

NBA Western Conference Finals: Lakers vs. Nuggets

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Austin Reaves

Los Angeles Lakers

Game 2: Postgame

Nuggets 108, Lakers 103

Q. What do you think the physical challenge has been these two games where the last game you talked about the energy and effort early and not being there. Seemed like it was there tonight. Where did you feel like that, how that second half ended up making a difference?

AUSTIN REAVES: Tonight or last game?

Q. Tonight.

AUSTIN REAVES: Oh, I mean I think there was four possessions in a row where they hit four threes. Couple of them were really contested and I think a couple of them were kind of defense breakdowns. But tip your hat. They made shots when they needed to.

Q. What's the defensive difficulty I suppose of trying to make sure you're staying with Jokic as a team and then also get out to the ball screens and limit what the threes are? How do you guys play that?

AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, I mean Jokic, like I said last night, is or two nights ago, he's so good at making everybody around him up to their potential. He gets the max out of every player he has just by the way he demands everybody's focus, the way he can pass the ball. I mean, I thought for the most part we defended, besides a couple of those possessions where they got a couple threes. But like I said, tip your hat off and move on.

Q. Did it feel like there was an opportunity or that maybe there were points left on the court in the first quarter when defensively you guys had them pretty locked up, you guys were getting to the line, but I think still only up five at halftime after having some opportunities?

AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, I mean, it's the game. I'm sure you could go ask the same question to their guys and they



would say the same thing. Yeah, there's always things that you could do better to build on a lead or sustain a lead. But we competed tonight. Like I said, there was a couple breakdowns, but, yeah, no, there's always in every game, situations where you look back and think if we did this instead of this we could have had a six-point lead or an eight-point lead. But this is just the nature of all sports, those things happen.

Q. Coach was saying that the challenge now is not to get down. From a mental and emotional standpoint what is the challenge for you that you guys have there?

AUSTIN REAVES: Don't get down. I mean, Denver's the one seed for a reason. They're a really good basketball team and quote, unquote they did what they were supposed to do here. Obviously, we don't love that, we wish we could have got one, two, whatever. But it's time for us to lock in on Game 3, see what we did in this game, last game that worked, didn't work, areas that we could get better, watch film and like just move on. Can't, I mean, I wish you could win them all, but it's not the nature of any sport.

Q. You guys don't get here without LeBron and AD. How do you as a group kind of process them both struggling from the field down the stretch in the same game?

AUSTIN REAVES: Like you said, who knows where we would be without them. Yeah, you could look at the stat sheet and look at the fourth quarter and be like, well, Bron missed a layup when he got the steal or had some turnovers, same for AD. But I guarantee you if you ask any coach in any basketball if you wanted those two on their team they would take them in a heartbeat. So, it's just, it's basketball. It's all sports. You have good days, you have not so good days and you wake up the next morning and have a great day.

Q. What did you think of the job that LeBron did on Jokic and just kind of that adjustment of throwing kind of another body after, obviously, the Rui adjustment got a lot of attention last game?

AUSTIN REAVES: Oh, I think Bron was really effective guarding him, just because of I think his IQ helped because



he was very handsy, got a couple deflections on a couple passes that led into transition. Yeah, I mean, he did good and we'll look and see if we can do that a little more or whatever.

Q. After a loss like this one, you lost two close ones and the recovery has to be fast because the next game is in two days. Do you do something special just like to recover for the next game, to think for something new and to forget about like all those losses like this one?

AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, I mean, if I had time to go golf, I would go golf. Probably play the game tonight. Obviously stay on top of hydration, all the recovery stuff we can do. Our medical staff is great, connect with them on what you can just do to prepare yourself, get better for the next game. But, yeah, I mean everybody needs a little mental get away because we do this so much. But at the end of the day, you're always still locked in on the next challenge, the next game. So yeah, I mean obviously it sucks we lost, but things you can learn from this.

Q. LeBron, obviously 0-10 from three over the last first two games of the series. Does that give you guys confidence knowing that there's probably a good chance that he's not going to have that stretch again in these playoffs?

AUSTIN REAVES: Yeah, I mean, he can shoot all he wants. It's LeBron James. I don't think anybody bats an eye when he shoots a shot or questions his shot. So, yeah, we want him taking whatever he feels comfortable with, just because he's a winning basketball player for his whole career and that's all he wants to do, he wants to win.

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