

NBA Western Conference Finals: Lakers vs. Nuggets

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Austin Reaves

Los Angeles Lakers

Game 1: Postgame

Denver Nuggets 132, Los Angeles Lakers 126

Q. Austin, what's the balance between your frustration from the way the game started, the loss and finding some encouragement with making it a game and having a chance to tie this in the final minutes?

AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, I mean, obviously never want to lose. First half was really ugly to say the least. But like you said, we got it going in the second half and really just played harder. It was the common denominator at the end of everything was we went out and competed in the second half and gave ourselves a chance. Like I said, never want to lose, but this is a series for a reason.

Q. What did you feel like was a key adjustment besides continue playing harder in the second half?

AUSTIN REAVES: I feel like we played, you know, kind of similar. We didn't really change much. Like I said, I mean, I really think it was just effort and got some shots to fall from three which helped a lot.

I didn't think we really changed that much other than really energy.

Q. As someone who takes pride in your basketball IQ and skill set, as an opponent, what was it like going up against Jokic tonight?

AUSTIN REAVES: He's really good. Obviously won the MVP two years in a row. He just makes everybody on his team, you know, better. Like he's the epitome of being a really good star that helps others.

So, hats off to him but like I said, this is a series and we're going to battle.

Q. Out of the pick-and-roll, what was working with those actions and do you feel like it's something that can help you in Game 2?



AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, obviously it worked, and I think it just gives us an action to use, when you have a guy like Bron, you've got to -- if the guard that's guarding me or whoever sets the screen has got to honor whatever he's about to do for obvious reasons, because it's Bron.

So, I think it's really just an action to get them kind of a step behind, and then whatever happens after that, a play out of close-outs or a shot or a swing or whatever it is. So I think it was good for us tonight.

Q. What did you think about their tough shot-making in the second half? Obviously, you guys were able to weather some of it, but can you speak about the difficulty, Porter in the corner, and Jokic at the end of the third? I saw you just laughed.

AUSTIN REAVES: That's all you really can do. They are good. Jamal made one over Bron. Jokic over AD. Like you said, Porter over me in the corner.

But they are really good players for those reasons. They make shots like that. But like you said, we weathered the storm. I remember we went to the bench, I think it was 6:06 in third, and I think we had scored 18 points and they had scored 20. So obviously scoring wasn't the issue for either team. So we've just got to take a little bit more pride on the defensive end and figure it out.

Q. Lots has been made about Jokic's game tonight but how important was it for AD to score like he was doing, and how big was it, especially in the first three quarters where he was keeping you guys within striking distance to make that comeback?

AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, AD is a top-five talent in the NBA for those reasons right there. When you're not playing well, he can weather the storm by himself. But that's, honestly, for me, I expect it from AD, you know, seeing him every day, the work he puts in, just the skill set that he has. I believe he can do that every night.

Q. Just wonder how in that closing lineup that you had tonight, Rui in there just makes it a little bit different size-wise, how that impacts your matchup and the fact that he's able to guard Jokic and have AD off the ball?



AUSTIN REAVES: Early in the first half, we were getting out-rebounded. AD would go try to block a shot or contest a shot, and you know, as much as I tried, me boxing out Jokic is not an easy task.

So, just gives us a little bit more size to kind of play a couple different ways and keep AD to where he can go block shots as well as rebound.

I like what we've seen from that group.

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