

NBA Western Conference Finals: Lakers vs. Nuggets

Monday, May 22, 2023

Austin Reaves

Los Angeles Lakers

Game 4: Postgame

Denver Nuggets 113, Los Angeles Lakers 111

Q. Austin, what do you feel like you've learned throughout the season, the playoff run and games like tonight that you can try to apply moving forward in your career?

AUSTIN REAVES: Oh, man, I learned a lot. First and foremost, just never give up on the process. 2-10 at the [start] of the year. Had a lot of downs obviously; the last two months, three months have been ups. That's the first thing is just really believing in yourself and what you have as a team and that will go a long way.

And other than that, it's really just how to be a pro, how to handle yourself on and off the court and really just embrace, you know, what we are doing. Like I've mentioned many times, we get to play basketball for a living and never taking that for granted because there's rough times. Obviously right now, sucks, but like I said, you can never take any of this for granted.

I mean, I was just in the Western Conference Finals. If you would have told me that when I was 15 years old, I'd have looked at you like I'd seen a ghost.

Really, a lot of lessons learned and hopefully I can implement that to my life and career and move forward.

Q. What would you have said if I told you you were going to be in the Western Conference Finals on February 1 this year?

AUSTIN REAVES: Was that the trade deadline?

Q. Just before the trade deadline.

AUSTIN REAVES: As a competitor, you never want to not think that you can't do something. You've always got to have that -- regardless of circumstances. I think, you know, even before the trade deadline, you know, there was always, if we could get, you know, a couple things going,



then we could have made a run.

But then you obviously make trades and bring in the guys that you brought in and their demeanors and skill set that fit really well with what we had. It just meshed.

Western Conference Finals is something probably before I made it to the NBA never really thought I would accomplish.

Q. Where do you think tonight turned for you, and what can you say about the Nuggets as an opponent as they move on to their first Finals appearance in franchise history?

AUSTIN REAVES: They are really good. They are nothing short of a really, really, really good basketball team. They don't have holes in their system. They are not missing anything. You've got two guys, you've got Jamal and you've got Jokic.

And then you have, literally, if you can hand-pick a team as far as, like, system, fit, you know, you've got a cutter in Gordon and you've got guys that can really shoot the ball and then you've got, not dirty players but do the dirty work stuff; Bruce Brown, Jeff Green, and then you even go to their bench, and it's just a really good basketball team all in all.

But they were the better team in the four games we played this series and wish them nothing but the best.

Q. As you look ahead to the offseason, is there something you're looking at in terms of what you want to work on with your game, an area of improvement or continued growth?

AUSTIN REAVES: Continued growth. Hopefully my golf swing gets better. I'll be in the gym as well.

Just I love the game. I love working. Me and Phil [Handy] spent a lot of time together. Me and Zack Gonzales spent a lot of time together in the gym just getting better, and I'm open to anything. If you want to tell me I need to work on dribbling, shooting, passing, defense, I'm open to anything.

So, it's really just a summer to take care of my body first. This has been the most games I've played my whole life in



like a season form. So taking care of my body and really just getting back to work and look to improving every aspect.

Q. I know you say as a competitor, you always want to believe that you can accomplish anything but throughout this playoff run, performing as consistently as you did, did you prove something to yourself that you might not have known you had in you?

AUSTIN REAVES: I mean, yeah. Like I said, I never really thought I would be in this position or -- I probably believed it but not -- there's two, probably three people in the world thought that I would be in this position and contribute. And honestly, I'm just proud of myself.

There's been a lot of times playing basketball where I didn't think that I would, you know, go to the next level. High school, didn't have many offers. Got the opportunity to go to Wichita State and then move up to higher, bigger program, and then didn't have, you know, much buzz coming out of college, so didn't know if I would be overseas or be in the NBA.

To be on this stage and perform feels good and I'm proud of myself.

Q. Obviously disappointment is the overwhelming feeling right now, but how much has this experience whetted your appetite to get back here and even get to the next stage?

AUSTIN REAVES: A lot. I mean, I said it to Bron after, I think it was Game 3 or 4 of the Memphis series and was just like, this is the most fun playing basketball I've had, just the group of guys that we've had, the level that we've played at, and me being a competitor, obviously I want to get back to this stage and even further and win the Championship, because you know, I know -- I don't know, but I know that there's no better feeling than that, just talking with Bron, AD, guys that's won championships.

There's no better feeling than that, so hopefully one day I can feel that.

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