

# NBA Western Conference Finals: Lakers vs. Nuggets

Thursday, May 18, 2023

## Nikola Jokic

Denver Nuggets

Game 2: Postgame

Nuggets 108, Lakers 103

**Q. You've always said Jamal is a leader, a superstar. You've always been his biggest champion. How would you describe what you saw him do tonight?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: He was special. He was special. He won us the game. He scored 20-something in the fourth quarter. He got us the lead, his energy. He played 40 something -- 42 minutes.

I think he was amazing. Yes, maybe in the first half he struggled to make shots, but when it mattered the most, he made shots and he won us the game basically.

**Q. Nikola, Michael Malone said obviously after Game 1 even though you guys won, everybody was talking about the Lakers and not you guys and not your historic performance or the fact that you're averaging triple doubles. What has been your perspective on all that?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: This is the last -- since we make the Playoffs it's like that, so it's nothing new for us. To be honest, I like it. We don't care, whatever.

Even if you remember, even in the bubble when we beat Utah, they were talking how they blow the lead. When we beat the Clippers, how they blow the lead. Nobody talk about how we won the game.

It's normal for us. To be honest, I don't pay attention at all.

**Q. Talk about what Bruce did tonight off the bench a little bit.**

NIKOLA JOKIC: Yeah. Not just tonight. He made a big three in transition. It was 4-on-3 or 5-on-4 or something. He made a big three in transition.

His defense, his energy, it's not just today. He is doing that since he came here, the whole year. Obviously he can



pick up the guys, he can guard multiple positions. Even maybe he's smaller, but he's tough, he's fighting. It's good to have him on our team.

**Q. Rumor has it you got the defensive player of the game chain tonight. What was working that you were doing on Anthony Davis and challenging his shots?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: I mean, to be honest, it's not just me. I have a backup behind me and I have a guy kind of next to me, so it's not just my defensive chain. It's supposed to go to everybody.

I think our defense, especially in the fourth quarter -- I mean, completely two different games. We scored 100 points, and last game was 130 points. It was kind of a little bit ugly game, if that makes any sense. But it's not just me, it's everybody.

**Q. Nikola, do you believe that to be a great competitor you need to go through the greatest competitors, and what do you think of the Lakers' performance tonight?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: I think they're a great team. I think everybody is kind of, okay, they beat Memphis. I think people are overlooking them. I think they're a great team. They have a lot of good pieces, a lot of good pieces. They are tall as a team. Okay, they have Reaves or D'Angelo or Schröder. But they are big, tall, they are long. In gaps they can rebound really well. Rui is playing really nice for them off the bench.

I think they have a good team, and they are great -- how do you say? Competitors? Competitors, yes. They have LeBron, who is probably the fiercest competitors in the league.

**Q. You guys had some early foul trouble with some of the guys. Some of the lineup stuff was unusual. You started the fourth quarter. Did that just sort of throw off the balance of anything? How did you guys fight through all that tonight?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: I mean, I think it was a must-win game for us. It's the Playoffs. Coach looked at me and I said I was ready to go. There was a big break between the third quarter and fourth quarter, basically eight minutes or ten-minute break, so I felt like I can go a little bit longer.



Yeah, you're just trying something just to change rhythm, change whatever. Maybe they're going to think, oh, what are they going to do now? So you're just trying to mess up their game.

**Q. As you guys go to L.A. now, what's the message? This core really hasn't been at a Conference Finals on the road; before it was in the bubble, so what's the message now?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: I mean, we're going to go there, try to play the same way, try to be aggressive, try to push them off their spots, try to be into the body. We're going to try to make the game our way.

Yes, we go through foul trouble early. But that's how we play. I think at the beginning of the Playoffs, that's how the Playoffs should play. So we will see.

**Q. Obviously your humility is very well-known, but if I may follow up on what you said earlier, why do you like it that the narrative is not around you guys?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: I mean, we don't need it. We don't need the media attention. We don't need this, they're playing really well. We don't need that. We're going to go out there and try to win the game. We're going to be quiet. We're not going to not talk about it. Maybe some guys will (laughter), but I think in general, we don't need talking trash. We don't need that.

**Q. Is there anything anybody should know about you?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: I don't know.

**Q. Similarly to the Phoenix series, you mentioned this game was much different than Game 1 in the way you guys won. How much confidence do you have in your team that you can win in a variety of different ways and find a way to get it done?**

NIKOLA JOKIC: Yes, I think it was the same. The first game against Phoenix was a lot of points, and then second was 80-something, 90-something.

We are confident we saw everything. We were in every situation during this Playoffs and this season. Then when you think about the last couple Playoffs, we've been through a lot of situations. I think we're really calm and we know how to get the shots that we want.

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