

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

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San Antonio Spurs

Stephon Castle

Practice Day



have, and it's very useful. We've just got to keep continuing to use it.

Q. Going back to your guys' perfect February, where I think you went 11-0, then you lose that first game in March and break that streak. What do you remember about the feelings of winning so many in a row? Obviously that's what New York is going through right now. Is it humbling? Does it bring you down to earth? What do you remember about that?

STEPHON CASTLE: I remember February we were having a lot of fun playing basketball, and we were just doing all the things right. We were connected on defense, rebounding our misses, getting ourselves extra shots.

I think just us losing that first game, I don't think it was like a humbling experience, but it made us realize that we're not invincible. If we don't do the things we're supposed to, we're still a beatable team.

I think it just kind of gave us a view on how good we are when we do all the right things, and when we play the way we're supposed to and pay close attention to detail, it makes things a lot easier for us.

Yeah, I wouldn't say it was humbling, but it was definitely an eye opener.

Q. You obviously had a lot of success getting to the rim last night. Dylan did also. Do you expect the Knicks to slack off a little bit more, make you shoot from outside? If so, how do you determine, okay, I got an open look here from 3, or this is what they want me to do, should I be doing what I want to do?

STEPHON CASTLE: Regardless, I think just us being aggressive, whether that's taking an open catch-and-shoot 3 or taking up that space and still trying to touch paint. I don't think we've let the defense force us to do anything all year. I feel like they've given us stuff and most of the time we take what they give us.

For the most part, we kind of dictate where we want to go on the court. I think that's a skill that me and him both

Q. You guys have had success on the road in some hostile environments. What is it about this group that allows you to thrive in an atmosphere like Madison Square Garden?

STEPHON CASTLE: I think just our connectivity. Coming into environments like this, you kind of expect it. It's something you can't shy away from, especially with the goals and aspirations that we have for our season. We knew that it was a must-win game.

Yeah, just focus on the things that matter throughout the game and not really paying too close attention to the crowd. They're going to be there regardless, especially cheering on their team. You should want to play in those environments. I feel like that's when we play at our best.

Q. Don't think you've had a three-game losing streak all year. What do you attribute that to? Why is this team kind of able to bounce back?

STEPHON CASTLE: I think our coaches do a good job of explaining why we lost most of the time and what we can do to help ourselves. I think we do a good job just applying it to the game. Whether it looks bad a couple times or it doesn't work out for us the first couple times, but I think just our process and sticking with things, I feel like it's helped us all year.

Yeah, we haven't lost three games in a row all year, but I feel like it's for that exact reason, just us being able to take a loss, look at it and see what we could do better from it and apply it right away.

Q. You've guarded Brunson a really good amount during this series. He and a lot of the Knicks are really, really good late in the shot clock. They don't really panic. They'll make extra passes with like two on the shot clock if they have to. What's the challenge of being able to guard late in the shot clock, and what do you as a defender have to do differently, if anything?

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STEPHON CASTLE: Yeah, just that extra effort really, especially when you're guarding the ball, if we can force them to do something we want them to do. And then having to make that late rotation, whether you're on the ball, if we see an open man, we guard them.

If I'm on the ball and they skip a corner and there's a "one more" and I have to be there, just making that extra effort just gives us that much more of a chance for a stop. So I feel like we emphasized that last night. I thought our rotations were great.

Q. Last night Wemby was saying that after games he needs to kind of rest both physically and mentally before rewatching the game. Kobe famously was kind of like a film nerd and just going at it. What's your process like in between games, and how do you find the balance between kind of like staying focused, studying and also trying to take your mind off of it a little bit?

STEPHON CASTLE: I think right away the mental rest is definitely needed. Today, that's probably when we'll do most of our film. Physically, these are very physical games. Both teams are getting beat up. We're at the end of the year, so everybody is tired at this point of the year. You know, it's no excuse.

Everybody needs to rest. But I think mentally going back and watching the game, whether we had a good game or bad game, I think that little break is definitely helpful.

Q. It seems like you guys played really good defense, like rotation-wise, and then making the Knicks taking difficult shots. Was there any adjustment from the defensive side, especially rotations, being physical on the defensive end?

STEPHON CASTLE: I wouldn't say that's a schematic thing. I feel like it's just an effort thing for us. Like I said earlier, just making that extra effort. When we've got them right where we want them and then they make a good pass late or find an open shooter late, just making that extra effort to try to get a contest. I feel like that's what helped us.

Q. How was the feeling in the locker room after the win last night? And how confident are you guys in going all the way and doing this comeback?

STEPHON CASTLE: I think everybody was feeling good. I didn't want us to get too happy about one win and get satisfied and take our foot off the gas a little bit for the next game. But I think since the end of Game 2 we've still been confident that we're going to win this series, and that's

what we plan to do.

I think we're very connected as a team, and we all want to win. I think that's just the selflessness that runs through our locker room, and it shows every night.

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