

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Monday, June 8, 2026

San Antonio Spurs

Mitch Johnson

Game 3: Pregame

Q. Was just wondering if since Friday you had one-on-one conversations with Victor and if he was looking for you or for some advice from you.

MITCH JOHNSON: We definitely had some one-on-one conversations. I don't think he's looking for anything from me that he's not throughout the season. I think he's looking for what my job is, which is to help him, support him, give him clarity, give him solutions or possible solutions to continue to give him opportunities and give him advantages. That's our job. And my job specifically to put these guys in position to be successful and then they have got to go and help themselves and help their teammates when they get out there on the floor.

Q. This morning at shootaround, De'Aaron was talking about how players were asked to bring fewer things today because of the security stuff. So I was wondering, from your perspective, if you feel like the Spurs have been inconvenienced by the President being here today, and then just generally, now that you've been through some Finals games, if today has been harder than it should be.

MITCH JOHNSON: No. I have not felt any inconvenience or -- we've got a big game tonight, and trying to continue to find a way to play closer to our standard and our identity than we had in the first two games.

There's a lot going on, and I'd much rather be a part of it than not.

Q. You've seen your group on the road in big games earlier this postseason. I'm just wondering how would you characterize how they were going into it and do you expect anything different tonight?

MITCH JOHNSON: I do not expect anything different. This will be as hostile of an environment as we have been in this season. Obviously, it's the Finals. It's New York. I don't know what measurement or level of explanation would probably describe it accurately. But I think our group



is confident. I think our group has been sharp. I think we are continuing to get clarity on how we need to play this series as we have in the previous three series.

And we're playing a team that's playing high, high-level basketball right now with a ton of confidence. It's going to take us to play at an extremely consistent level for 48 minutes to give ourselves a chance. But I love where our disposition and temperament is at going into the game.

Q. This is a young team. How helpful have the Spurs legends like Pop and Tim been in experience department in situations like this?

MITCH JOHNSON: It's much to do with our organization because of the historical connections that we have, and they have been great. And there's a lot of people that have been in our organization for decades and a long time that are not as notable for the public as Pop and Timmy and everybody has been. Just an outstanding resource and source of wisdom and support at times.

But I think the best thing about our organization and everybody that's associated with us, they have allowed these guys to have their own experience. Again, I've said this a few times, but no one has the extent of the experience for this team this year as the group in that locker room. And they have embraced that and they have stayed together and they have walked into every moment and walked out of every moment together, and I think we have been continuing to grow from that.

And again, tonight will be the toughest test of the year to see if we can step up.

Q. In terms of getting back to that Spurs level of ball movement and chemistry, how important is the bond between Vic and Stephon and how has that grown over the course of the season.

MITCH JOHNSON: It's important. I really do think it's more of a whole deal in terms of the team. We have to play fast and we've got to share the ball and we've got to make sure we're finding our teammates in the right spots. Again, sometimes that can be from one guy to pass to the next guy to make the play.

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It's not always for you or the next guy that's receiving the ball from you to make the play, and that's tough. These guys are competitive. They are in attack mode at all times.

That has helped us get where we are today, and I think it's a delicate balance at times to want them to be aggressive and on the attack, and then you want them to be perfect and you want to be disciplined and you want them to execute.

We're growing in that area and we'll continue to be better and I'm really excited to see how we come out tonight.

Q. Given the situation, it would be easy for anybody, especially a young team to sort of tighten up and feel the pressure of the moment. Guys seemed pretty loose yesterday. What have you seen around the vibes and the positivity from your guys in the last couple days?

MITCH JOHNSON: Yeah, I think, again, it's the makeup of the group. I think when you single out a lot of the individuals in the group, and if you looked at their history and their basketball past and their personalities and how they are just wired, I guess, it's no surprise.

And again, you still have to go do it. You have to go execute. That doesn't mean that you're going to always get the results you want. But this group is excited for the moment. This group will be ready to go, and if we execute to the level we can, time will tell. But we didn't make it here because we were trying to be perfect or we were worried about how old we were.

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