

# NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

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San Antonio Spurs

Julian Champagnie

Practice Day



**Q. There was a sequence where you and Jose [Alvarado] traded threes, a little bit of jawing back and forth. It was giving NYC street ball vibes. Was that just classic Brooklyn-on-Brooklyn jawing?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: Yeah, I think it's just friendly banter, honestly and truly. Obviously I've known Jose for a while. Yeah, he makes one, he talks. I make one, I talk. That's just how New York is. That's how it goes.

**Q. Are you allowed to say what was said?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: I don't think it was anything too crazy. It was just, "you like that one" and whatnot. That was all it was.

**Q. You were so hot at the beginning of the game, five threes. What happened next? You got cold; they weren't looking for you. My second question is it was drawn to my attention you have some Puerto Rican in you; is that true?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: So what happened during the game? I think the Knicks just made some good adjustments. Credit to them. They're a good team, good coaching staff. I think they did some things that kind of took away the corner three and the other threes. So we'll figure out ways to kind of find those again.

I'm not too sure about the Puerto Rican part. I think my mom's dad was a little bit Puerto Rican, but I usually say I'm Jamaican-Italian. That's usually what I say.

**Q. You grew up playing basketball in Brooklyn, obviously St. John's. I'm curious maybe some street ball New York City playgrounds. How did that upbringing prepare you for the toughness and the physical game like Game 1 of the NBA Finals last night?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: Yeah, obviously playing in the park, in the city, you've got to go out there, and one, you

have to win or you can't go back on the court for a while. Then obviously there's no foul calls out there. They're not giving you no weak fouls, especially when you're playing with the older guys. There's no weak fouls, a lot of trash talking, a lot of physical bump-bump and stuff like that.

Figuring out how you can play on those courts, definitely I feel like it translates into playing on the NBA court. Obviously the talent is different and stuff like that. But you take little tidbits, the trash talk, the physicality, perseverance and how to get through and actually win a game. You take those things with you throughout your whole career.

**Q. Along the lines of that physicality, I also noticed you had a little moment with Landry Shamet when you guys were coming off and it looked like it almost got a little physical there --**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: No, no, no, no physicality. That was just competitiveness, honestly and truly. I don't really know Landry, for real. He's a great shooter, as well. That was just he made a shot, I made a shot and we just talked a little bit. I like to compete, so that's all it is.

**Q. I believe the last time a St. John's player won an NBA title was 16 years ago: Ron Artest, 2010. I don't even remember the last time a guy from Brooklyn won an NBA title. How does it feel, you have a chance to put NYC hoops on the map winning a ring this year?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: It feels great. Obviously I'm from there. I lived there. I grew up there. I went to school there and all that good stuff.

Being able to bring one of those back to the hood, it would be real good.

**Q. You hit six threes in the last game against the Thunder. You hit five early last night. I just want to know how it feels when you're in that kind of rhythm. What do you see? What do you feel to be able to get that crazy of a hot streak?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: Yeah, I think I do a good job of watching defenses and trying to figure out what they're

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doing, whether they're helping on the low man, shifting off, attention to detail on who's attacking and where they're going and stuff like that. But I always give credit to my teammates. We have really good point guards and really good guards that like to point in places where they need us and want us.

Like last night in the first half, I don't know if you saw, but Fox was just pointing and telling everybody where to go. But he did it purposely so I would get a three. It worked the way that he thought it would, and the rest was history from there.

I always give it to the guards and the players. They pass the ball. They do a really good job of finding me when I'm hot, so all credit goes to them.

**Q. Julian, in your mind, what allowed Jalen Brunson to get in rhythm in the fourth quarter, and as you go from series to series and you watch film, how long does it take to get accustomed to players that you play only twice a year like the Knicks?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: I think he's a great player, right, so it's one of those things where I don't think we necessarily did a bad job defending him. I think he was 12 of 31 last night. In a regular game, they're going to say that's a crazy shooting percentage.

But he's a great player. Made some shots late, and he willed his team to a win. At the end of the day, I don't think we did a terrible job on him. I think there are things we can do better to even limit more points.

But I think we did a pretty solid job. I think we'll just continue to be more physical, do some more things with him and stuff like that.

I don't think it's a thing about getting accustomed to him. I think we have a really good defensive coaching staff who puts us in places and gives us some schemes to do a good job defending him. I think it's just about kind of sticking to that and trusting the coaching staff and also trusting your teammates, knowing that they're going to have your back when something doesn't go the way it's supposed to.

**Q. The atmosphere was crazy here yesterday, and especially also the Knicks fans, which you know very well. How was that for you guys? Do you expect anything different for Game 2? Does that motivate you to see the away fans filling the stands, as well?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: I don't feel like the away fans motivate us. They're here to vote for the other team.

For me, I kind of expected that. I'm from New York; I know how New York fans travel and stuff like that, so I kind of expected that.

But the goal is just to come out next game and just play hard, play better. Their fans, they're not crossing our minds while we're in San Antonio. It's just more so about what we have to worry about in between those four lines. Yeah, that's really all it comes down to.

**Q. Seems like one of the things that comes with being a deep team is having to find minutes for everybody. Something Dylan and Mitch were talking about was just decisions have to be made at times with players on the court, off the court. How do you deal with that when you're off the court, especially if you watch your team give up a lead or stuff like that?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: I don't. I think that I trust the coaching staff and whatever they're doing, and everything they do, they do a really good job. They've done a really good job all year of having us in positions where we can play, we're rested during the games, we're not overexerted and stuff like that. I don't question. I don't think about what Coach Mitch and all of them are doing when it comes to that kind of stuff. I just trust them blindly, which I have been all year, and I think all of us do just that.

**Q. I've seen videos of you interacting with a young girl, and I've seen you where you hand the ball to a kid, to shoot some three-pointers. I was wondering is that something you like doing before the game? Does that relax you, or where does that come from?**

JULIAN CHAMPAGNIE: Not relax. I haven't done it for the Playoffs for the most part because I feel like the security is a lot more heightened during the Playoffs and it's kind of hard to get away with that.

But I remember what it was like being a kid. I didn't go to many NBA games, but I remember what it was like being a kid seeing NBA players and wanting to do that or just being infatuated with what was going on at the arena. So I feel like why not give the kids an experience that they're going to remember for a lifetime. If that means coming on the court, shooting a three, miss or make, whatever, coming on the court, saying what's up, passing them the ball, you pass it back to me.

I feel like kids appreciate that, and it makes their experience a lot better. So that's all that comes down to. I want them there to enjoy all of this like I enjoy all of this.

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