

# NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Practice Day



## Game 7?

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It has to be an emphasis. It has to be the top of our mind. It has to be all we care about, and above all, we just have to want to do it. We just have to have a sense of urgency in that part of the game.

**Q. Shai, why do you think home-court advantage has mattered so much to you guys during the playoffs?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: The crowd is amazing. You're ultimately in your complete comfort zone. The flow to the day doesn't change. You're in your own bed. You have shootaround at your building. You eat your pregame meal from your chef or your whoever. It's very comfortable, the whole flow to the day, and then the crowd is behind you. They give you energy, whether you're up or down or whatever is going on in the night.

It's an advantage. It's fun, for sure.

**Q. People's definition of adversity or their barometer for it is having to lose over and over in the playoffs. Boston is probably a prime example of how often they went so close to the Finals and lost. I wonder how you view your team's adversity and comparatively why you think the adversity you've been through is enough to get over the hump?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, I try not to compare as much as I can. Everybody is going through something. Everybody goes through a hurdle in life or in a career or in a season, whatever it looks like. Everybody reacts and responds and feels different to them, so I try my best not to compare.

I think this group has done a really good job of learning its lessons through adversity. I think that's why we've gotten here, is we've taken them and gotten better from them and gotten better on the other side of them.

If we want to achieve our dream, we'll have to continue to do the same thing.

**Q. A lot of statistics explain the outcomes of the games, but a lot comes down to the intangibles, playing with force, imposing your will. How do you make sure that your team wins those battles, that you come out with the right kind of energy and effort in**

**Q. You clearly have a great perspective on history of basketball and the league and just things that you've said over time. There's not been many Game 7s in the NBA Finals. I'm wondering as you approach that, what that means for you personally to find yourself in a Game 7 in the Finals?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: It's a really good opportunity. Really exciting opportunity. A dream come true, this.

Above all, I try to look at it as a blessing and an opportunity, and then go out there and try to be the best version of myself. I think that's what we need to do and what we have to do across the board. Don't try to do anything spectacular. Don't try to do anything that you haven't done before, or be less than what you've been. Just be who you are and what got you here.

**Q. How do you not let the moment overwhelm you but at the same time having that neutral that you guys have talked about all season? How do you balance both of those?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I think through our experiences throughout the whole season and the postseason, no matter how big the moment or the game, it always comes down to the same things. When we go back and watch film or we go back and look at the numbers from the game, it always goes back to the things that we know we can control every night. When we do those things, we look like a pretty good team. When we don't do those things, we look like a bad team.

I think learning that and understanding that throughout the season and in the postseason is going to help us tomorrow.

**Q. Coach Mark says the offense has been**

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**inconsistent, not moving the ball well. Do you think there's things that you guys can improve to win Game 7?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, we have to. We have to improve on both ends of the floor if we want to win tomorrow. But yeah, we obviously have to get better offensively. Last game, clearly, was not good enough and not going to cut it, and we know that.

We watch film for those type of things. You have games like that. Now, it sucks to have it at that stage obviously, but we know we have to be better, for sure.

**Q. Everybody knows what you are doing to do, make a couple of dribbles and create space. Why can't the Pacers stop you from doing that?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I work really hard. I use all my games and all my experiences to get better throughout the season. I've developed, I guess, a skill set that works for me, and I try to go out there and do it every night.

**Q. There's been a lot of emotional momentum swings throughout the course of this series on both ends. With Game 7 being the highest of the high, how do you keep the team's emotions from not spilling over and maybe keep those swings from not being so vast?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: We do a really good job of plugging out of our emotions, and viewing the game and the opportunity the right way. I honestly don't feel like I have to do too much with this group. They do a really good job of putting the team first above their individual emotions or goals or whatever it may be and getting done what needs to get done. I think that's why we've gotten here.

I don't think I have to do anything special because of the stage. We just have to be who we've been all year and then use the muscles that we've trained all year.

**Q. In your seven years, only two guys have played as many minutes with fewer techs as you've gotten, Jrue Holiday and Harrison Barnes I think is the other. Have you always been that way? You just don't go over the line. Was there a lesson that you learned to not go too far?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I was hot-headed as a kid. As I've grown, I've just understood that getting too high or getting too low, especially in competition, doesn't really help me, for sure. So I try to be as even-keeled as possible.

The way I see it, techs is points. I don't ever want to give a team points because I can't control my emotions. So I control them. It's that simple to me.

**Q. What has it been like going up against somebody that you know as well as do you in Andrew Nembhard, and what have you sort of learned about him as a defender over the course of this that you didn't know already from all the times that you had played against him?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it's been really fun. I haven't learned anything new. I've known how good of a player and defender he was, playing with him for all these years. Tomorrow should be even more fun, for sure.

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