

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Oklahoma City Thunder Chet Holmgren

Game 7: Postgame

Oklahoma City Thunder 103, Indiana Pacers 91

Q. It seems like this team gets super aggressive defensively when it's you or Isaiah, then four guards. Why do you think that formula has been so successful?

CHET HOLMGREN: I'd say it's all about tradeoffs. As many compliments as I have for myself and Hart, we don't move our feet quite like some of these guards. The guards we have are special on defense with their ability to climb up in the ball, play in passing lanes, really cover distance, cover ground quickly. So when you have an extra person out there doing that, we're able to kind of really turn up the heat.

I'd say, yeah, it's all about tradeoffs. A little less adept on the glass when you're small, a little less rim protection out there. The tradeoff is you can play the passing lanes, climb up and pressure people more.

We saw it tonight. We saw how special our guys are on defense. I'm just so happy we were able to win.

Q. Before the final buzzer, I saw you go over and hug Clay [Bennett]. Talk to me about his role in all of this, Mark's role and Sam's role.

CHET HOLMGREN: I would say three of the biggest people in all this is Mark, Clay and Sam. I'm not out there on the floor if those three don't believe in me.

As much as this was for myself, teammates, everybody else, it was for those three. They believed in me from the moment that they drafted me. I just really wanted to - I don't even know the words. I really wanted to I guess make them proud, validate their belief in me.

This isn't the end of the road. We have a long ways to go as a team. Everybody understands that. This is a huge moment for everybody here, the city, the fans, Clay, Sam, Mark, all the players, the sports staff. I'm just so happy for



everybody that we can kind of share this moment together.

Q. A few years ago you did an interview with GQ about 10 things you can't live without. You had the champagne goggles. What is it like to break those out finally?

CHET HOLMGREN: I haven't broke them out yet. I brought them to Indy and we lost, so I left them at home. You will see me with those on at the parade. Right now, I have my Michelob Ultra joints, and these work more than fine. We did it.

Q. How would you describe your season? You missed half of it with an injury, the struggles of getting through that, capping it off this way.

CHET HOLMGREN: It was a lot. Before I got hurt feels like a whole different season. It was so long ago. We've been at this since October. I really didn't take any breaks last summer. Other than like a weekend vacation, I'm doing my thing. It's just been so much leading up to this.

I'm proud of the guys for holding it down when I was hurt. I got to give big props to big Hart and especially J-Will. They came in and held things down when I was hurt. It's almost like we didn't skip a beat.

A lot of things changed for them personally, individually, when I came back. So I have to give them all the credit in the world. They never expressed any sour feeling about it. They never stepped outside of the team about it. They were all in no matter what it took. I'm just so happy to have guys like that in our big man room that are so selfless.

Back to my injury. It sucked. If you told me this would be the end point when I got hurt, it would be easy not to quit. But this isn't guaranteed. That's why only one team gets to do it every year. So I'm so happy I didn't quit. There were a lot of nights where I was out there on will power and anti-inflammatories. I'm just so happy I didn't quit and we made it, we did it.

I have a long summer of getting my body right again. Man, a lot of emotions.



Q. Shai just had an incredible season. You basically got to be a fly on the wall. Can you take time and talk about how impressive it was to play this season with Shai.

CHET HOLMGREN: At the end of the day that's going to go down in history as one of the greatest seasons that's ever been had by a player. It's amazing to be a part of that, to witness somebody going through it, succeeding in so many different ways.

He really makes it a joy to be around. It's never about him. It's always about us. It's always about winning. His talent shines through all of that. We saw that all year. He's a hell of a basketball player, but he's an even better person.

I'm proud to call him my teammate. Proud to call him my friend. I'm so happy that we were able to put a shiny cap on what he did this year.

Q. You're one of the youngest teams to get here, much less to win it. This just happened, but can you allow yourselves to think about what this can become in the years to come?

CHET HOLMGREN: As cool as this is, tomorrow we got to wake up and start getting ready for training camp...

No, bro, it's going to be a long night. It's going to be a great night in OKC. I'm going to be back to work in a few days when I get my stuff together and get back home. I'm not thinking about any of that right now.

Q. You had five blocks today, most in a Game 7 in history.

CHET HOLMGREN: That surprises me.

Q. How does it feel that your name is on the record books?

CHET HOLMGREN: Honestly, I never really play for records. I never play for stats. All that will be forgotten. But us winning is forever. It's immortal. I'm just so happy we were able to do that together as a team.

I am surprised that five blocks is the most in a Game 7. I guess there haven't been that many Game 7s, but I don't know. Feel like I could have had more tonight. Could have been better there. But we won, so that's all that matters.

Q. You talked about Shai being a historical player in an historical season. Your team had one, too. You needed a victory tonight to cap it off or nobody cares. How much pressure was on you guys to validate what

you worked since September to achieve?

CHET HOLMGREN: I mean, there's always pressure. When you lose in the Playoffs, even if you just lose one game, it's the end of the world. The whole team is on the trade block. It's just how it goes.

When you win, it's the greatest thing ever. Even when you haven't won the championship yet.

At the end of the day winning is what's remembered. It's what's immortal. I'm just so happy we were able to do it. Happy for the guys. There was so much hard work that a lot of people don't see that went into this. Years of hard work for everybody that led up to this. It makes it all worthwhile, it makes it all... It's just a great feeling.

Yeah, would have sucked to lose that game.

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