

# NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

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San Antonio Spurs

De'Aaron Fox

Media Day



**Q. De'Aaron, as you look back at -- I think Dylan was calling you Unc, but just your relationship with this team, from where you came from coming to San Antonio, what were some of the harder moments for your time in Sacramento and how pivotal was that for your career?**

DE'AARON FOX: I mean, I think losing is definitely the hard part.

But I think the hardest part was you have a good year and then you kind of expect it to get better, and then it doesn't. I think that's probably the biggest part. Usually when you hear guys who went to the Finals or won the Finals or whatever it may be, they talk about loving getting to that point. But it's a hard thing to do once, and it's definitely a hard thing to do multiple times.

Once you taste that success a little bit, I think the hardest part was not being able to get back there.

**Q. Dylan calling you Unc, I know you've said before, you're no unc. When is he going to get punishment for that?**

DE'AARON FOX: Punishment? Well, I'm actually a literal uncle, but I'm not an unc in the sense of I'm old. I'm definitely not.

**Q. I know you're going through this for the first time, but as one of the steady hands on this team, do you say anything to the guys? Do you do anything different? Obviously you've been on the run together, but now that you're here, just wondering if that dynamic on your end changes a little bit.**

DE'AARON FOX: I think my big message for guys is, especially as we were going through this process, not right now, but as we were playing in the first round and going up, to one, obviously enjoy the moment. This is a hard thing to do. It's hard to get back to these places.

But don't change anything that we're doing. There's a reason that we're in the Finals. There's a reason that we won 60 games. There's a reason we didn't lose three games in a row the whole year.

So we don't want to get to this place and then start changing the way we play. Like going to Game 7, a lot of times superstars think, people say "unload the clip," "get all your rocks off," whatever phrase you want to use. Going into that game, I'm like, no, do the things we've been doing throughout the course of the year, that are the reasons we're playing the defending champs, that we forced a Game 7 on their home court. We don't need to change anything. We're a good team, and we know that.

Going to these games knowing that there's a reason that we're here and continuing to play the way that we play, double down on it, triple down on it and continue to do those things.

**Q. With Gregg Popovich, we talked about him texting Dylan after Game 5. What did you learn from him during this whole playoff run, and how important is it to have a resource like that for a young team that is experiencing and discovering the NBA Finals?**

DE'AARON FOX: It's great. Not even just Pop, just the organization as a whole. It's a lot of people walking through this building that have been there and done that. We could just have practice and Manu is there or Tim is there. We have these guys who have won multiple championships and been to the mountaintop multiple times. You can ask them anything.

Obviously Pop is going to come in. He's going to speak his mind, whatever it may be. Like I said before, that was the first time after a game that he walked in and said something. But he comes to shootarounds, practices, you'll see him here and there. But just to have that source of information or -- that's always willing -- even if you ask a question, he'll answer it or sometimes he'll just walk in and let you know what he sees.

It's not always bad, obviously. But they're able to give you those, just, tidbits of -- it's not even something that has to be a big thing. It can be something as small as boxing



someone out on a free throw or one extra pass that happened at this point of the game that could have changed the game.

It's just great having those type of people in your ear who they're not saying it because it makes them successful. They want to see other people be successful. That's a great thing to have, especially throughout the course of a long year and in the long Finals run.

**Q. The Knicks come in on a real hot roll offensively. They've won these different series playing different ways offensively. As you've dug into them, what kind of challenges are they posing on the offensive end right now?**

DE'AARON FOX: Obviously they've been just throughout the whole year one of the better-shooting teams. They've played faster throughout the Playoffs. So for us, it's getting back, limiting our turnovers. OKC was, I think, the best team in the league as far as turning teams over, and our last five games we were able to minimize those turnovers and not allow them to get out and run.

But playing a team that has a high-powered offense, you can't help them by having bad offense. I think that's where it starts, being able to -- if we miss a shot, getting back in transition, and limiting our live ball turnovers. That makes it easier and helps them get into offensive flow even faster.

**Q. You talked just about all the connections to the past that are in this building. You also know pretty well how young that locker room is and how little they remember about some things that you might remember. How do you think the whole group of young guys have done, you included, connecting to the past while also sort of creating something new? Because this isn't the Spurs team that won five championships, it's something different. How would you describe that contrast?**

DE'AARON FOX: I think these guys have such a level of respect for all the people that have walked through here. Every time you see them -- even if you're not talking about basketball, you just feel it whenever you go say what's up to them. They come by, and it's just -- I guess it's so normal now. Whenever you've lived through that, and obviously Vic and Steph have been here for a couple years now, but you just feel it. Like, whenever I went to Kentucky, you feel the winning of a program whenever you step foot in the building and people just start coming around.

I think they've handled it -- I don't want to say with grace, but they've stepped into it and they want to be a part of

that. You handle it with a level of respect and with a level of responsibility, knowing that when you put this jersey on that you have an expectation.

It's not always to win. You're not going to always win. But to go through that process of trying to get to that point. I think it's been great. I think that's why we've been able to do it with -- we have four guys that are under 23, and I think we have like seven guys that are under 26, and we're in a position to win a championship. That's because of the way that they've handled this process.

**Q. Your time with Coach Brown, what sticks out about him as a person and maybe as a coach?**

DE'AARON FOX: I think the biggest thing is just how open he is. That's from an organizational standpoint. Whenever he came in, the first thing he's like, well, I want the entire organization to be in, from ownership to front office, coaching staff, players, medical staff, everybody on down. Whenever you have that -- whenever you have that, and I've seen it since I've been here, and I'm like, well, that's probably where he got it from. That's why he wants to do it that way. Then that way there are no secrets. If a player says something, you tell your medical person, and then they tell the coach and the front office and everybody knows exactly what's going on on a day-to-day basis, I think that's what makes a team good. Obviously there's talent and all these other things that play into that part, a little bit of luck, a little bit of health, all these things. But whenever you have it there from a foundational standpoint, you give yourself a chance to be good year in and year out.

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