

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Rick Carlisle

Game 7: Postgame



Oklahoma City Thunder 103, Indiana Pacers 91

RICK CARLISLE: I first want to congratulate Mark Daigneault, one of the great young coaches in all of professional sports and his team. The way this season started and everything, they may have had those buses painted up back in December.

So they will have a great parade. They have great fans. This was a great series. I'm so proud of our players. So proud of our organization. Our fans showed up big time tonight. It was really moving.

What happened with Tyrese, all of our hearts dropped. But he will be back. I don't have any medical information about what may or may not have happened, but he'll be back in time, and I believe he'll make a full recovery.

So, he authored one of the great individual playoff runs in the history of the NBA with dramatic play after dramatic play. It was just something that no one's ever seen and did it as 1 of 17. You know, that's the beautiful thing about him. As great a player as he is, it's always a team thing.

And so, our hearts go out to him.

But so proud of everyone.

So, questions?

Q. Tyrese, we saw him greeting teammates on crutches after and was cheering from the locker room --

RICK CARLISLE: I'm not talking about his injury. I'm not giving you -- I have no idea. I haven't heard anything about a diagnosis or anything.

Q. At halftime, did he say anything to the team? And the way you guys kept fighting --

RICK CARLISLE: He was in the locker room, and he was

very much a part of a group that believed that they could do this.

You know, Nembhard hit the shot at the end of the first half to give us a one-point lead, and you know, we needed to come out of the locker room and be better in the first five minutes of the third quarter. We just weren't. I don't have the whole sequence of events but they made some great plays. We got off to a show start, and that quarter was the killer.

To me, the fourth quarter, the effort that our guys poured into the fourth quarter to win the quarter by one point was epic, and it was symbolic of what this team stands for what basketball in Indiana stands for, and there was no surrender. It was just, you know it, was all defiant fight until the end.

And so I told these guys coming into this that there's no feel-good scenario when you get to the Finals and are unable to get it done. It really hurts on the one hand. On the other hand, this team has given all of Pacer Nation something to be very proud of.

Q. You touched a little bit on how much the team was able to fight in the first quarter. Specifically the first half after seeing Tyrese go down, your thoughts how they were able to battle then? And on top of that, is there anything that you can share with us that you said to the team after the game?

RICK CARLISLE: I'm not going to share anything I said after the game. Really, just a tremendous amount of gratitude for the character, the skill, how together they were, how hard they continue to fight no matter what. You don't author comebacks like this team did, really, over the course of the entire season without just an indomitable competitive spirit to fight together, and that's what they were and that's what they did.

Q. Bennedict Mathurin was not able to play in the playoffs last year. What did you think about how he kept you guys in the game in the fourth quarter and during his first playoff experience?

RICK CARLISLE: He's a fighter. That's one of the

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

reasons he was the first guy in the game tonight. I knew we needed him, and these moments are moments that he really lives for as a competitor. He's talked about it. I've seen it.

This is one of those physical type of games where you have to have pit bulls out there figuring out ways to get the ball to the basket, get to the free throw line, get stops.

I was really, really proud of how he fought from start to finish.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.