

NBA Western Conference Finals: Lakers vs. Nuggets

Monday, May 22, 2023

Jamal Murray

Denver Nuggets

Game 4: Postgame

Denver Nuggets 113, Los Angeles Lakers 111

Q. Can you talk about that last play? What was going through your mind on that last play?

JAMAL MURRAY: I was guarding Rui. He set a screen for Bron. AG chased him and I just kind of had to be there, knowing that help would be behind me.

Then I kind of caught his drive at the end. I could get the ball, and I just put two hands on it and didn't let him get off a good shot.

Q. I know this is just a step before the ultimate goal, but never swept a team, this franchise had never had advanced past the Lakers, never had made it to the NBA Finals. What does it mean to be a page in this story?

JAMAL MURRAY: It's incredible. It's a lot of fun. It's surreal. I know we're going to keep making history. That's the thing. We want to keep that mindset and enjoy the moment. But we've got more work to do, so that's the mindset right now.

Q. What were some of the things that you guys tried to do with LeBron? This was one of the games where he just kind of had that kind of impactful force that he just kind of historically has. What did you guys say? What was the dialogue between yourselves just as the game was going on in terms of just trying to weather that storm?

JAMAL MURRAY: I mean, first half was great for him, and then he started finding everybody in the second half, found shooters. Shooters being aggressive. Reeves made a couple big shots. They kept the pressure on us with not just guarding Bron, but having to guard everybody in action.

Yeah, we knew they were going to come out aggressive, though. It's less about that and more about us weathering



the storm and staying with each other. We were down 15 at half, and came in the third quarter ready to play and ready to take the lead, I think. It was just a great team effort all around. Everybody came in and stepped up.

Q. Going back to start the series, LeBron had been trying to seek you out on those switches and trying to manipulate the game that way. Did you have a feeling that that was going to be the play that they tried to run on the last play? Were you kind of prepared for that?

JAMAL MURRAY: We didn't know what the last play was going to be. In the first game, I was in foul trouble. It's tough to guard LeBron with foul trouble. We switched, mixed it up during the series, showing and switching. At the end of the play I just saw AG was a little late, and I kind of remembered that play against Indiana when he went up for the left-handed layup. So I wasn't going to let him have a good angle. At least give AG the time to get back and get a contest.

Q. A lot of conversation about defense the last few questions, rightfully so considering how the second half went, for those that have been around Michael Malone know he's preached about defense for a long, long time. And to see you guys buy in the way you did in the second half, do you feel like that almost embodies kind of what the last few years have been in regards to working, and you talk about the teamwork and knowing what's ahead. Did the second half, specifically the last play, embody Denver Nuggets basketball through and through on defense?

JAMAL MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, in the first half it was too easy for them. They were playing like they were down and they were playing like they were playing for their life, and we were just not as aggressive or as physical or as desperate as them. I just feel like we came in in the third quarter and got some stops, but we also got on a run and made some shots. I could name a lot of guys. KCP got us going, Jok, AG was battling down there the whole game.

It was everybody. It wasn't just defense; it was offense, as well. We needed to score to keep up with them the way they were playing. They were playing at a fast pace and they were getting to the free-throw line. I think we did a good job of just staying with it and locking down on both ends.



Q. Jamal, when you think back on the last seven years of your career, the journey to get to this point with this team and this franchise, what comes to mind for you?

JAMAL MURRAY: Yeah, it's just been amazing to be -- especially with the core guys that we've had here since the beginning. What we've been building, since Gary, since Paul, Monte, all the guys that had the culture embodied, and to have this team and see everybody come together, especially with eight new guys that came in at the beginning of the season. Took us a little bit to find our rhythm, but once we knew what everybody was going to do and the way we played, we just clicked.

It's been a journey. It's been nice to finally reach this point and to just be the first team in Nuggets history to do it.

Q. Nikola just set a playoff record for most triple-doubles in NBA playoff history, surpassing Wilt. Can you describe what you've seen from him throughout this Playoffs?

JAMAL MURRAY: I think it's self-explanatory, brother. If you're watching the game, he's doing some incredible stuff. 45 minutes while in foul trouble, 30, 14 and 13, that's decent. That's decent. To do that in a close-out game, and he's been doing it all Playoffs. Just staying consistent no matter what they throw at him: double teams, single coverage, help from the baseline, from the top, traps. He's been figuring out it all and just being that consistent motor for us. Not just on offense but on defense, as well, grabbing boards every game. No matter what he's doing on offense, he's grabbing boards and pushing the pace. You just need to watch a game and you'll know how much he contributes for us.

Q. AG has kind of been the unsung hero I think in a way of this playoff run. He's guarded stars pretty much every single round. What did you see from him tonight?

JAMAL MURRAY: Just staying with it. I thought in the second half he came out and grabbed some boards, was physical. Even if he didn't get the ball, he made an impact or a play on it. Made some big threes down the stretch. He was locked in.

He's kind of been doing that every game since the Playoffs started, just going under the radar. But he's such a big piece for us. I don't even know what to say about him.

He's done all the little things that a lot of guys don't do, especially his position, and making timely, timely buckets and timely rebounds and getting timely stops, things that

you don't see in the stat sheet. It's communication on the court, keeping everybody together and just trying to keep him on the matchup as he keeps doing a great job of just embracing the defensive part of the game.

Q. You've talked about growing up on the playground dreaming of big moments of you on the court, and you know the history of this game, the great ones that have come before you. As prolific of a duo as you and Jokic have been, what does reaching the NBA Finals mean for you two?

JAMAL MURRAY: We just want to make the most of the opportunity. First Nuggets team to do that. We want to go all the way and stay locked in. I think our chemistry is at an all-time high, the way we play, the way we read the game without even speaking. We talk that language on the court.

It's just beautiful basketball, honestly. It's so fun to play with this team and with him and with the coaching staff that has groomed us into the team that we are.

We've got four more wins to go.

Q. Jamal, how would you say your defense on LeBron there on that last play exemplifies the mindset and attitude of this team?

JAMAL MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, we needed a stop. We needed a stop. They went for a two. I knew they didn't have much time, so I just came over. AG was still trailing. Yoked up my man. He was kind of right there in the middle playing him, and then I kind of committed to it. I knew I couldn't half-ass it, so I had to go for the ball. I was able to grab all ball and just not let him get a good shot.

We work on those scenarios in practice and all that. I think we did a good job of just locking down for the four seconds that were remaining.

Q. I know that your journey back has been well-documented over the course of this year. Is there a moment that you can think back on maybe during this season thinking, okay, I know I'm back at this level, it's just about time now getting back to the Playoffs eventually?

JAMAL MURRAY: Honestly, I'm not thinking of it like that. I'm not thinking about whether I'm back or not. I've been back since the day I came back. It's just about trending in the right direction and continuously getting better.

I had some ups and downs during the season, some sore days where I couldn't play, and those sucked. Played my



first back-to-back in January or something like that. It's just been trending. Every month I feel my knee get better and more solid and more consistent in the way it's going to feel. Wo just to be here and be playing this many minutes at this time has been -- we've prepared for this.

I'm just glad I put the work in during the rehab to be able to perform and be at my best.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.