

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

New York Knicks

Karl-Anthony Towns

Game 1: Postgame



Knicks 105, Spurs 95

Q. Coach mentioned the emotions of the game. From the outside looking in, what is it about the character of this team that allows you guys to have those open-ended in-game conversations to level out those emotions?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: This team has unity. It has camaraderie. It was special, something I thought we showed the world last year. It got us far in the playoffs last year, and just kind of growing off of that from last year, having another year with each other, even more familiarity. Last year was a lot of change with me coming to the team and Mikal, and obviously just so many moving parts.

I think it's been something that has been building and more trust has been built over time. It's just something that has worked tremendously well for us.

Q. What's your approach defending Wembanyama?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: Just try to make it difficult. He's an amazing player, one-of-a-kind player in this NBA, that the league has ever seen, and you just try to make it as difficult as possible.

Q. You guys were down 20 twice in Boston last year. You guys were down 22 against the Cavs in Game 1 of the Conference Finals and today you were down 14. What is it about this team when you are down big, you don't quit and you have that confidence, no matter how big, you guys are down?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: It's something in the city. You feel that energy in the city; the grit, the grind, the hard work you've got to put in to make in the city. I think we reflect all our fans and lifestyles and what it takes to make it in New York City when we step on the court with a Knicks jersey.

Q. You had a nine-point edge, your team, in second-chance points and a 10-point victory. How

important was that, the work on the offensive glass? And Mike had talked about the imperative of capitalizing when Wembanyama is not in the paint. What's your approach then?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: I mean, we got to execute our game plan at all times, regardless of what the situation is. Being disciplined in our approach, I thought that today we did a good job of having a disciplined approach on defense.

Offense, we didn't shoot the best, but I said it on the court, you know, the difference between this, Game 1 here and Game 1 in Cleveland against Cleveland, was our offense didn't show up and our defense didn't show up and that one time we just had to make a miraculous run to get back in the game.

But today our offense didn't show up until late and our defense was there from the beginning, and that's what saved us. If we continue to -- if we can find a way to get the offense going and continue to improve our defense, not only just keep it where it was tonight but improve on it, we'll give ourselves a chance to win every night.

Q. You were especially aggressive driving with Wembanyama, guarding you, especially early in the game. What kind of just mental persistence does that take to keep going at a guy who is that level of a defender and shot-blocker over and over again and find success?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: You just trust your work and you trust your decision-making, and I always say about being aggressive in playmaking. It may not be for the shot or get someone else a shot or get the hockey assist going.

For me when I go out there, I try to be aggressive in playmaking. Early in the game, just you never know what's actually -- the defense is going to give you. You don't know what is going to unfold but I just wanted to be aggressive, especially early in the game, Game 1 in the NBA Finals, and trying to bring that energy for our team.

Q. You had to expect that this would be a very physical game. We also saw Josh got in a bit of foul



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trouble early, as well. How do you think you guys handled that physicality and how do you balance being aggressive but also staying disciplined?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: It's all about executing offensively, not putting your hands in a place where they could draw fouls, and also in being aggressive, not making stupid fouls, as well.

So for me, I think in my aggression today, I committed, I'd say probably like two fouls I wish I didn't commit.

But at the end of the day, like you said, I think everyone in the building knew the game was going to be physical. It's going to be high energy. Their fans brought it. But, you know, we knew we had to execute and stay disciplined throughout the game because it was going to be a hard-fought game and it surely was.

Q. You've seen it now for two years but you see Jalen limp to the locker room, comes back out, fourth-quarter heroics. Was there ever a doubt in your mind, one, he's coming back, or two, you put the ball in his hands, he's going to do what he did?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: No, with the ball in his hands, I'm never surprised. I tell you, that last shot, I think it was a shoot floater, that was nasty. I ain't going to lie.

You know, when we all saw him limp off, we were worried not only because he's Jalen Brunson but more because he's our brother and we are a family in our locker room. We want to -- just worried about his health. But when we were on the court and I saw him walking back out to the bench, it was a relief feeling just to know he's safe. That was really at the end of the day all we care about it is his safety.

Q. I think I heard you say as you were walking off the court, that was like a prize fight. If that's the case, do you think this is just round one, and what's it mean for the tone of the rest of the series?

KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS: There's a lot more basketball to be played. But like I said to y'all and the media who has followed us on our journey here, every game has to be approached like it's 0-0. You have to come out with that same energy, intensity and desperation, like it's Game 1 of any playoff series.

You know, we've got 48 hours to rest up and do it all over again and even at a higher level.

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