

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Jalen Williams

Practice Day

Q. We hear Mark talk a lot about being present, trying to be where your feet are. Is there anything you can share about how that is implemented within the group?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, that dates back to -- when he first started saying it, we were in L.A. last year. That was during LeBron's, however many points he scored, like a hundred, whatever. But just, like, the idea behind it for that was there's going to be so much going on in the arena during LeBron's moment, that you have to be where your feet are. You have to lock in and stay present in the moment.

From there, we kind of just ran with it. There's been so many outside factors and a lot of noise that have gone into my last three years. Obviously being in the Finals, the Cup, all that stuff, it just kind of became a little team mantra.

It's just something to kind of remind us how far we've come. The more we can get back to zero, the better we'll be.

Q. You guys are ahead on point differential in three of the four quarters this series. The exception being the fourth quarter. As you've studied it, what has to change for you to be able to finish the way you've played in the first three quarters in the series?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Just not having any letup defensively. That's our identity. We've kind of strived away from it a little bit. I think when you're scoring at a good rate, sometimes it can drop off a little bit. That's something that we've looked at.

There will be some game plan adjustments, for sure. A lot of that is just competing. I don't want to say "competing" because that sounds like you're out there not trying. Defensively locking in on a lot of the little things, not let them get comfortable and make those bigger runs late in the game.



Q. You're down 2-1. How are you feeling mentally? There's a lot of games in the season. How are you feeling physically, mentally? How are you staying prepared?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, the Playoffs, you kind of get a little bit of a second wind. It feels like a little bit of a different series. We were fortunate enough to get a week off in between two of the series, so that's helped a little bit. My body has actually been pretty good.

One thing that I got to learn earlier in my career, even though it's only my third year, the way you take care of your body in the summer and during the season helps you for the Playoffs. I think I did a really good job of that this year, so my body feels really good. I've been able to find different outlets to keep my brain active that don't have anything to do with basketball. I write. I still try to talk to my friend group as much as possible. Do anything to keep my mind off the series all the time. Kind of go from there.

I've always said it -- just to get back to whatever your zero is helps you kind of figure out and navigate the NBA and all the craziness that comes with it.

Q. You talked about blocking out the noise. What does that look like, especially as the Playoffs get this deep and more significant? How much better have you gotten at that over the course of your career?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, I literally block out the noise. Laila (Wani) has my headphones. I usually walk around with those so people don't talk to me.

You just have to find something else that makes you -- I don't want to say happy, but allows you to kind of escape reality a little bit. Like I said, for me I started writing. Just whatever my thoughts are, whatever that is. That's a cool little escape. I watch movies. I watch a ton of movies during the Playoffs. Whenever I have downtime, try to hang out with my friends. Do stuff that is not basketball related, which is sometimes very hard because that is my livelihood.

You just get better with it as time goes on. You find more and more interest with stuff. Yeah, I just kind of go from

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there. Obviously so much of my life obviously has to do with basketball, this and that. You're watching film all the time. You're trying to find ways to get better.

Over the course of time, I've just found other things that I like and I try to do that in my spare time.

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