

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Thursday, June 4, 2026

New York Knicks

Josh Hart

Practice Day



Q. There's a saying around New York and New York Knicks fans that's been catching fire lately about how a lot of people are better than Jalen Brunson until it's time to be better than Jalen Brunson. Obviously you've been around him a lot during your Villanova times and now here. What do you think when you hear something like that?

JOSH HART: I don't know. As a friend, you're happy he's getting recognition. I think he's still underrated in the league, and he keeps proving people wrong, game by game, series by series, playoff appearance by playoff appearance.

As a friend, as a teammate, it's funny because you know he's one of the best players in the league, and you're happy that he's starting to get some recognition.

Q. Josh, when you go into a game like this, I don't know if you've seen any of the numbers, but the 15 rebounds was I think a record for somebody your size since 30 years, 40 years. When you've got Victor in front of you or around you, what is the approach that you're able to get 15 rebounds against that front line like that?

JOSH HART: Yeah, I mean, just a will. Obviously he's someone that we have to pay extra attention to and try to keep him off the glass, or KAT and Mitch did an amazing job doing that yesterday.

Obviously they've got talented guards that crash the glass hard. It's just a will. Just trying to read the ball, see where it's going to bounce and be the first one to get there.

Q. Josh, you push the pace a lot, especially against a Spurs team that can be so good in the half court. How important is it to push quickly off a make or a miss against this defense?

JOSH HART: Yeah, extremely important. Obviously they're very good in the half court, using their physicality,

their athleticism, and then obviously Wemby altering shots or deterring shots.

We've got to make sure we push it. Obviously they crash the offensive glass relentlessly the whole game. If we do get those defensive rebounds, we're able to get out and push the pace and we have guys that can finish at the rim, knock down shots.

It's definitely a part of how we want to play.

Q. Can you tell me what you remember most about Jose as a rookie? And also, when he got here, him coming back home, what was your reaction, and how much do you think that meant to him?

JOSH HART: You know Arsenal lost the Champions League, right?

Q. Not to Chelsea.

JOSH HART: But they lost, so wearing all that Arsenal trash there --

Q. Who won Premier League?

JOSH HART: Luckily. They had VAR on their side.

No, but Jose was kind of like a deer in the headlights at first. But you could tell he had the energy around it that was contagious, that he was willing to work. He had a chip on his shoulder and was really willing to do whatever it took to get on the court.

I think when you do that and you have the mentality and you start seeing success with it, you kind of double down on that. That's what you see him -- he goes out there, pushes the pace, makes us play fast. Defensively gives good minutes and gives contagious energy.

Even when you look at him on the bench, he's up, he's talking, he's doing those kind of things. When you've got a guy that's locked in like that, even when he's off the court, as a teammate and a player, you have the ultimate confidence in someone like that. When his number is called -- obviously it was called a little bit earlier yesterday

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with JB going out, and he gave us good minutes.

Go Blues. Arsenal sucks. Let's keep it going.

Q. When you find yourself being guarded by Victor, how much of a priority is there then at getting him moving, changing directions, drawing him away from the paint for the opportunities that it creates for other guys? Never mind the scoring or passing.

JOSH HART: Yeah. Definitely important. I think all the questions that I was asked the last three days about Victor guarding me, doing all those kind of things, and obviously we're going through stuff for that, and obviously the first period of the game, I'm bringing the ball up and Champagnie is guarding me. I was about to call a timeout and tell him to switch. I was like, hold on, that's not how it's supposed to be.

But when you have someone like Victor guarding you, obviously he's very comfortable being around the rim and doing those kind of things. So you want to do your best to draw him out.

Especially for me, I'm able to play right action or handoffs or ball screens where JB, Mikal, OG, Landry, if he's down the floor, as long as I get a good hit on the guards, they're going to have open shots.

So there's an emphasis of doing that, playing fast and just trying to draw him off the rim where he's not as comfortable.

Q. Jalen is obviously always known for keeping his cool down the stretch and always over the years. Was it unusual for you to see him get worked up, getting into it with the fans a little bit last night, and what do you think set him off?

JOSH HART: To be honest, I didn't even see what happened. I heard something about it. I didn't really see it.

I don't know. He's always pretty calm, pretty composed. I'm sure the fans probably said something crazy to kind of get him going.

Yeah, I wish I could answer that a little bit better, but I didn't see the interaction.

Q. When you described what Jose brings, that infectious energy, I think a lot of people would identify that as something you bring to the table, as well. What does it take to be able to continually provide that, whether going through shooting struggles, different defensive matchups, different things that are being

asked of you defensively to be able to bring that energy night in and night out?

JOSH HART: It takes humility and just a willingness to sacrifice. We're in the NBA Finals; there's millions of people watching. It's easy to get wrapped up in human nature of wanting to get recognition, wanting to score the ball, wanting to show people what you can do on the biggest stage.

That's not everyone's calling and not everyone's assignment. I know for me, that's not really my assignment.

It takes a little bit of time to find that humility. For me, I found that with prayer and my faith.

But that's kind of what it is, those two things, prayer and humility, because it's easy to get wrapped up in human nature, especially at this level, when you want to show people what you can do. But when you have that willingness to sacrifice, and I think Jose has it, myself has it, a lot of guys on the team have it, OG at times, Mikal at times, KAT at times, when you have a group of guys that have that willingness to sacrifice and that humility, that breeds a championship culture.

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