

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Friday, June 12, 2026

San Antonio Spurs

Stephon Castle

Practice Day

Q. Your teammate, Harrison Barnes, he was part of the only other Finals series where a team rallied from a 3-1 deficit. He was actually on the losing side of that one. But I'm wondering if he's talked to you a little bit or the team a little bit or given you any advice on what it's like to battle back from a deficit like this?

STEPHON CASTLE: No, he hasn't really talked about that. I feel like his situation was, like you said, the complete opposite.

It's just been really the same kind of common theme throughout the locker room. Obviously him being one of our vets, he's probably one of the first ones to say it. But yeah, it just starts with believing first.

Q. How challenging was it two days after a loss like that? And every game you go into it with a new mentality, but knowing that they could win the title tomorrow on your home floor, how does that change your thinking going into the game?

STEPHON CASTLE: I think our mindset coming into every game is going to be the same. Trying to have short-term memory through wins and losses. I feel like in the way we started the first half, I think if we would have just played like it was 0-0 instead of kind of taking our foot off the gas and acting like we had a lead -- even though we did have a lead, but playing like we had a lead, I feel like that's what sparked their comeback.

So having a short-term memory through the good and the bad, it's what's really helped us all year.

Q. When you look back at the game, you can kind of see the mistakes that were made during their run. But when it happens, how hard is it to kind of like go from you, your teammates, the coach saying what to do or what not to do and then actually stopping their run and doing what you're supposed to do versus kind of letting it happen?



STEPHON CASTLE: I don't think it's that hard to do. I think we did some of the wrong stuff. I think our shot selection wasn't great. But I think it started with our defense. Just going back and watching it, we got let off the hook a lot in the second half. We had some bad defensive possessions, and even though they didn't make the shot so it didn't really feel that bad, I feel like the possession itself was still bad, and it was just a trickle-down effect for the rest of the second half.

They were able to generate a lot of open shots, whether they made them or missed them, and eventually they started to fall for them. I feel like that's how their comeback started.

Q. You hit on this a little while ago. The fact that you guys have been right there in every single game, how do you balance the wiping away of that frustration as you move forward in terms of heading into Game 5?

STEPHON CASTLE: I think just our confidence. We've had a 10-plus point lead in every single game. Just trying to stay poised throughout that and try to keep our foot on the gas really.

I feel like once we get those leads, we start to play a little bit different, take our foot off the gas defensively. I just feel like we have to stay aggressive but be smart through it.

Q. Does the chance to make history, is that important to you guys at all? Obviously winning the title is, but matching the only other team to come back from 3-1, is that something that's talked about that resonates with you guys? Does it matter?

STEPHON CASTLE: Yeah, it definitely matters. I feel like we've made history all year, and we've proven that with our backs against the wall that we can step up. So I don't really expect this to be any different.

Q. How much do you take from those games against the Thunder when the season was on the line twice? And is it hard not to look back with some regret at the opportunities that were missed in these first couple games?



STEPHON CASTLE: Yeah, it's definitely hard looking back at it and thinking about what the series score could be based off self-inflicted mistakes. But the reality of it is we're here now, and it's not too late to fix those mistakes. I think we can do it.

Looking back at the OKC series is a whole different series, whole different game plan, way different team. Just the pressure side of it probably could help us with that series. But I think internally, I feel like just going game to game and taking it a game at a time with this series is going to help us to try to close this out.

Like I said, I think we're pretty confident we can do it. Each game we've been up and pretty much controlled the game for most of the game. So just trying to stay composed and poised through that.

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