

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Practice Day



**Q. Shai, Mark told us the other day winning the possession game was key for Oklahoma. You guys lost it in Game 4. You guys had only three three-pointers in Game 4, the fewest in a Finals win since 2010. You guys had only 11 assists in Game 4, the fewest in a Finals win in the shot clock era, and still you won the game. Is that what makes this group so special, the ability to find ways to win games when things are not going so smoothly?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, absolutely. Whatever it takes to win has always been our mindset. It's all that really matters with us.

Now, it's harder to win the way we played last game over the course of time. We've got to correct that if we want to come out on top. Yeah, we are grateful, thankful we did enough to get a win, but we're not trying to rely on the way we played last game. We need to be better, and we're going to be better.

**Q. Want to talk to you about Coach [Marvin] Mack. Has been there for over 20 years, greeting people, greeting you, the visiting team. What does his presence mean to you? I don't know if you've got to know him much, but just seeing him around every game?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it's special. I think you get so caught up in your own world as an NBA player. You get so caught up in all the things that come with being in the NBA. People like Coach Mack, we have a bunch of them around the building. They are like a breath of fresh air. You walk in all serious, thinking about your game, whenever it is, and he's happy to be there. Happy to hold the door for you. Just the simple things in life.

Over the years, I've been able to get closer to him. I've met his granddaughter. He is a really great guy. I'm happy he is around. He keeps everything light around here. He is a big part of what we do.

**Q. How has Dub's development as a playmaker impacted this team? And specifically, you guys in the two-man game down the stretch there, what do you think of that dynamic and that as a weapon?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, Dub has made tremendous strides. He is one of the biggest reasons why we're here. Him being able to shoulder what he does every night on both ends of the floor takes a lot of pressure off everyone else around him, including myself. He is a gamer. He is a winner. But he continues to get better in every situation. It makes it easier for the rest of us around him, whether it's me in the two-man game or him switching on the five defensively. He is a Swiss Army knife, and he's only getting better with every game he plays. I'm excited to see where he ends up.

**Q. This is now your fifth time being in this best-of-three kind of scenario in your career. What would you say that you're taking from those previous experiences heading into these next two games, given it's the NBA Finals now?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Learn the lessons. Learn the lessons from the past four games. And it's the first team to two wins. Those two things, most importantly. Two wins and you get the job done. That's what I felt like I was focused on in the Denver series, and we were able to do so. Same thing for this series.

**Q. When older players talk about their experiences the Finals, they talk about going through it for the first time and how fatiguing and tiring it is just not knowing how to prepare your body to play through mid to late June. In Indiana, looked like there were points where you looked fatigued and worn down. Where are you physically and mentally playing this late into the calendar for the first time in your life?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It's a lot of games. It's tiring, for sure. But every game is tiring. When you're giving your all, every possession, you're going to be tired. I don't think I'm the only one out there that is tired.

But yeah, it's something new. Something new for a lot of us, and a lot of us haven't been this late into the season.



But I think above all, it's been very fun. It's been everything I dreamt it to be growing up. There's no other place in the world I'd rather be, and I'm grateful to be here. Thankful for the experience, for sure.

**Q. Before the last couple games, I think Alex had only played 30-plus minutes once or twice all year. Both the last two games, extended minutes for him. What does having him out there more do for you guys? How does having Alex out there more make things easier for you?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, he is a gamer. You plug him in anywhere, any lineup, feels like any group, he makes a difference. Makes everyone else around him better. He is always talking. He always knows where we're supposed to be, where the other team is supposed to be.

He has instincts that are special. I don't think you can teach things like that. He just knows where the ball is going, where a rebound is bouncing to, how to get a deflection, timely steals. He just has amazing feel for the game and is an insane competitor.

I think you add those two things together and no matter where you drop him in the world, any basketball game, he is going to make a difference.

**Q. The roles that Dub and Chet have in the series are not unprecedented, but being responsible for so much early in their careers is a lot. What did you sense that they learned from the series last year with Dallas about being schemed so heavily in a playoff series and the temperament and how to bounce back over the course of a series?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I think what they have done a really good job of is just getting better. I think through the two series last year, through the whole season and then the three series leading up to this one, they just used every opportunity to get better.

Because of that, because they focused on that and because that's what they have taken care of, they have been ready for the opportunity and a big [indiscernible] in the moment. So I think that above all, they have really hammered home as long as you -- you're going to go through experiences and you're going to fail and you're going to succeed in some, but figuring out how to learn and get better through them is what's really going to help you ultimately get to where you want to get to.

**Q. Kenrich played more in Game 4 than over the previous three games combined. What did you think**

**of the minutes he gave you guys? And also, I know we've asked you a lot about him over the years, but as one of the original holdovers with you and Lu, what has Kenrich meant to you?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: He has played really well. He is a guy that goes in there, brings energy. Doesn't think too much. Changes the game. He is part of our DNA and our toughness, for sure. He has been here for a long time. He is hard-nosed and brings it no matter the setting.

You know what you're going to get out of K-Rich. Every coach knows what they are going to get out of K-Rich, and every teammate knows what they are going to get out of K-Rich. That's all you can ask somebody to be -- do their job and do it at the highest level every day. And he does that. He is the ultimate professional. Really good player.

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