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| At the end of the day, we're all a brotherhood. NBA is a brotherhood, and you never want anyone to get injured, even in combat. So that's what went through my mind. Obviously, I love competing versus anybody who loves to compete as well. He's one of those guys that was competing throughout the night, throughout the postseason. I'm not sure the severity of the injury right now. But I hope he has a recovery, whatever it is. You just don't want nobody to get hurt like that. I've been fortunate enough to play with some shooters to help spread the floor for myself and what I do best, and that's being in attack mode. To be able to play with one of the all time greats in Ray Allen, and also play with Mike Miller and Shane Battier and James Jones still, and then you get a guy like J.R. Smith, who's able just to shoot the ball and have the extreme confidence that every time they let it go, that it's going in. I've been blessed to play with guys like that. When you have guys like that, you have to utilize them while they're on the floor. Coach drew up a play, and we just try to run it to perfection. He drew up a play, and Double T came up and set a screen and roll. I was able to get to the middle of the floor. The ability, the way we were shooting the three ball tonight, kind of kept those last two defenders at bay, and I was able just to turn the lane and make a big play for our team at that time. Get him here, and I'll take care of it. Yeah, I got him. You get him here, I got him. Yeah, I got him . We have a great coaching staff, first of all, that gives us a game plan. We kind of, throughout these six days, we've kind of been balancing ways we can try to not stop what they do, but just try to limit some of their touches, limit some of Kyle Korver's touches and some of their other three point shooters. We're the number one defensive team in the playoffs, and it has a lot to do with when we go out, as a coaching staff, they give us the game plan. And for us as players, we go out and execute it. For us to win ultimately, we have to defend. Tonight we shot 44 percent from the field, but we defended. We gave ourselves a chance. When you defend at a high level, you give yourself a chance to win every night. Me and J.R.'s history go back long before he came into the NBA. Before he came into the NBA, he came to my hometown, and we worked out multiple days, multiple times. For me, as a leader of a team, you always just want to try to give someone an opportunity. With the talent this guy presents, I knew the man he was, and I didn't really care about what everybody else thought about him. Obviously, our front office, they have the last say so, and for me, they have the last say so, but when they made it and said they were going to do it, I was definitely all for it. I felt like, for me, we were getting a great piece, not only on the floor, but off the floor, as well, because I'd known him before he even got to this point. To answer your second question, to be able just to make plays to help your team win is all that matters for me. We have a guy like this that was shooting the ball extremely well, who broke the game open, but also the contributions from Delly off the bench again, and the two bigs, both of them having double doubles. That was big time. Like you said, in the third quarter, I went to contest DeMarre Carroll's three point attempt, and the cameraman, I guess his foot was out further than it should be, but I stepped on his foot and turned my ankle. I'm happy that it didn't cost me the rest of the game. I was able to go out there and make a few plays. I think, to answer your second question, we can't worry about how many points we're up or how many points we're down; we have to continue to play our game. It starts with me. I take all the responsibility for it. In fourth quarter, I played way too much isolation basketball, one on one basketball, a lot of defenses set, and I was letting the clock run down way too much. I just had to take the shot or I was giving it to my guys late in the shot clock, and they couldn't do nothing with it besides shoot it or turn the ball over. So I will do a better job. I'll probably watch the game over again tonight, as I try to get my body ready for Game 2. So it starts with me. It's tough, and I know it sucks for him. This is the moment he's been waiting for. This is the biggest stage. Physically, he's not capable of doing what we all know he's capable of doing, and it's starting to, I guess hopefully, it doesn't continue or hopefully it doesn't get into his mind. For me, that's my role at that point, to let him know when he's on the floor, no matter what he's going through, we need him to be aggressive, as aggressive as he can be with the injury, and not worry about things that he cannot control; only worry about the things that he can control. Like I said, that will be my job to help him understand, no matter what he's going through physically, never let it creep into his mind where it affect him mentally. We started to get kind of a rhythm of what they wanted to do, but we also just put pressure not only at the point of attack, but when the ball was moved from side to side. Like I said, our coaching staff gives us a game plan, and it's up to us to execute it. They're going to make shots. They're one of the, if not the best with Golden State, best offenses we have in our league. We just try to make it tough on them. I kind of sense it. I sense it during the game a little bit, and it's tough sometimes with our main ball handler not being on the floor, and that's in Kyrie. That's something that I'm not happy with, something I'm not really comfortable with doing. I can do it, but I don't like to play that much isolation basketball late in the game. I'd much rather get the ball moving from side to side and get a good look after that. So like I said, I'll be more conscious about that in Game 2, if that opportunity presents itself, where at least I can get the ball moving to start and then maybe at the back side, or like the third option I can get it back at the end. At least we got the defense moving instead of them just watching me pound the ball for 24 seconds. That's not good basketball. |
