

NBA Finals: Knicks vs. Spurs

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New York Knicks

Mike Brown

Practice Day

Q. Obviously you guys have had pretty convincing success in closeout opportunities this year, all on the road, all obviously blowouts. What has been the common trend? What makes this group lock in at a level that we just don't see very often?

MIKE BROWN: Their level of maturity. Obviously, we have some veteran guys on the team. But you can be a veteran and still have a little bit of immaturity about you, as we all know.

From top to bottom, this group is pretty mature, even though a lot of them are veteran guys. That rubs off on the rest of the group. It makes my job easier. We've been preaching all year it's about the next possession, the next possession, the next possession. We understand anytime you try to play a closeout game, the level of desperation for your opponents increases, the level of desperation for the fans of your opponents is increased. You have to bring your best effort because even if you bring your best effort, it may not happen, especially on the road. That's the only way you have a chance for it to happen.

Q. You have won two here, obviously came back in one of the biggest games ever. You still need one. How is the process mentally to stay focused on the goal?

MIKE BROWN: The biggest thing is everybody has to stay present. You have to be present. You can't think about the outcome. It's about the process, the next play, the next play, the next play.

Sometimes you can think about the process, and it not work out. But when you're playing against other great teams especially, that's how you have to take it because anybody's mind can start wandering when you think about the outcome.

Q. You were talking about how mature of a group you have. How much has your guys' maturity and experience level played a factor in this series,



especially late in games?

MIKE BROWN: Not just this series, but our whole Playoff run. There were times when we had our backs against the wall. There was really no panic. There was no panic from ownership, from Leon, from the staff, all the way down through the players.

A lot of it starts with the players. They've been great at trusting or continuing to believe in the process, in each other, while we kept trying to find ways to help them out.

It's no different with this series. San Antonio is a great team. You just got to try to find a way. You got to try to find a way, whether it's by one point, a half a point, if they give half a point, or 10 points.

Our guys are trying to continue to do that.

Q. You've talked so many times over the course of this postseason about you need to stay desperate, that 0-0 mentality. Is getting back to that place harder after as emotional a game as Game 4 was with the highs and the lows? Is it harder to get back to zero after a game like that?

MIKE BROWN: It is hard. We're all human. It was hard even in the series that we swept. You win two, three, four, five games in a row, there's a tendency to relax a little bit. That's just in life. In your job, you have success for 10 months straight, maybe you feel like, I got this, I know what I'm doing [smiling]. You're not as sharp then because everybody's been patting you on your back and telling you how great you are.

Trying to manufacture things to help guys lock in, trying to talk to guys individually so they can continue to talk to their teammates to lock in, all that stuff is huge.

Having Pat's presence around, Pat Ewing, so he can talk to guys to help them lock in from a different vantage point is all huge especially during this time and coming off a win like we did last time.

Q. You've coached a lot of superstars, like the biggest names in the game. How do you feel for a guy like

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Landry Shamet who has been through the journeyman life, all these teams, he gets to the moment and he's ready for it? What does that guy do for you as a coach?

MIKE BROWN: I tell you what, this for me, I'm speaking me personally, that's the best feeling in the world to see somebody that deserves an opportunity and maybe gets passed over, passed over, passed over. Now, on one of the biggest stages in the game of his craft, he steps up, he shows the world I can do this.

I mean, it makes you feel really, really good to see that because he went and he earned it. You have a lot of role models in life. You have a lot of things that you look up to in life. You can take a guy like Landry Shamet's story as a young player, or even somebody in the work field on another job, and just understand you might get passed up for that promotion six straight times, but if you stay with it, stay with it, believe, believe, grind, grind, now when that opportunity's there, and the right situation is there for you, it's time for you to shine.

That's what he's doing and that's what I love more than anything. It's bigger than basketball, looking at his story. It's a great life lesson from many others.

Q. The environment the other night with that game, it felt like you guys won the title. How do you make sure that your group doesn't let up when you had that kind of an experience? The Finals 3-1 comeback has only happened once. It's been 15 times historically; it's not the type of thing that never happens. How do you make sure your group doesn't change the way that they attack this thing?

MIKE BROWN: One thing is this: The only thing you can 100% make sure of is - I hate to be graphic, gruesome, pessimistic - I had this conversation with one of my sons the other day, that everybody is going to pass at one day. I can't 100% say this is what I'm going to do to make them not have the hangover from the win two nights ago.

The biggest thing is continuing to preach 0-0, continuing to preach stay present, continuing to preach next possession, next possession, next possession, and hope the experiences they've gone through as a group already, and their maturity, as well as our standards, which they really hung onto all year, will help us lock into this game.

It's going to be hard. San Antonio's a great team. They're desperate. I still think they believe. It's going to be hard for us. But it's natural for that to creep in a little bit. You just hope that it doesn't creep in too long throughout the course of the game.

Q. You obviously have been a coach in this league a long time. Leon Rose before he came here was a long-time agent. What has stood out to you about his approach as an executive, team president?

MIKE BROWN: Hasn't changed, man. Leon's one of the best dudes I've ever been around. I'll throw out the agent, throw out the president, I'm just talking pure human being.

When I was a coach in Cleveland, his son Sam was playing for a high school up in New Jersey. I'll never forget. We were going to go play the New Jersey Nets. He asked if I could go speak to his son's team. Normally I wouldn't do that. When he asked me, just because of the interactions...

We weren't tight, we weren't best friends, but the interactions we had, there was something there for me. I had zero clue he'd be president and we'd be working together someday. Just because who he was as a human being, I was like, yeah.

So on a day off, I jumped in a car, went and spoke to his son's team, that was that. Now you fast forward and we're here together and he's been an absolute, no matter what happens going forward, I don't care what happens going forward, he's been an absolute joy to work with.

His family's been great. His wife, my wife, they get along fantastic. That synergy between me and him, our two wives, it helped the whole organization align horizontally and vertically. That's what you have to have in these situations, especially when things get tough. He's not going to waver.

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