

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder Isaiah Hartenstein

Practice Day

Q. Isaiah, what were the conversations like before Game 4 with Mark [Daigneault] about you being back in the starting lineup?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: Normal. I think he does a great job communicating throughout the season, throughout the playoffs what situations he's going to put you in. So I don't think you ever go in guessing. Even before this series started, he sat down with me and talked to me about it. I think he does a great job communicating that aspect.

Q. How important is momentum at this point in the series?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: For us it's different. We start every game, it's back to 0-0. I think the last game was big for sure. I think going into it now, 2-2 rather than 3-1, I think is huge. Now the series kind of starts over again. Best-out-of-three series now.

So I think we just did a great job of stealing one out there. Both games, when they stole one out here, was similar. We controlled the game most of the game, and they won at the end. I think we did something similar out there.

Q. Now going back to a double big starting lineup, is that something they talked to you about beforehand?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: Again, I think I said it before, he does a great job of communicating. He sat down and talked me through it. Nothing really crazy. But he does a great job explaining and making sure you what to expect.

Q. Do you think this is the most physical series you guys have had in the playoffs?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I think the guard pressure for sure. I think that's definitely been a little bit more physical. I think in general throughout the playoffs, it's been a physical series. It's more that both our teams are physical and we also play with pace. It's a little different, both teams are playing at fast pace, so feels more physical at



times.

Q. How important has the energy of the crowd been?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: We don't have to help them. They do a great job. Every game, whether it's a preseason game or regular season game or especially in the playoffs, they have been huge for us. And to me, being in different atmospheres throughout these playoffs, it's definitely the best atmosphere I've been in. I think they have been really special and hopefully they come out big.

Q. Have you had time appreciate how special this is or are you too focused?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: You're focused most of the time. I think the only time I took time was after the Western Conference Finals, when we won that, I took a little step back, talked to my wife, and I was just thinking how I was in G-League finals and won an MVP there. It's going from that to being here, starting, having a big role, I think you just have to appreciate it.

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