

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Monday, June 16, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Game 5: Postgame



Oklahoma City Thunder 120, Indiana Pacers 109.

Q. Shai, in the fourth quarter you were up two, five minutes later you were up 15. Everything was clicking. The crowd was amazing. How does it feel to experience these moments on the biggest stage of your career?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Feels good. We got to try to stay there for as long as we can. Obviously, it's a lot easier said than done playing against a really good basketball team. We got to try to stay in that space, in that momentum on both ends of the floor for longer periods of time if we want to kind of hoist this thing.

Q. Shai, what did you make of the offensive flow that you had tonight?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it was for sure better. Ball moved a little bit more. We were more aggressive. We were in the paint making decisions. Yeah, we were good.

Q. Two straight games Dub has come up huge. How much is your job easier when he's playing like this?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: A lot easier. Not only for myself, but for the rest of the guys. He can shoulder a load. I've said this before. He does so many things for us as a basketball team on both ends of the floor when he's the best version of himself.

But yeah, like you said, he was great tonight. Makes a world of a difference when he's that good, for sure.

Q. What stood out to you most about Dub's performance tonight?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: He was, like, really gutsy tonight. He stepped into big plays. Felt like every time we needed a shot, he made it. He wasn't afraid. He was fearless tonight.

Whether they went in or didn't, obviously tonight they went in more than didn't, he stepped up to the plate with confidence, for sure.

Q. The crowd was really good tonight. At times when there were lulls, they got loud, seemed like that pushed you guys. Do you feel when those lulls in the games happen, the crowd randomly gets out, do you feel like that pushes you guys?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, absolutely. They are like a wind in our back. When we're not playing well, they help us. When we're playing well, they keep us going. They've been great all year. Tonight was no different. We expect that from them.

Yeah, they were great.

Q. You know what it's like to be a young player to ascend quickly, almost out of nowhere. What is it like to see your teammate go on the same path? Something you saw early in the season, last year even, him as a rookie?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, absolutely. From the first, like, honestly from when I saw him play at Summer League, I knew he could be really good in this league. He can do so many things on the basketball court. Then he has, like, really good feel and really good work ethic. When you have those two things, you're going to figure it out. You're going to get better and you're going to just continue to mold your game the more you work, figure out your spots, figure out where you're supposed to be, where you're not supposed to be. We're seeing that blossom right before our eyes.

Q. You look at some of the plays you made down the stretch defensively, individually, was that a focus of yours to get a little bit more disruptive or did you feel fresher with having a little bit lighter minutes in the first half?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I'm not too sure. I was just out there trying to effect winning, trying to make a basketball play, help the team win. Try to be in position for

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the next rotation, next play defensively. Whatever comes with that comes with that.

Q. You're the fourth player with 15 or more games in Playoffs that you score 30 or more points. Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan and Hakeem Olajuwon. How does this one feel?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It's cool, I guess. It's just like the rest of the other ones. It's like a stat but it's narrowed into three different specific details.

It's cool, I guess. Focused on one thing, and that's winning one more game.

Q. Mark talked about some of the stretches Dub had during the year to play with this level of force. He called it ugly stretches, ugly plays. What do you remember about those stretches, what they did for him?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I honestly have no clue what Coach is talking about. I don't know. I don't know what he's talking about.

But yeah, he uses the season to get better, just like the rest of us. He played big tonight. The way he attacks every game, all 82 of them, it's just like chinks in his armor. He was ready for battle tonight.

Q. You may go on to win a world championship. Look back at that stretch where you had a big lead, then it shriveled, you found a way to come back and overcome it. What was the key to that happening? It may end up being a key part of that game.

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: We were very disruptive defensively. Kind of had them on their heels. Was pressuring. Because of that, felt three or four steals in a row, we were able to get out and run, get easy baskets.

Yeah, it always starts defensively for us.

Q. Felt like you brought a calming influence to this game, specifically in the fourth quarter. When you're up in the way that you're up, they start to come back, what do you try to bring to a game to protect the lead but close it out?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Every play's important. Every play matters a little bit more obviously later in the game.

But you just try to go out there and make the right basketball play, play off your instincts. Both ends of the

floor you just try to do what's best in that moment, that possession. Try to stay in the moment as much as possible. Not worry about what's happening, what the swings are. Just try to win that possession.

Q. A big topic of discussion was you going back and feeling like you could get your teammates more prepared for the Playoffs. What is it like seeing Dub on a stage like that as a guy you've empowered throughout the years?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It's good. He's getting better. I'm not surprised by his performance tonight. Like, the kid works super hard. He has the right intentions. He deserves this moment.

Now with that being said, we got one more game to win, and I know he's not satisfied by this performance. Yeah, he works hard. He played well tonight because of it. It's no fluke.

Q. How vital has Caruso's voice been throughout this whole Playoff process?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: He's the only one on the team with a ring. He knows what it takes. He's been there before. He's won 16 games in a Playoff run. He knows what it takes. When he speaks, everyone listens.

Also, like, what he brings to the game, you have no choice but to listen. A guy like that that leads by example, not only leading with his voice, does everything to make the team better, selflessly, you have no choice but to listen to a guy like that when he speaks.

Q. Do you have any message for your millions of Turkish fans? They watch very early every Finals game.

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Thanks for the support. We love you guys.

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