

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Alex Caruso

Practice Day



Q. Last three minutes of the game, you were behind 103-99. Can you take us through the last three minutes and what you still remember?

ALEX CARUSO: Yeah, we were in a timeout right before that just talking about there was a lot of time left, a lot of possessions, we were going to get a bucket and come back and get a stop and just talking the right mentality, having the right mentality of we were going to go out there and find a way to win the game.

Q. How important are tactics and your coach at this time?

ALEX CARUSO: Yeah, super important. Just getting us in the right stuff. On offense that's the main thing. Defensively it's more about the guys, us talking through stuff, us winning closeouts, finishing possessions with rebounds, a little bit of both.

Q. Last time you won a championship there were six players with championship experience on the Lakers, and now you are the only one on this team with championship experience. Can you tell us what did you learn from those guys that is helping you to be a leader with this young team in the Finals?

ALEX CARUSO: Yeah, just how unique each individual game is and being able to move on to the next game regardless of win or lose. Mentally and emotionally, being able to calm yourself down and regroup to be able to motivate and get back to square one for each game. That's probably been the biggest thing.

Q. How do you find the balance between the effort you exert on offense and defense at this point?

ALEX CARUSO: Yeah, I'm a complete basketball player. There's a lot of things that I do really, really good. Defensively was something that I started early in my career and over the years I developed some better offensive skills. Just being prepared to play and understand what

the game is going to find, what the game is going to present, opportunities for me to go be aggressive whether it's on defense or offense.

Q. Is your preparation different than it was in the regular season, as far as you now being asked to sometimes play over 30 minutes?

ALEX CARUSO: No, pretty much the same. Just a little more recovery in between.

Q. How much do it matter to you than you are now being asked to do more?

ALEX CARUSO: These are the games you are judged on. You can win 68 games like we did, and you lose in the first round and everybody is going to be like, oh, they won 68 they but lost in the first round.

Vice versa, you can win 48 games, sneak into the playoffs; and if you win a couple series, you say, well, they had a pretty good run.

This is the time of the year that I live for. This is the time of the year where games matter, stakes are high, wins and losses are more important. So being prepared for this is important.

Q. These have been four pretty good games, they had a great comeback in Game 1 and you had a great comeback in Game 4. When you are in it, can you take a second to appreciate how good of a start of the series has been?

ALEX CARUSO: Good for y'all. Good for me would be getting ready for a parade right now. From the outside perspective, it's great for the league and great for basketball.

I think these two teams play stylistically the best versions of basketball right now as far as pressuring and being influencing and aggressive on defense, causing turnovers, making stuff hard; and offensively, free flowing, shot making, passing the ball, playing fast, getting out on the break.

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Those are the ways that people talk about traditional basketball and wanting to not have it not just be coming down, shooting a bunch of threes and give up open layups. The two teams play a great brand of basketball, and I think that's probably what's contributed to, like you said, a fun series so far.

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