| I've just seen every coverage that defenses can offer me, and I always try to be a triple threat on the floor, being able to score, to rebound, to pass, whatever the case may be, however the game presents itself. Just get my confidence I give my teammates the utmost confidence that when I throw them the ball, to shoot with confidence. I just try to put it exactly where they need it to be, where all they've got to do is catch and shoot or catch and drive and make things happen. So it's something I learned when I was a youngster, understanding how important a pass is and how important it is giving your teammates confidence. When you have guys like the guy next to me and Delly and J.R. and the rest of the guys on down the line, I'm able to do what I love to do best. Well, for us, offensive rebounding is part of our game. Three point shooting is a part of our game as well. We get 30 looks at the three point line, and we had 11 offensive rebounds that converted into 13 second chance points. That's all a part of our game, it's part of our DNA. When we do that, we're very successful. I'm able to make adjustments throughout the game, just knowing how the defense read and react. Obviously, when you've got guys like here, who shot the ball extremely well tonight, the defense starts to go further and further away from the paint, and I'm able to see creases. When they react to me, I'm going to find my guys. I'm going to know exactly where they're going to be every single time I drive. That's just a repetition we have through our practices and watching the film and knowing where your guys are going to be, and they have outlets, and they make themselves presentable, and I just try to put the ball right where it needs to be. I'm able to gauge the game and watch the game and able to replay it back in my mind and understand what I can do to help us win. That's how the game presented itself. When I was attacking, I was seeing guys open. When they were bringing two to me, I was seeing guys open. Like I said, I have the most confidence, the most confidence in my teammates to make shots and make plays. For me, that's my job is to put energy behind that ball when I'm finding them. All they need to do is catch and shoot or catch and drive or make a play, and the game presented that tonight. I was able to be aggressive at times getting to the rim, and then there was times where they brought two and three guys towards me, and I was able to find my guys, and they knocked them down. Why that is, for me, more than scoring, you always get the excitement of two guys being able to benefit from a pass. If I score the ball, if I'm in an iso situation where I score the ball, it's just me, and I've always been accustomed to team basketball. When I'm able to put pressure on the defense and then make a pass to a teammate and he's able to knock it down, I've always got the excitement of that more than anything. But I have a gift, and that's why I'm able to keep defenses off guard because, you know, they say, okay, we're going to make him score or make him pass. They really can't make me do what I don't want to do. I go out, and I play the game the right way. And whatever that moment, that possession presents itself, I try to do what's best for our team at that very moment. We've gotten smarter. We've ramped up our communication to a level that, at times throughout the season, I didn't know we could get to, and we're flying around, and we're just helping one another in time of need. It starts with this guy, first of all. Look at those all defensive teams, and obviously he has a small window with us, but he will be on the all defensive team in this league very soon. It starts with him, his approach. I love the defensive side. You have a guy like Dellavedova, who he takes a challenge and Double T protecting the rim. Mozzy as well in the starting lineup tonight. And everyone else, everyone takes it seriously. We understand that ultimately, if we want to win long term, we have to defend. It's going to give us the best possible chance to win because the ball don't go through the rim all the time, and you have to be able to get stops. We've been able to do that thus far in our 4, 10, 12 games in the postseason. It's a total 360 from our last series. We were terrible in the third quarter versus the Bulls. We understood, if we want to be really good, we have to come out with a little bit more sense of urgency. We have to play more pedal to the metal in the third quarter. Defensively, we've been locked in. When the ball is entered, either if it's their possession or it's our possession, we've just been very, very in tune with the game plan, and that's allowed us to get some leads in the third quarter and push the game out of reach. How do I want to answer this question? We're the No.1 defensive team in the postseason for a reason. Obviously, it's a great offensive team that we're playing against. You can't stop a great offensive team. You just try to make it tough on them. That's all we're trying to do. We're just trying to make it tough on them every night contest all their jump shots, be in tune with the game plan, keep a body on a guy like