

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Indiana Pacers

T.J. McConnell

Practice Day



Q. What are the things that are making a difference for you guys in this series?

T.J. McCONNELL: I think it's about playing together as a group. Obviously, I think we have to continue to play together, communicate, play as hard as we can on both ends of the floor.

Q. Did you find something yesterday that you can apply to tomorrow?

T.J. McCONNELL: We're still looking at stuff like that. Obviously looking at stuff that we can fix. But I don't want to divulge too much information. Rick and the staff do a great job of figuring out what we need to fix, stuff we can add.

Q. I know you're going to say it's your job. Five steals from the bench. Were you amazed about yourselves doing that in the Finals?

T.J. McCONNELL: I think you know me. Our group, it's a feel thing. When we need to inject energy, I think we do a good job of doing that. Just trying to do my job. Really that's all it comes down to. Nothing more, nothing less.

Q. For you what was the key yesterday? The level of intensity of the defense forced into 19 turnovers, or that second quarter was amazing with 40 points. Which one would you pick as the moment of the game?

T.J. McCONNELL: I'm not quite sure. I just think as a group we just continue to need to be tied together on both ends of the floor because we're going against a great team who is extremely well-coached, got the MVP of the league.

We have a lot more left to do.

Q. Does the bench squad have a name?

T.J. McCONNELL: I don't know if we have a name. Might

have to ask around. If we do, I don't know.

Q. It seemed like, no disrespect to OKC, but down the stretch you're getting the loose balls, like you wanted this game. Where does that come from in this postseason that you've been able to find a way down the stretch?

T.J. McCONNELL: I mean, I feel like throughout the series, to start the game you could really say OKC was getting all the 50-50 balls, the second-chance points. It goes in waves. You have to have a concerted effort from the group to kind of dig deeper and go to another place competitively. That's what we need to continue to do.

Q. Your relationship with the fans, you've taken that more on each game of finding a moment within a game and hoping it sparks something.

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, I mean, I love this place. I love our fans. Anytime we can get them energized more than they already are, it takes us to another level. We need their energy next game.

Q. What is the role conditioning plays for you and your team, playing the way you do and seemingly having more energy down the stretch?

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, I mean, we obviously got to be in good shape. Got to credit Rick and our strength and conditioning staff for preparing us to play this way from the moment Rick walked through the door.

Credit to us for kind of taking, no pun intended, and running with it. It's a style of play that he wanted to play. We've adapted and we've got to continue to do so.

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