

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Friday, June 5, 2026

San Antonio Spurs

Coach Mitch Johnson

Game 2: Pregame



Q. Mitch, you've said many times one of the fundamentals of the program is ball movement, assist numbers. Where is the line between the amount of passing that you want ideally versus overpassing and maybe guys being a little too unselfish sometimes?

MITCH JOHNSON: Yeah, I think over time, whether you know it or not, the term we try to use is just 'our shot.' I think a team produces similar looks over time, even through different opponents. Over the course of the year, having different lineups at times.

At some stage you particularly produce a style of play and consistent brand of basketball. If you're aware of that, then obviously try to play to your strengths, to different combinations on your roster strengths, then that would produce similar looks over time if you're pointing the right way.

I think that's where you can get into hopefully some clarity of that, what you're talking about, in terms of passing, just for the sake of passing, versus having the ball change sides, making sure you're touching the paint, making sure if you have an okay shot earlier in the shot clock, can you be greedier for a shot, whether that's for yourself or for your teammate.

Q. Harrison stressed this morning the need for the guys, especially the young guys, not to take this for granted and think it's an every-year occurrence. Do you see that kind of humility with Dylan and Carter, they realize what a great opportunity this is?

MITCH JOHNSON: Yeah, I think so. I don't know if they are even flying at that high in the air. I think they're just what's right in front of them.

I think for most of our group, that's served us well. Yeah, I don't think anybody's too preoccupied with whatever this means big picture. We know we have a heck of an opportunity. We've had a heck of an opportunity throughout the season, since the Playoffs have started. I

don't think anybody is taking anything for granted or assuming anything.

Q. In the last round you had mentioned outside of sleeping you had spent 24 hours just all on basketball. What has that been like since the end of Game 1 of this series? When it comes to you talking about becoming a better coach, what does that mean to you in that time frame?

MITCH JOHNSON: Yeah, when you play a common opponent obviously as you do in the Playoffs, you're in a series, I think to really settle into a series, there needs to be clarity for the players. I think that word is really important. I think that's a large responsibility on the staff and myself.

To be able to give them -- 'them' being the players -- feedback on this worked, this didn't, we need to do this better, this may not have felt good at the time, but we actually think we can continue to invest and commit to whatever that is.

There's so much to be made at times of the outcome of a play or a game or a situation. I think to continue to give the guys clarity as you settle into a series, when you start playing teams multiple times, can really give guys confidence into what they're walking into and to continue to try to improve on whatever they're walking out of.

Q. You guys had fallen behind in the previous couple of series but found ways to have strong responses. Any kind of common thread that allows for those strong responses?

MITCH JOHNSON: Yeah, our competitive response has been consistent it feels like for most of the season. Our guys are made of the right stuff in terms of character and competitiveness and togetherness. I think they also typically have committed to what it takes to improve as a team execution-wise, what we need to do to improve to get the W coming out of some of those situations you're talking about.

It's not easy. This will probably be the most difficult one all year. But that's what we'll strive to do here tonight.



Q. How would you describe De'Aaron Fox's role on the team right now, how it's evolved since he first came aboard?

MITCH JOHNSON: His role on the team is we're at our best when he's confident, in attack mode, has the basketball in his hands, making his teammates play better, making plays for himself. I think that role has been pretty consistent.

The thing that's changed obviously is the teammates around him have continued to grow and improve, and we've added some guys. He has probably balanced better than anyone on our team being able to be at the forefront and lead the attack at times, then also understand that he can allow someone else to be super aggressive and be right next to that person.

For an All-Star at 28 years old, I believe is his age, to do that is really difficult to do. I don't believe he gets enough credit for that.

Q. You ran with the trio of Harper, Castle and Fox a little bit in the previous game. What do you like about that look? Are there any limitations that keep you away from hammering that?

MITCH JOHNSON: Love the look. We've done it sporadically throughout the season. The only limitation is we haven't done it as much as I'd like to or wanted to. That's been more to do with sub patterns and lineups and health and trying to balance, similar to Victor playing with Luke when they're all there in terms of three guards. Someone is going to have to play a little longer because you have to get someone else out to bring the other one back when they're not all out there together.

Something that we want to continue to grow. Yeah, they're three dynamic, talented, unselfish guys that can dribble, pass, shoot, guard. It's a good formula.

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