

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

San Antonio Spurs

Dylan Harper

Media Day



Q. Dylan, I know you spent just about as much time as anyone with De'Aaron this season. You weren't here when the trade happened, but when you look at where he's been and where he is now, how happy are you for him, and what's it been like getting to do this journey with him?

DYLAN HARPER: I feel like growing up, in my era at least, Fox was kind of a big name, just watching high school and college highlights and watching him in the league. But just to be a part of this journey with him and to kind of have him -- he hates when I say this, but as my uncle in a sense, my big brother, just to have him kind of to help guide me because this is year nine for him, and this is my first year, so he's done a great job of mentoring me.

I feel like what he brings to the table every team would love to have, and I feel like I'm just lucky to play with him.

Q. Dylan, as a guy who went to Knicks games growing up, what does this moment mean for you that you're playing in your rookie season going up against a team that you used to watch?

DYLAN HARPER: Like I said, it's a dream come true. If you would have told me my first year in the NBA I'd be playing with the Spurs and playing in Madison Square Garden my rookie year in the Finals, I would think you're crazy.

But just the reality and possibility that we have as a team, and I think our biggest goal this year, I think we have a chance to do it in a special place.

Q. You and Julian are the two guys coming up -- are you getting more family requests? Has it been crazy coming back close to home?

DYLAN HARPER: I mean, yeah, definitely. I think this is the part of the year everyone wants to be there. Obviously everyone wants to see the journey and be a part of it. The ticket request, there is always going to be a ticket request.

I really don't handle that because I feel like there's bigger -- I'm on the court playing. I kind of let other people handle that for me.

As much as they say those tickets are going to be there, there ain't going to be a lot of tickets going out.

Q. What did the Rutgers experience mean to you and your development?

DYLAN HARPER: It meant a lot to me. I feel like a lot of people looks at that Rutgers experience as a down side or kind of like y'all didn't make the [NCAA] Tournament, you guys didn't win a lot of games. But for me, it taught me a lot. Obviously great group of guys over there. I love my teammates, coaching staff. I feel like they put me in the right positions I need to be in. At the end of the day, life ain't always going to go your way.

But the lessons I took from there, you've got to go through some hard times. I feel like that was necessary for me in my career to go through things like that, so I could be even more prepared for this level.

I have no doubts about going to Rutgers. I loved playing there in front of the fans and everything.

Q. I'm not sure how much time you spent on social media the last few days, but it's been quite bananas in terms of how the Filipino fan base is excited for you going against Jordan [Clarkson]. Also, what has your mom said about your playoff journey so far this year? I know she's detailed with you; give us some insight on that, as well.

DYLAN HARPER: Yeah, I think me and him get to do something really special, representing our country, where we're from, represent everything on the biggest stage in basketball. I feel like over there in the Philippines, basketball is probably the biggest thing.

I think we're very excited for that and we're just very blessed and grateful to be in this position.

I think my mom, she's not my coach no more, so I don't get it as much anymore. But regular mom stuff, I feel like.

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Regular mom stuff with a little mix of basketball here and there. At the end of the day it's more of, as long as you're happy, I'm good.

Q. I've been watching lots of your high school clips. You're mic'd up; you talked a lot. Now you're in the Finals in your rookie season. What would be your advice for your younger self, even in a Game 7 where you were holding up Stephon in a scuffle? What would be your advice for your younger self?

DYLAN HARPER: Just keep being you. That's probably what I'd tell my younger self. Don't ever shy away from the moment; attack the moment. And at all times just stay in the gym, because I think that's what got me here more than anything, me just grinding, grinding, grinding.

Q. Obviously Manu Ginobili is an international legend. In terms of playing style, you and Manu have some similarities as a lefty, but I think it's more than that. What do you think about the comparison between Manu and you, and have you had any relationship with him on a daily basis?

DYLAN HARPER: Yeah, I think that's a fair comparison to say. I think it's an accurate comparison. We're both lefties, big guards.

Yeah, I've had a lot of conversation with him, especially when I first got here. Me and him kind of talked a lot about the role of the team and what to do, things of that nature.

I think he's kind of, more than anyone for me, been that vet that's been around the Spurs for a long time and kind of just giving me insight of what he's been through.

Q. Also maybe secrets of Euro step?

DYLAN HARPER: I think the Euro step has come natural to both of us. We're both dynamic getting downhill. I think obviously he had a little more flair. But I think we both kind of just know how to get to the rim, know how to carve out space.

Q. You have a unique perspective as well; you have a father who has won multiple NBA championships. Has he given you any advice, and have you busted his chops a little bit because it took him 10 years to get his first one and you're here in your first opportunity?

DYLAN HARPER: Yeah, I haven't busted his chops. He has five, so there's really not much I can say to that. I feel like I've got to win some before I can say anything. I get this big opportunity to do that, so that's going to be fun.

Yeah, I've picked his brain. We talked a little yesterday. He just tells me, like everyone else tells me, but I think coming from him it's more of, be you, you don't have to switch who you are in this situation. Just do whatever you've got to do, do whatever you did to get here. Just keep doing it. That's been the biggest thing.

Q. You don't have this matchup directly all the time, but you guys are going from playing Shai and his drive and mid-range game to going to Jalen Brunson, who likes to drive and pull up for the mid-range. What's similar and what's different about how they play and how you approach them?

DYLAN HARPER: Yeah, I think they're two great players, obviously MVP and one that's a superstar. I feel like the game plan in ways are the same, but they're also different because they're two completely different players. I feel like Jalen Brunson, when he gets in the paint, his footwork is elite and is among the best. I feel like just adjusting to things like that.

But at the end of the day, I feel like we have great defenders that I feel like will want to take that challenge and go and meet it.

Q. Your three-point shooting has gotten so much better as the season progressed. Was it a matter of putting the shot up or were the coaches telling you to take that shot more?

DYLAN HARPER: It was more just being in the gym, more shooting the ball every day really. I feel like if you want to be a good shooter or better than good, great, you kind of have to stay in the gym constantly. You've got to shoot shots, because I feel like for shooters, once they see one go in, it's kind of like, all right, now I've a rhythm and flow.

I feel like for me, it was more just finding my rhythm, my flow, off the court, outside the game and on the court.

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