

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 19, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Rick Carlisle

Game 6: Postgame

Indiana Pacers 108, Oklahoma City Thunder 91

Q. You pointed to the turnovers last game as being the big difference and you guys really just limited your turnovers overall. What helped you have success in that area tonight?

RICK CARLISLE: We played better. You know, we were where we should be most of the time. Well, a lot more than we were in Game 5.

And we were stronger with the ball, and we had some that weren't great ones. But when we made a mistake, we bounced back well, and that's what you've got to do this time of year.

Q. Do you think there was a discernible lift just from Tyrese gutting it out? Not like your guys needed to know what the stakes were tonight, everyone knew what the stakes were but how much was that worth, do you think, in terms of energy and all that?

RICK CARLISLE: He's super important to us. I think the big thing was just there wasn't a lot of drama. The drama was created in the press somewhat because there's a lot of talk about it. It was not coming from him. He was straightforward. He didn't want a lot of attention. He was doing everything possible to be able to play.

Fortunately, we were able to keep his minutes reasonable because we had a great first half and a good start to the third quarter.

So you know, one game. I mean, this is what it's all about. I mean, this is, you know, this is what you dream about growing up, this kind of opportunity. It's a very difficult place to play. We know that.

But you know, the opportunity to play in a game like this is a great honor and a great privilege.

Q. What did you think of your team's mental fortitude



after missing shots and going down early? And what does T.J. McConnell give you night in and night out in terms of energy and effort and digging you out of that hole?

RICK CARLISLE: Look, our crowd was spectacular tonight. This is the loudest I've ever heard Gainbridge or Consecro. It was never Bankers Life when I was here.

But the crowd was absolutely tremendous. And we're playing the best team on the planet. They have proven that the entire year, and we have got to play at such a high level for us to have a chance, and so we did better tonight. T.J. is a big part of what we do.

But everybody was tied together, and that's how it's got to be. You know, from the standpoint of rebounding, we did better. We did better with the turnover count. All that stuff's going to get tougher on Sunday.

Q. What did you see defensively when the offense kind of got on track when you flipped to that early deficit, what changed defensively to bog them down at the end of the first, start of second quarter?

RICK CARLISLE: Just try to make it hard, and literally, the events that lead up to one final game, obviously, matter. But at this point, any talk about things in the past are really meaningless. It's one game. It's the ultimate game.

Q. You've spent most of your adult life trying to win a championship and you've had some success in that, and most people don't. Do you think people who are not involved in this directly understand how incredibly difficult it is, no matter who you are or how talented you are, to win an NBA championship?

RICK CARLISLE: I believe that everybody coaching in the NBA has a very good idea. Because Chuck Daly once said, if people had any idea how difficult it was to win one game in the NBA, in the regular season, one game, they would have -- you know, they would be shocked. There's so many things coming at you, and you're swimming upstream, you're going against great coaching, you're going against high, high, high-level players, and guys that go hard and are super skilled and all that kind of stuff.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

This time of year, not everybody's been deep in the playoffs or to the Finals but I guarantee you that people have a very good idea what goes on and how difficult it is to get here and how challenging it is. I do believe that.

Q. A lot of us are probably writing about resilience tonight and you guys have these comebacks throughout the playoffs, and back against the wall tonight and have a game like this. Is some of that just because a lot of the guys on the team have been traded or this wasn't their first stop? I know you've had a couple of stops in your career. Is it because they have gone through some of that as shared experience, or is this unique to this group?

RICK CARLISLE: Honestly, I'm not into reminiscing right now. All that stuff's over with. Some great things happened for us, and our team made some great things happen. Same thing with Oklahoma City to get to this point, to get to one ultimate game. And that's all that matters.

So this is a wonderful group of players. I mean, in terms of character, I've had some great character teams, none better than this, maybe some equal. But these guys are fabulous, you know, and they try so hard for each other.

But you know, it's getting back on the plane at 3:00 tomorrow. Have a team dinner tomorrow night. Another session with you guys, whatever day that is, Saturday, and then Sunday, we'll be here even sooner because I believe it's a 7:00 local game.

Yeah, so that's where it's at.

Q. Curious, what stood out to you about your team's ball pressure and the way in which by not pressuring full court with Andrew, you unlocked his probably most complete game that we've seen in this series?

RICK CARLISLE: We had to play better and we played better. You know, it's simple as that.

I mean, I thought our crowd had a lot of influence on what was going on out there. When a building is this noisy and raucous, it makes it hard on the opposing team. You know, we're grateful for them.

Q. We talk a lot about staying ready and being present in the moment but as a coach how do you balance letting the guys feel their emotions but also keeping them present?

RICK CARLISLE: Yeah, I mean, it's a deep question. You

know, I believe that every NBA coach does a lot of talking about process and the things necessary to have individual players contribute to a system. I'm sure Mark talks about it with his team, and that's what I'm pretty sure all of us preach.

And you know, at this time of year, you've got to be able to block out a lot of things and avoid the distractions that are coming at you all the time.

So, over the next couple days, we'll do what's necessary to try to get ourselves ready for that environment and that team, and this will be a monumental challenge.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

