

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Pascal Siakam

Practice Day



Q. Pascal, statistically, the biggest difference between your wins and your losses in this series has been on their end of the floor. I'm wondering if you feel like the level at which you guys have defended has fluctuated from game to game. Do you think that's just random? What do you think that is?

PASCAL SIAKAM: I think it's a long series. Sometimes you're going to get people's best shots. Sometimes they are going to go in, sometimes not. I think our process is the same. It happens in basketball. You happen to lose games. That's just what it is.

Q. Couple of questions. One, you had a front row seat for Kawhi Leonard winning a Finals MVP, just that performance. Do you find yourself drawing on any of those lessons you maybe absorbed unconsciously or not? And two, your comfort level, just talking to your teammates, there's moments in this series and this playoffs where you've really asserted yourself offensively, others where you've stepped back and let other guys do what they need to do. Maybe those two things, that experience, watching Kawhi and your comfort.

PASCAL SIAKAM: I think, Kawhi, incredible player. For me, one thing I learned from that team, being even-keeled. I think Kawhi, no matter what happened, he is always the same. That's something I try to have for me. It's like no matter good or bad, make shots, miss shots, it doesn't really matter. Just be yourself at all times. That's something I learned from that.

I think for our team, it's all about team. That's who we are. Anything that I can do to help my team win, that's what I'm going to do. There's no real thinking about myself and what I need. It's like at that moment, what we can do as a team to win. Sometimes it's defending. Sometimes it's getting rebounds. Sometimes it's getting a steal. Sometimes it's scoring.

Whatever I need to do to help my team win, that's what I'm

going to do.

Q. You're playing for a coach that has won over a thousand games and won a ton of playoff games, an NBA championship. What has his experience done for you guys, especially in these Finals?

PASCAL SIAKAM: Yeah, he's been definitely a calming presence. Again, his communication, and like you said, he has the experience. He does a good job of preparing us for games. Not only just in terms of game plan but mentally. He is definitely one of those coaches that, again, talking to him, and he can just give you a good perspective on certain things, and maybe make me look at things a little differently than I look at or whatever.

I think he has been so great with us in that, just preparing us for games and putting us in a mindset ready to just go out and be ourselves.

Q. I know you reacted to this on social media already, but the other picture of you from --

PASCAL SIAKAM: You're going to be the one asking that, bro?

Q. Yeah, why not. What's your thoughts of what happened?

PASCAL SIAKAM: Well, I didn't see it until -- well, they showed me in the locker room. I haven't been on social media, so I don't really know.

Yeah, my teammates showed me. We're praying. I tried to close my eyes. I have this problem where I can't really close my eyes. Sometimes I'll be thinking I'm closing my eyes, but they are not really closed. Even sometimes having conversations, sometimes I look up and it feels like I'm thinking, and my eyes just go up.

It's definitely just something natural -- usually I try to do this (covering eyes with hands) to make sure close my eyes, but that time I didn't and it got caught on camera.

I'm glad people are enjoying it and having fun with it. Literally I was praying and trying to close my eyes and I

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was thinking in my head my eyes were closed, but clearly they weren't closed. That's just all it is, really.

My agent told me one time in the national anthem, he saw that. I thought, oh, man, I have to make sure I close my eyes. Those are the moments I usually pray and I'm thinking I'm closing my eyes, but I'm not. I've got to do better. I've got to start doing this (covering eyes with hands) or I can put my head down and y'all can't look at me no more. And the NBA with all these cameras, it's too much, man. Get the cameras away from us.

Q. You won the championship before, and then you were an All-Star. At this level, it seems like your maturity has come to another level. How do you describe your maturity throughout the series in the playoffs?

PASCAL SIAKAM: I think experience from being in these situations before, just trying to pull from all the experiences in my life. Knowing that this is an amazing opportunity and we are on the biggest stage.

Not taking anything for granted and also just knowing how hard it is to get here. I think for me just the fact that I can appreciate that makes me just go out there, not get too down on myself when things are going wrong and not getting too excited when things are going well. Just understanding that this is the game of basketball and it's life. Sometimes you have good games and sometimes you have bad games.

I think that whole understanding for me just makes me relaxed and just go out there and do my job, because at the end of the day, that's what it is. We're playing basketball. Obviously all the other things make it look bigger than what it is. But it's just ball.

Q. We love talking about LeBron and he brought the first championship to the Cavs. You obviously are someone who brought the first championship to Toronto and now maybe the second time to the Pacers. We don't really give them appreciation. We heard the question before -- sometimes it's Kawhi, it's also Haliburton. Of course you're a team. But how much should we give you more flowers and talk about what you actually do to a team that you are someone who is maybe now a two-time guy bringing a championship to two teams who never had a championship before?

PASCAL SIAKAM: Well, first, I appreciate that, thank you.

But I think for me, again, I really don't look at it that way. I just feel like I'm in a position where I am today -- from

where I'm from, to get here, it's pretty crazy. For me, I feel like I've already achieved everything, you know what I mean? I'm here now, and nobody can really see this path for me except God. I'm here now. And to me, it's just about going out there every single day, putting the work in and just trusting God and just giving everything that I have on the floor for my team, for myself and my family. My dad watching me, just hoping that he's proud of me and everything that I've accomplished.

Having his name everywhere, to me, that's what's more important. All the other things, when I'm done, I look at it and be like, oh, man, this is -- I did this and it was great. But for me right now it was just about the journey and going out there and continuing to do my job and doing everything that I can.

I would say that I'm not supposed to be here. A kid from where I'm from, not supposed to be here. I'm just so blessed.

It might be cliché, but I just don't really care about all that. I just care about going out and doing my job. Maybe one day I get the recognition, and it will be great then. But right now I'm still writing that story, so I'm just focused on that.

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