

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Practice Day



Q. Shai, you mentioned last night they prioritized picking you up higher. Statistically the average pickup point was higher than any game in your career. They also tried to make you work as hard as possible. How much did you feel those body blows made fatigue a factor? How can you mitigate that and fight through it?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, you got to suck it up. There's a maximum four games left in the season. It's what you worked the whole season for. It's what you worked all summer for.

To me, the way I see it, you got to suck it up, get it done and try to get a win.

Q. You said there's four games max the rest of the way. I don't know if you feel like there's similarities between this series and the Denver series. You were down 2-1. How does this feel different or similar? What's the sense of urgency today with the group?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it feels a lot similar. Obviously losing Game 1 on a buzzer-beater, winning big Game 2, being up in Game 3 and losing the lead. There's a lot of similarities.

The teams are very different. You can't kind of compare the situations too much. But at the end of the day, we have to be who we are and who we've been all season. I think we got back to that in that series. If we want to give ourselves a chance in this series, it has to be the same thing.

Q. I want to ask about how you guys are adjusting to Indiana's pace and how fast they play?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Pretty good. We play pretty fast ourselves, so it hasn't been too much of an adjustment period. It's been pretty comfortable.

But yeah, they do play fast. It's been fun.

Q. When Andrew was trying to deny you after made baskets, they wouldn't inbound it to you. Is that something where you want to get the ball more often, or are you okay letting them inbound it to somebody else?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I'm okay with both. There's a lot of guys that can make plays and handle on the team. I don't have to be on it 24/7. There's moments where it is beneficial for the team for me to touch it early.

It's a mixture. It's a blend, just like anything else. Yeah, I think both is fine.

Q. Do you think you had the right balance last night or do you feel like you need to tilt it a little more toward being on the ball?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It wasn't an issue with being off balance last night. Not at all.

Q. You seem a little more emotionally agitated in this series by Nembhard than anybody else you played against this year. Is he doing extra to get under your skin? Is it because of your long history together?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I'm not too sure. I don't know what you're talking about. I don't feel emotionally agitated at all. So I don't know what's going on. But I don't feel emotionally worked up at all (smiling).

Q. Whether it was the pace or some of the extra bumps that you took last night, did you feel that wore you down a little bit going into the fourth quarter?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I'm not too sure. I don't think so. It's a physical game. We've had plenty of physical games. We've had games like that where I've been great late, games where I've stunk late. I don't think it was anything out the blue, anything I hadn't seen before.

Q. You guys all talk about just being in the moment, being present. Is there anything you guys or you maybe specifically do to implement that into your mental routine or something that you do as a group?

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SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Nothing specific. I just think we've hung our hat on that all year. It's something that we're pretty used to, something that's comfortable for us. It's almost like a default.

Q. Your pace is always your own, slow and surgical. You always move with calm confidence. How do you keep that identity with the other team when it's trying to speed you up emotionally and physically? What is your version of leadership look like when you're down in a Finals series?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Honestly, I don't really think about it too much. It's become so second nature the way I play, the way I think about the game. It's just part of who I am.

Then my leadership is the same. It's been all year. Been organic to who I am. Never overbearing. If something needs to be said, I say it. Pick my spots, pick my moments. I think above all, be organic to who I am.

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