

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Indiana Pacers Rick Carlisle

Practice Day



Q. What did you see from Tyrese?

RICK CARLISLE: He participated in all our walk-through stuff. But it's a walk-through, so there was no real running. We'll see. We'll see where we are tomorrow. It's a topic that people want to hear about and know about. There's going to be a lot of questions about it.

We will not really know for sure until late tomorrow afternoon or early evening.

Q. As you've kind of watched Jalen Williams develop from afar, seen him up close in this series, what stands out to you about his game, the way he's evolved?

RICK CARLISLE: Yeah, he's the quintessential modern-day wing. He can do everything. He can attack off the dribble. He can make plays and pass the ball. He shoots the three. He shoots midrange. He finishes. He gets and-ones. He creates a constant vertical threat on the rim.

I don't know him personally, but he looks like a great person and a great young leader on this team. He's a guy that we got to slow down somehow. It's not easy.

Q. Zach Lowe published a comment from an anonymous GM saying this is the hardest-playing Finals he can remember. When I looked at Second Spectrum data, in the 12 years they've tracked it, the 2025 Pacers in the Finals have run the most miles and at the highest speed of any team, regular season or postseason, in history. Is it a product of your scheme, the opponent, the situation? Are there limits to pace and space?

RICK CARLISLE: Limits based upon what? The dimensions of the court?

I don't believe the court is going to get bigger anytime soon. This has been a topic for many years. Players are

getting bigger. They're getting faster. How do you create space? The arenas are pretty much configured a certain way. It's just very difficult to try to find an extra six inches of width on the court on each side or whatever.

That's one reason that the three-point shot has been so advantageous to the game. It creates more space.

But as far as the running fast and running far, that's how we play. That's what we're supposed to do.

Q. Can you talk about Coach Boucek and what she's meant to this team all year long, in particular this historic Finals run, and what her ceiling is?

RICK CARLISLE: I continue to answer the question the same way: She is one of the best coaches in the world. She is a great teacher, communicator. She has great knowledge. She is committed to constantly learning and getting better.

When she was a head coach in the W, her teams were elite offensively. I've asked her to take on a different role here, really concentrating on the defense.

It's been really to this point an 18-month effort to get better, to help some guys that weren't great defenders to become better team defenders. Guys that were good defenders to hopefully become great defenders.

She has had a lot of impact on all that stuff.

At some point in time, there will be a first female head coach in the NBA. I believe that. I believe that she is one of the few that could be that person.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the protocols of using a player, not using a player, if he's hurt versus injured? Is it different in a game like Game 5, when it happens on the fly versus heading into a game? Is it medical staff? The player's want-to? Your involvement? Does it change?

RICK CARLISLE: Yeah, it's all the above. It's all that. We were all talking constantly during Game 5. Getting the feedback. But Game 5 is over. It's time to move on.

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Q. Have you had to rein in a player against his most intense desires to be out there?

RICK CARLISLE: Yeah. But not without consultation with the medical staff, weighing all the factors. The answer is yes.

Q. With Tyrese, we saw him out on the floor today. Was he able to do anything other than just sort of the set shots that we saw?

RICK CARLISLE: We did a 30-minute walk-through. We did 25 minutes of film, a 30-minute walk-through. He was able to do both of those things.

Q. You said immediately after Game 5 that you thought he had done some positive things in the second half. Having watched the film, do you still feel like he was, while injured, more of a positive being out there?

RICK CARLISLE: Well, he was in there when we got it to two. We cut it to two. Then what happened there was we had a good defensive possession, we over-helped, gave up a second shot, it turned into a three. We had an untimely turnover at the other end that turned into a breakaway dunk. Boom, it was seven again.

This is not related to Tyrese. The two things right now that are really bothersome and challenging for us is the rebounding, the second-shot rebounds, and the turnovers.

We're going to do our best to address those things.

As far as Tyrese, he'll go through the day tomorrow. Our prep session is tomorrow late afternoon. They'll get together and do some testing. That will determine whether he plays or not. If he doesn't play, we have a plan obviously if we're without him.

Q. Would you say that everything that has happened in this series is absolutely normal? You won a road game, they won a road game, did their job last game. Now Game 6, you have the chance to go to seven. Asking that because the atmosphere around this series, Oklahoma came in as such a big favorite.

RICK CARLISLE: We've been in this position before. We were in this position last year in the New York series. We were down 3-2. We were coming back home.

What we need to do is buckle down, stand strong. I anticipate one of the best crowds in the history of Gainbridge Fieldhouse. We got to find a way.

The ultimate is to get to a Game 7. That is the ultimate privilege. It's the ultimate experience in sports. But we've got to take care of home court tomorrow to do that.

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