

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Indiana Pacers

T.J. McConnell

Practice Day



Q. Are you sometimes even surprising yourself with the performance you're giving here in these Finals?

T.J. McCONNELL: Honestly, not trying to think about it too much. You guys have all heard me say this a thousand times, I'm just trying to go out there and do my job and that's really it. I'm not going out there listening to the external noise. I'm just doing whatever it takes to help our team win.

Q. How does it feel to be this important for the team at this stage and this moment?

T.J. McCONNELL: I have to give credit to my teammates and coaching staff. Rick and his staff have just empowered me to play my game. And when you have teammates like I do, it's easy to go out there and just play basketball.

Q. That might be the easy part but the hard part is getting two feet on the ground. The stadium goes wild and even the Finals MVP conversations for you starts. How hard is it to keep your feet on the ground?

T.J. McCONNELL: Just block out the noise. I don't pay attention to any of that stuff. Just try to go out there and inject energy into the game and get our guys going and do my job.

Q. How much enjoyment do you get out of the chess match in this series?

T.J. McCONNELL: I think that's the best part about playoff basketball, especially playing in the Finals, just the adjustments and the changes that teams make. You've got two amazing head coaches going against each other, like Mark and Rick, they are obviously going to make adjustments and they are great at doing it.

As a fan of basketball, it's cool to see.

Q. Do you have a favorite Game 7 memory?

T.J. McCONNELL: Not really. Kind of just trying to stay in the moment and not look too far ahead and not look behind and just trying to prepare for tomorrow.

Q. How much does it mean to be in a Game 7 on this stage?

T.J. McCONNELL: It's something I think all of us dream about as kids obviously. I think for me, just not getting ahead of myself and for our team not getting ahead of ourselves, staying in the moment and preparing for the moment tomorrow.

Q. Can you take anything from the Game 7 win last season at New York? Can that experience help you at all?

T.J. McCONNELL: Yeah, I think experiences can obviously help but we are a different team. We are playing against a different team. So you kind of just can't really pay attention to that type of stuff and just prepare for tomorrow.

Q. Is there a difference creating turnovers at home versus on the road? What's the challenge in doing on the road versus at home?

T.J. McCONNELL: I just think the atmospheres are different, obviously. Crowds give you a little bit more energy, a little bit more burst. We are going to be practically alone tomorrow. This crowd here in Oklahoma City is amazing. It's going to be very loud. We have to be ready.

Q. How important has faith been to you during this run?

T.J. McCONNELL: It's something that I've leaned on very heavily. Something that means a lot to me and my family and wouldn't be here without my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's something that I lean on, on a daily basis.

Q. How has your coaching staff taking their game to another level this series?



T.J. McCONNELL: I think we have a great staff in general who do a great job of fixing things that we need to fix but also empowering us to do what we do well. It's been amazing to see just the growth of not only our players but our staff, I just can't say enough good things about them.

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