

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

Friday, June 12, 2026

New York Knicks

Josh Hart

Practice Day

Q. Statistics are such a big part of basketball. At what point in your playing career did you sort of come to terms with that maybe your game isn't going to be judged on stats alone, and how did you accept that and learn to judge your game that way?

JOSH HART: Probably college. Coach [Jay] Wright did a really good job of emphasizing that competitive will, making the plays that go beyond the box score. I think you see it with a lot of Villanova guys in the league. A lot of them make those kind of plays. They don't show up on the box score.

I think it really started at Nova, and then when you do something for four years, it kind of just sticks with you.

Q. You guys in the closeout games have dominated each time. What goes into that? I think they've had the first quarters each game in the series. What do you need to change there?

JOSH HART: We know they come out with a lot of energy. They've been doing it all playoffs. We've been very up and down with that a lot this year. So we've got to make sure we come in focused with a great attention to detail and taking things a possession at a time.

We know if we do that and we play our style of basketball, we're going to put ourselves in a good position to be successful. But we can't keep getting into a hole and trying to dig ourselves out of a hole.

We were fortunate to do that last game -- actually, all three games, all three of our wins -- but we've got to do a better job of starting games off.

Q. Could we go back to when the Knicks traded for you? You had been with a few different teams. I don't think you had played in the playoffs before. Looking back, could you have imagined it working out the way it has, and what has it been like to kind of establish yourself and be in the same place and kind of have an



actual home?

JOSH HART: Yeah, I've been in the league for nine years. I've always talked about I had a lot of instability in those -- before I got here, those 6 1/2 years or whatever it was, I had six head coaches, three different teams at that time.

So I was just kind of looking for a home and stability, and I found that in New York, obviously first with Thibs and now with Mike. I think the city really embraced me, my style of play, me as a person. When you do that, you feel like you're able to go out there and play your best.

This city is built on toughness, grit, blue-collar people, and I feel like I'm the same person. They can look in the mirror and they can see myself, just because that's how I look at myself and I just happen to hoop.

That stability and home in New York, it's been amazing. Hopefully we can keep it going.

Q. [Question from the Charlotte Hornets' Kon Knueppel.] One of the big things that I've seen in this series watching is offensive rebounding, especially from the guards and wings from both teams. Obviously with our preparation in the season, that's a big emphasis when we play you guys. You play a big role in that. Could you kind of just speak to what you guys preach, what Coach Brown preaches about the offensive glass?

JOSH HART: You played basketball for a long time, and you know that sometimes you can get the cleanest looks for your best shooters off offensive rebounds. So if you're able to punish teams on the offensive glass, get extra possessions, change momentum, that's something that's huge.

I think for us, besides really JB and Jose and Deuce, a lot of us are kind of taller, athletic wings, strong wings, OG, Mikal, myself. Obviously Mitch is amazing at offensive rebounds. When you're able to do that and get extra possessions, it increases your chance to win. It also helps negate teams like y'all that play extremely fast and kill teams in transition. So there's a way to combat that and also a way to get clean looks.

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Q. I've never seen a locker room with this level of togetherness, friendship, camaraderie as the Knicks' locker room. You are comfortable playing together but have fun doing it. How crucial of a factor has it been for this incredible playoff run?

JOSH HART: Oh, man, it's been invaluable. I think you can look at the play, I missed the layup last game. I miss, and we come down and foul Wemby. I think I fouled him or KAT fouled him or whatever, and I ended up on the ground. I was frustrated and kind of down on myself. You see JB, KAT, Jose run up to me and pick me up. You see Landry on the bench yelling at me to get up and those kinds of things.

When you have a team that has that kind of togetherness in the most adverse situations, that breeds championship habits and a championship team. I feel like we can go down the line of every guy in that locker room that has had moments like that during the season, and everyone has been there to pick each other up. When you have a team that can do that, no matter what happens in a game, you feel like you can get through it.

Q. When your opponent goes on a big run like they did in the first half, what makes it so hard for you as a team to get back to executing the game plan when your head is under water like that?

JOSH HART: Honestly, I think it gets a little easier to focus on the game plan because most of the time when you dig yourself into that hole, you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing. You're not doing what the game plan is, and you don't have that attention to detail.

So it allows you to stop and reset for a second and double down on doing -- having that focus and having that attention to detail, because for us having that focus and attention to detail has got us to this point, and you can't lose it. Sometimes you lose it for spurts or a quarter or something like that, but good teams are able to kind of get back and steady themselves, steady the ship and get back to doing what they do.

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