

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Sunday, June 7, 2026
New York Knicks

Mike Brown

Practice Day

MIKE BROWN: A great day for me today. For the first time I got a chance to meet Ben Stiller. I don't know if he's in here or not. I actually gave him a handshake and a hug. I got my man Fat Joe sitting in the back. This is a great day for Mike Brown.

Q. I think you were talking about this at the outset of the last series. You were saying when you took this job, you felt like this team had enough to win. So what were your feelings about this roster when you took over? Then did you feel like you had to get to The Finals this year as coach?

MIKE BROWN: I'm going to answer that part first.

Every year I've coached I felt like, I've wanted to and needed to be part of a Finals team. I never experienced as a head coach trying to tank, trying not to make the Playoffs, trying those things'. It's about trying to get the win and improve during the regular season, so come postseason you're in position to try to go for it.

As you're looking at this team, trying to put together what you want to say to Leon, Mr. Dolan, Quentin Dolan, Wes, the rest of their staff, you just tell the truth.

I thought the diversity in terms of the skill set on both ends of the floor, as well as the size, the length, the athleticism, all that.

Every team that I've been a part of that has gone to the Finals, and especially has won it, has an X factor, a wild card. That's somebody that plays off of their emotions, but it's usually at one speed. Most of the times you love it. Sometimes you may pull your hair out of your head, if you have it. That person was Josh.

Back in San Antonio, it was Stephen Jackson. In Golden State, it was Draymond Green. Here it's Josh. All those guys, they can change a game to the Nth degree just with their passion, their emotion, however you want to call it.



Sometimes they make you want to pull your hair out your head, like I said. I thought the team was diverse and had a lot of different pieces that you can help you. Skill-wise, they had the X factor in Josh, and then being a veteran group, there was a hunger about this team with the way they lost the last couple years that I thought could help bode them well getting over the hump.

From there, I said this before, you got to be aligned not just horizontally but vertically, from Mr. Dolan, to Leon, myself, on down. You got to be aligned horizontally, too.

I've known Leon for many years. I felt that alignment could happen, and it could be great even when times got rocky.

Q. Do you recall the first day you stepped foot inside Madison Square Garden and what your impressions were of the building and atmosphere then as opposed to now?

MIKE BROWN: I was like, holy crap, I can't believe this is where I'm going to be coaching.

The biggest thing was when I got to the bench where we sit and I kind of turned and looked at the crowd, I saw my wife and family, like, three rows back, I was like, dang, thanks, Mr. Dolan, that's pretty nice.

Just obviously the building, but more importantly when you get in and you look, for me, I see my family right there, then obviously all the stars. It makes it feel different than almost any other building you've been in.

Q. What would you say is Jalen's kind of superpower as an offensive player, his superior skill set? Can you remember when you first took note of him and thought this second-round pick is actually pretty good?

MIKE BROWN: When I first took notice of him, I was defensive coordinator in Golden State. We had to play against Dallas. I remember first couple times we played against them, we put a guard on him. I was amazed. Because when you look at him, you're like, okay, he's not the biggest guy, not the most athletic guy, not the quickest guy. Okay, you can put a guy 6-4, 6-5 guy on him, you'll be okay. No.



We put guys 6-6, 6-7 on him. He got to his spot methodically. He put his back shoulder in them, he still scored. When we played him in the Playoffs, Luka is great, an all-time great, he's going to probably go down for sure as a top-10 player, maybe top five, I don't know. As a defensive coordinator, this is just me, going into that series, my concern wasn't Luka, my concern was Jalen.

We put Draymond Green on Jalen. That's how concerned we were. Because we needed a bigger, stronger, tougher guy to try to do it or to try to slow him down at that time.

Jalen didn't shoot as many threes, he didn't play as many pick and rolls because the ball was in Luka's hands.

Now it's different. If you put a power forward on him, he's in a ball screen, out in transition, he can score from all three levels. He does it with a patience that you embrace as a coach because it's not hurried and frantic all the time. It always seems like he's in control, which helps you as a coach be in control, which helps his teammates be in control.

He's been a problem in this league for a long time.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, but when you come to New York, it seems like there's a lot of pressure, big personalities, egos. It seems like you always deflect praise and pass it onto your coaching staff, the players. Was that a calculated decision that you made upon taking this job, to kind of not make it about you, or is that evolving?

MIKE BROWN: I'm really just telling the truth, man. My staff is great. They're extremely diverse. They've all stepped up at different times. Same with the players.

I don't know. This is me personally, I think anybody that says I got us here, I, I, I, is flat out lying. You had to have help from somewhere. I truly believe it.

When you do, you want to make sure you recognize everybody else because it definitely ain't about just me. I'm just telling the truth about the staff and the players as we go along.

So not calculated, not made up. Again, I'm just telling the truth. If they weren't, I'd let you know somehow, some way.

Q. [from Fat Joe] The shoes. I hated those shoes.

MIKE BROWN: Can I say the name?

Q. What's the name of the shoes?

MIKE BROWN: You keep calling them P.K. Flyers. They're P.F. Flyers [smiling].

Q. Shoes have come so far.

MIKE BROWN: P.F. Flyers.

Q. I need you to keep them on, Coach.

MIKE BROWN: I'm going to keep them on. Bob Cousy, he was the first athlete to be endorsed by a shoe. You got me thinking P.K. Flyers. They signed him back in the day. P.F. Flyers was the first shoe company that signed an athlete. It was Bob Cousy.

Q. Can I get a pair signed by you.

MIKE BROWN: Yes [laughter].

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