moment for granted, enjoy this moment.

You want to be able to put all your cards on the table, play as hard as you can. You don't want to have any regrets at the end of it. That's the biggest thing that we talk about as a group. That's the way it should be.

Q. Even when Shai has had some success in this series, he seems to be frustrated on some level. What is Andrew doing to keep Shai sort of off his game even if it's emotional?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I think Andrew is doing a great job of staying in front, being physical, just making it hard on him, just trying to give him different looks. He's the MVP, the best scorer in the NBA. Feels like when he wakes up he has 30. That's what it is.

I think Drew is doing a great job of making it as difficult as he can, being physical, just being a pesty defender. That's his calling card in this league. That's what he does as such a high level.

Those guys have played together all summer. They know each other their whole lives. I'm sure they know things about each other that many don't know. I think that's to both of their benefits, as well. I think to see such an elite offensive talent compete against such an elite defensive talent has been a treat to watch for me on the floor. So I know as basketball fans, people have to enjoy that matchup, as well.

With a guy like Shai, you can never give him the same look. Drew does a great job of mixing things up. We're just trying to make life hard on him as best as we can.

Q. You mentioned a few people in your organization that have won championships. Have they been talking about those Finals' experiences, bringing their rings to show you guys?

TYRESE HALIBURTON: I haven't seen any rings. I have not.

Coach consistently, I think having been in the league so

long, I hear a lot of stories from him, not just from the 2011 run but the unsuccessful runs, stories of him with Dirk and certain guys. We've been talking a lot about that 2011 championship run, how that series went, how they had to respond in many different ways.

I was 11 years old, but I remember hating Coach Carlisle and those guys at that time (smiling).

I think even with Pascal, he might be a little annoyed by me at this point with all the questions I ask of those Finals runs. It's been that way since he's gotten here. I consistently ask questions. I wasn't in the league at the time, and I'm a huge basketball fan. I want to know about the adjustments and the conversations in those locker rooms.

We consistently talk about those things. Yeah, for sure. Just trying to get knowledge from all the basketball minds that were around. I think everybody can agree on that, not just in our locker room, but the external forces as well, like Reggie (Miller) consistently talking with us, just other guys that I've had conversations with. Sharing their experiences has been really beneficial for me.

Like I said, just keep saying, I don't want to take this time for granted. I want to live in the moment, put all my cards on the table, have no regrets at the end of this.

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