

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

San Antonio Spurs

Devin Vassell

Media Day



Q. Second-longest tenured Spur. Talk about the balance of getting here and accomplishing what you guys have accomplished, but at the same time, still another step to go?

DEVIN VASSELL: Yeah, just being here, being through the process, not skipping any steps. It's definitely been a long process, and I'm definitely grateful to be in this room, to be in this position. To be here is a blessing. But we're not satisfied. We want to win it all.

Q. What's the balance been like between getting such a monumental victory against Oklahoma City with the Game 7 there? At what point did it switch from celebration to, okay, task at hand?

DEVIN VASSELL: I think next day, honestly. Plane ride, we were all excited. But we didn't get here to say, we're the Western Conference Finals champions. We want to sit here and say we're the NBA champions, we won the Finals. It was great while it lasted, but we're ready for the next chapter.

Q. Along those same lines, how do you fight against the mental letdown of, that was such a monumental effort, and these two great teams that you've faced all season. Not that the Knicks are nothing, but how do you take that next step mentally?

DEVIN VASSELL: It's already there. We feel like the Knicks have played us really well this year. We went into their house and they beat us. They beat us in the in-season tournament. They beat us last year on Christmas. We feel like we've got to get some get-back because they've been successful against us.

Q. Talk about the chemistry. Seems like even when y'all were losing, y'all were still real close. Where did that come from? I know Keldon is a big part of that, but you are, as well. Seemed like you all got along really well. Where did that come from?

DEVIN VASSELL: I mean, playing the game of basketball that you love, it's obviously tough when you're not winning and you're going through certain situations. We always just knew to keep our heads and that the tide would turn as long as we're doing the right things and putting in the right work, staying together. Eventually it did.

Q. How are you guys handling the zoo that is the Finals? Did you talk about that over the last couple of days, the distractions, the tickets, the family and all the stuff that's going to come with it?

DEVIN VASSELL: Yeah, Mitch definitely addressed it. As a team, players, I think we're going to talk more about it today.

But we're just trying to keep everything the main thing, honestly, and keep our goals here. We don't want to look to the outside and worry about the media, worry about everything else that's going on. We've had a goal since we started this year, since training camp, and we're going to keep staying focused, keep trying to stay laser focused. But it's nature when you have family, friends, people trying to come to the games. It is what it is, but at the end of the day, we've got to keep the main thing the main thing and worry about winning four games.

Q. You talk about the mental ability to flip and the focus. You guys have had a very tight, kind of fun -- I don't want to say loose, but close locker room all season long. Does that mental flip come from internal, like among the players, or is it a little more top-down from Mitch?

DEVIN VASSELL: I think it starts with the players, for sure. We have some great vets with HB, Fox, Luke, Bis. I could go on and on. They've been in certain situations. They've been here before. They definitely try to keep us grounded.

But then with Coach Mitch and all the other coaches that we have, our GM, B-Wright, everyone is laser focused. It's been like that since I could say open gym training camp. We were going through open gym and we had pretty much all of our players there, which is rare to have everybody there, so everybody was locked in from the beginning.



I think that is one of the main reasons why we're here, because we've been so locked in and on and off the court we're all talking, we're all together. But we know as soon as we get in between the lines, we're ready to go.

Q. With every round, the lack-of-experience talk has only grown instead of subsided. At this point do you take that as any kind of a challenge, looking to prove people wrong? I know you've talked about how experience does not matter and you guys have shown you're here. Wondering if that's any kind of motivation as you keep on going forward?

DEVIN VASSELL: Honestly, we're just trying to block out all the noise. We've heard it all year and this and that, but we're here now, so there's nothing more for us to say or talk about or to think. We're just going to keep doing what we're doing and that's been successful for us. So just staying on it, staying on the same thing that we've been doing and not trying to overthink it, because we're here for a reason.

Q. Can you just discuss the challenge of guarding Jalen Brunson, coming off a series where you guarded Shai Gilgeous-Alexander?

DEVIN VASSELL: Yeah, very, very talented player, knows how to get to his spots. Just got to be super disciplined with him. We know he likes to do a lot of shot fakes and is a very crafty player. It's going to be a tough task, obviously, but with watching film and just getting ready to go, I'm excited for the challenge.

Q. De'Aaron talked before about he knew in December he knew you might have something special. Was there any point in the season where you felt like this is going to be an exceptional season?

DEVIN VASSELL: I mean, I think when we went on that stretch, maybe was it in February -- I forgot how many games we won in a row. Just us being that locked in, and we felt like we could still be a lot better. There were games we were winning where we came in and watched film and we still had so many mistakes or turnovers or stuff that we could clean up. There was even games in the Playoffs where we felt like we could have been a lot better. I think we're still to play the best that we can in these Playoffs.

I think with these Finals we can be just a whole lot better, and that's an exciting thing to say.

Q. What does it mean for you to play for San Antonio, a city like this? What have you been doing during the rest days, and to see the support in a city like this?

DEVIN VASSELL: Honestly, it's an honor. It's a blessing. The city of San Antonio has welcomed me with huge arms, and honestly all of us. Even when we weren't winning they were super supportive for us, and obviously when we started winning, it's been nothing short of amazing.

We're playing for San Antonio. Off days, we're just resting, recovering. But at the end of the day, we're nothing without these fans. We know these first two games are going to be crazy, and we're excited to be in here playing.

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