

NBA Western Conference Finals: Lakers vs. Nuggets

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Rui Hachimura

Los Angeles Lakers

Game 1: Postgame

Denver Nuggets 132, Los Angeles Lakers 126

Q. Rui, Austin was talking about the lineup there with you and LeBron and AD. What did you notice there about how your size impacts that group and your focus when you're having to defend Jokic?

RUI HACHIMURA: Yeah, I feel like for this series, it's different than last series when we were playing against Golden State. They are very small and quick and there are a lot of shooters. But this series, they are almost like -- the point guard is 6-6 and everybody is like 6-10 and 6-8, so just got to, you know, I think for that lineup that you just said, that's going to be good for us. And it was our first game, too, so you know, we're just still feeling the games and everything.

But yeah, I like the lineup for sure.

Q. Typically on you defending Jokic, what's key there? Obviously he was incredible the first three quarters especially.

RUI HACHIMURA: Yeah, I was just trying to get in his knee. It was -- it was a part of our game plan and then we talk about it before the game. You know, I'm going to -- they told me -- the coaches told me that I'm going to guard Jokic, too.

I think it was a good plan, and I think the second half, I think we did a pretty good job on him. So yeah, I think yeah, we've got to watch the film again tomorrow and we're going to come back next game.

Q. So you said you were prepped for this matchup by the coaching staff. How did it meet your expectations or versus how you prepared for being in it?

RUI HACHIMURA: I'm ready. I'm always ready. Like I said, the last series was a little different. It wasn't really -- there wasn't really an opportunity for me. I was ready for this moment, and I just have to -- I've been watching the



film for them, and yeah, I think it's going to be big for me this series because, like I said, they are very big, and we need the size. I think it's going to be a good one.

Q. What do you feel like was the key to the second half comeback, particularly in the fourth quarter?

RUI HACHIMURA: I feel like just the effort and energy, it was different. The first half, we were just kind of running around.

The second half, we came back. You know, we had a good energy. I think the difference, we had a couple good stops and we are running the fastbreak, and I think the first -- I think the first half we gave up like a 17 fastbreak [points] and second half we only gave up two points or something. So that was the game, and you know, our first half wasn't enough.

Q. I know there's no moral victories, but when you put your head on the pillow tonight what will you think in your mind to take away from this game to apply to the next game?

RUI HACHIMURA: After the game, we talk about, you know, the series. We have to -- we need every possession. Every possession matters. Like I just said, in the first half, we were kind of, you know, joking around, like it wasn't enough for us. We can't just be messing around with them. Next game, we have to go from the beginning, and like we just played like the second half like that. We just got to start like that the next game.

Q. You mentioned the size that Denver has, but it seems like when Jokic is sitting, they go a little bit smaller. Do you feel like there's an advantage there for you to use some of your physicality and get in a scoring rhythm.

RUI HACHIMURA: They are still big. AG is 6-10. Michael Porter is 6-10. It's not going to make any difference. But of course, you know, like Jokic is the one doing everything for the team.

So just got to -- like you just said, of course we have to take our advantage for the lineup. But also, the size advantage is good, too. We just have to be on top of it. Yeah, we've just got to watch the film tomorrow and figure



it out.

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