

# NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

San Antonio Spurs

Stephon Castle

Media Day



**Q. Steph, you are the youngest team to make the Finals in almost 50 years. Do you believe that means anything, the inexperience, the youth? How have you been able to overcome that?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I mean, I don't think that was ever a problem for us. I think for us, that was all outside noise. In-house, we have nothing but confidence in each other. We take it game by game, try to walk this thing down. I mean, we've got to this point, so...

I mean, we've been making history with, like, every game, we see something new. Yeah, we got four more to go. We got this far. I mean, we still haven't really done anything yet.

**Q. Personally each round you've had to guard an All-Star. What is it about your makeup that makes you want those matchups and gives you success?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I guess, knowing it's a positive in my game. It's a strong suit of my game. Just using that to my advantage. Also, just my competitive nature, just wanting those matchups. Just wanting to win so bad, doing whatever it takes.

If that means guarding the other team's best player for 40 minutes a night, then that's what I'll do.

**Q. Can you think back and describe the emotions you guys felt after that NBA Cup Final loss, given it was at that point the biggest game you had played?**

STEPHON CASTLE: Yeah, obviously it was a tough loss. It wasn't season-ending, so it doesn't feel as bad as probably your season ending in the Playoffs. Obviously, we wanted to win. I think just us as competitors, you want to win every single game.

But I think we had short-term memory with that. We still got paid. How much did we get paid for that, so... [smiling].

Yeah, we moved on pretty quick.

**Q. I know you like Nine Vicious. I know you're all with that music. Give me your top three from Atlanta.**

STEPHON CASTLE: Top three from Atlanta? I'll put Baby in there just out of respect. I'll put Prada in there because that's my man. I'll put Glokk in there. I listen to Glokk before names, so...

That's a crazy question to ask [smiling].

**Q. Steph, at the beginning of the season you guys were talking about getting to 60. Sort of as the season went on, what were some of the things you saw that you said we can go get this thing?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I just think our consistency and togetherness, it just screamed great habits throughout our locker room. With our leader being Vic, with how good he is, with how young he is, for him to not have any ego, I think it just fed great energy throughout our locker room.

Especially early to start this year in January, went on that long run where we won I don't know how many games in a row. I think just that kind of confidence and that kind of groove coming into the Playoffs is what you want. I think we hit our stride at the right time.

Yeah, also we have the best player in the world on our team.

**Q. Steph, the defensive question, what drew you to that side of the ball? When did you realize that could be your calling card?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I think my competitive nature, not wanting to take plays off. Just having pride in guarding one on one. I think just the success that I had at UConn with it, understanding how much of that was needed for us to win, I think it kind of just became natural for that to be a part of my game.

I don't think it was ever a weakness of mine, but I don't think I ever seen it before UConn as a strong suit of mine

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or a high skill of mine. Now I do. I think it's a big part of my game now.

Yeah, I don't take that year for granted. I think just learning how to win is very important to winning. Not taking any possessions off. Just holding that competitive nature and trying to impose that on every possession is what drew me towards that.

**Q. Sticking with the defensive topic, the numbers with you guarding Jalen Brunson skew in your favor. What has worked for you in guarding him?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I think what's worked for me is trying to be physical with him. He's obviously shorter than me, but he's a very physical guard, he gets to his spots well. Uses deception well, has great footwork.

Trying to be as disciplined as I can, crowd his space, but not give him the angles that he's looking for. At this point he's seen pretty much every coverage, been guarded all kinds of ways.

I mean, yeah, just trying to impose my will and use my physicality to my advantage.

**Q. As a competitor, defender, how much do you look forward to a challenge like that?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I mean, I love those challenges. I mean, I ask for them, to be honest with you. Sometimes it gets in the way of me missing a rotation or me not being in the right spot for my teammate because I'll be so locked in on those matchups. That's one thing I say I have to get better on, is the team defense aspect of things, not just making it about me and another person.

Yeah, I just think riding off of my competitiveness on that side, then using my techniques to my advantage. I think our coaches do a great job on giving us the tendencies of what guys like to do, the spots they like to get to.

Using that and trying to be smart and play aggressive defensively without fouling, it's fun to do when you do it right. I know how big a part it is to winning. I don't have any problem doing that.

**Q. A few minutes ago Victor said that Thunder win was so emotional, isn't sure the team is completely over it, still has 30 hours to refocus. Do you feel like you guys are completely locked in and ready for the Finals or still a day where you're still coming down off that high?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I mean, honestly I think it was a

feel-good win for us. Playing the defending champs on the road in a Game 7 like that, it's hard to flush that out of the back of your mind, especially when you're the team that came out on top.

We have a balance where we understand we can't get complacent or satisfied with that. We still have a job so...

Come game time, we'll be ready.

**Q. Mitch was telling us earlier about the output that you put out on defense. They have a lot of measurables. How do you prepare for the energy you have to expend on that? How do you expend that kind of energy and prepare for that?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I think I just have the luxury of being young, honestly. I mean, I just get in the cold tub. I don't do nothing crazy.

But yeah, I think I've been doing it for so long and consistently throughout the year that I really haven't had to change much coming into the Playoffs, especially on that end.

I mean, at this point I'm pretty conditioned. My body is used to it. Yeah, I'm 21, so...

**Q. The NBA is full of big, strong guys, many of whom seem to topple to the floor a lot with contact. It was suggested during the earlier rounds that some of your guys, you in particular, that doesn't seem to happen. You're not looking to sell calls, embellish anything. Are you leaving some gamesmanship on the table, or does this get into the ethical hoops stuff in terms of playing it straight?**

STEPHON CASTLE: I don't really know how to answer that. I mean, because I sell calls, too, sometimes. I can't lie. It's really just a feel thing. Especially in the Playoffs, if it's too egregious, the refs aren't going to bail you out. They're going to make the better team win.

I think taking it game by game, not trying to put yourself at a disadvantage. I don't really think it's about selling calls or not trying to sell calls to make yourself look a certain type of way.

I think we talk to the refs a lot, especially me in particular. Most of the times they're right, so... I mean, just having a short-term memory, whether you fall down or not, if you get the call or you don't get the call, it's not really something you can change.

I think for us, just playing the game and seeing how the

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ref's calling it.

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