

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Jalen Williams

Practice Day



**Q. Mark was in here saying that the nature of the playoffs is, in the regular season, you wouldn't play a great team four games in a row and be schemed against so heavily. I wonder what you learned in that Dallas series last year in terms of what that takes to be schemed against so heavily, what you need to do in terms of temperament game-to-game to sort of stay level in a series?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think it's exactly that. It's a very unique opportunity. It's hard to look at it now because obviously everybody is playing for a championship. But regardless of the outcome, when you look back on the summer, you're going to know what you're good at and what you're not just based on how teams guarded you and what they tried to take away.

That's what I learned from Dallas. I think that's why I was able to make a bigger jump this year. Regardless of how that series ended, I knew what I had to work on this year and I knew different ways to get better.

I think just whatever the series is, when you're playing somebody that much, it's going to force you to do something. You're either going to get worse or get better. I think I took that jump and have the same approach with that right now.

**Q. There's been a lot of talk this playoffs and a lot of evidence in these various series to support this, that momentum doesn't really carry over from game-to-game in a playoff series.**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah.

**Q. When you're at 2-2 in a Finals, where is your mind and how do you approach the last three games compared to how you approached the first four?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Aside from game planning and scouting, this is like a totally new series. You're treating this as Game 1, you know what I mean? You can't really

focus on what happened in the past or what you could have changed on Game 1. You're just looking at the fact that it's tied up now.

I feel like that's the most clean-slate attitude that you can have with it. I think that's the approach that both teams are taking. It's definitely the one we're taking. You just kind of go in there and figure out how to win Game 5, and that would be it.

**Q. They basically had you run point last game. What went into the development to get you to a spot where you can run point in the Finals, and just how comfortable do you feel with those sort of responsibilities at this point?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Are you talking about my development as a player here or throughout my career?

**Q. All of the above.**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Okay. Well, I grew up short. So I've always been a point guard. Whenever I kind of get a similar question to this, it's funny because I did grow up playing the 1. A lot of times that always goes under the radar. I played the 1 in college. But college, too, is the first time I got introduced to playing the wing. I had to play wing my first two years, and my third year I went back to something that I normally played at.

Same thing kind of with the NBA. I started off really running a lot of the wing up until my second year. I've had a lot of experience. My learning curve was more how to play off the ball than it was on the ball. I'm pretty comfortable doing it, and at the same time, I think if everybody on our team can figure out a different way to be successful and change during the series, I can do that. It's just something that, as the game went on, it just naturally, organically happened, and I was kind of ready for that.

**Q. This has been a pretty emotionally swinging series from Game 1 to Game 4. I can imagine how fatiguing it is. When you haven't played this long, this deep into the season, how do you manage the fatigue and excitement and opportunity of all of this?**

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JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, the emotional swings, I think I've honestly gotten better with them as time went on because we've had so many different series. You go to Game 1 of Denver, I've never lost that way in a series that means a lot. Even this one, the way we lost the first game.

There's so many ups and downs and we've constantly had that throughout this run. Then last year we had so many of those. I'm kind of numb to the ups and downs. It just kind of comes with basketball.

But as far as my body and not playing this long, that all starts -- ironically it all starts in June, whenever the season ends. But taking care of your body throughout the season, how I eat, how I prepare throughout the year allows me to play this way. My body feels good. What I'm doing after games to recover, win or loss, I think is a big one for me. I try to do that pretty consistently and find a routine, and that's been really helpful.

**Q. I wanted to talk about a few ups and downs that you've had. Against Denver, couple rough games, big Game 7. Minnesota, Game 3 was rough, but you came back with a strong Game 4. In the Finals, rough start, but Game 3 better, Game 4 dominant. How do you flush those games where you don't shoot well and then come back and not only shoot well but do so in really important games that can kind of turn the tide of a series or clinch?**

JALEN WILLIAMS: Just understanding that basketball is full of ups and downs and you can't get too high or too low. If I go the next game and I don't miss a shot, it really has no bearing on what I do the next game, you know what I mean? I can go out and not make a shot.

It's more about understanding all the that I can do to affect winning. We were shooting 8 percent from the three last game, and still figured out a way to win. There's always things that can impact winning and stuff like that.

I work really hard on my game. So there won't be a game where I don't shoot well and it affects my confidence to not shoot those shots my teammates need me to shoot. That's the confidence I have going into it, and wherever the shots fall, they fall.

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