Korver, who can break open a game by himself. And that's all. That's all we can do. They're going to make shots, which they did tonight. They still made some shots. There were some possessions where we thought we could have been a little bit more in tune, but we just try to make it tough on them. That's all we can ask, and our coaching staff gives us the game plan, and it's up to us to go out and execute it, and that's what we've been doing so far in these first two games. It's next man up. Guys are just taking the challenge. It means everything to me to be able to share this podium with multiple teammates. On every given night, Delly and Shump and J.R. and Ky and Tristan. It could be James Jones next. It could be anybody. It means a lot. It means that, first of all, what they do, they do it very well. I got teammates that they don't try to outdo what they can do. They do what they do at a high level, and for me, I just try to lead them. Lead them the best way I can, and they go out and work for me, and I try to do the same for them. Well, we learned from Game 1. In Game 1 we had a big lead, and we started to play the clock, and that was my fault. I took that straight to the head. I knew, if I got that opportunity again, I wouldn't let that happen again. So we happen to have the same thing happen today, and we just kept our foot on the gas. We had early shots in the shot clock, we took them. If not, we executed, and we were able to continue our roll and continue to defend as well. That was very important. |
| I gave it everything I had tonight. My teammates did. Played our tail off, and to be able to win the game like this, with so many ups and downs and so many lead changes, it's a huge win for our team. I was struggling earlier. I missed a lot of shots that I know I'm capable of making, obviously. Missed a lot of layups. Missed a couple threes, and my teammates kept me afloat. I think I was 0 for 9 at the end of the first quarter, but it was 21 24 at the end of the first quarter. We were in the game because of my teammates. They picked me up, and I just tried to do some other things while we were struggling offensively as far as shooting. For me, offense, as far as scoring, doesn't define my game. I've always wanted to be a triple threat in this league, being able to rebound and to assist and also to score. So when I wasn't scoring and those guys were picking me up, I was able to do other things to help us go. Every game is different as far as the Game 5 in Detroit. Compared to this game, it's so much different. It was a 2 2 series at that point being in Detroit. Tonight is a 2 0 series being back home. This is much different, but the win feels great. How am I feeling? I've been better. It will be around the clock treatment, as usual, to get my mind, get my body ready for Tuesday. Well, we needed it tonight. We gave ourselves 19 offensive rebounds, extra possessions when we weren't shooting the ball well. For me, we played a lot of small ball tonight. But even when we're big, I just try to help our bigs out, try to help rebound. It's good offense for us when I'm able to rebound, able to push the break. Just being in that mindset that I tried to get every rebound possible that was in my lane. One or two I could have got, like you said, but just being in the mix and just helping us get extra possessions. No, it's probably, it's the same thing. I play to exhaustion. I play hard and I give my teammates, and I give myself as much as I can give. Sometimes the body just kind of shuts down at times, and that's what happened tonight at one point. Even in the overtime, I asked to come out, but I had a second thought, and there was no way I can go I wouldn't have felt right about the situation, win, lose, or draw, if I'd have went to the bench and not being out there for my teammates. So it was mind over matter at that point. What does that mean? Well, you just play the game the right way. At this point, you try to do whatever it takes to win. You don't want to hurt nobody. No one, I think, in our league goes around trying to hurt people, but you don't take the aggressive nature out of the game. I think in the case of ever since you were a kid, the ball on the floor, the first man to the floor usually gets the ball. There's no difference between what Delly did to Kyle Korver last game and 18 guys diving on the floor late in the game tonight. It was like six or seven guys diving on the floor for that loose ball. Delly was on the floor. J.J. was on the floor. Mike Scott was on the floor. Shump was on the floor. J.R. was on the floor. Just no one got hurt. There's no difference between me boxing out or Al Horford boxing me out and Delly boxing someone out. That is a fundamental box out. That's all it is. And we all know that. We don't never want to play with the integrity of the game and try to get people hurt. That's not what it's about because we all want brotherhood at the end of the day, NBA family. But I play to win the game, and you play aggressively. That's what it's about. I need to shoot more from the corner . No other three has been good to me, basically, is what you're saying. Which side of the credit? The I'm not shooting so well credit or I mean he does, for sure. We work every day, just trying to get the ball up there and not think about it too much. First of all, the offensive rebound by Double T was huge. I seen in his mind that he wanted to go back up for that shot, and I yelled his name probably as loud as I could yell it because I wanted another opportunity. I just seen Paul Millsap running a little out of control, just gave him a pump fake, and I just stick to my routine. Things that I worked on all year long, make or miss, and I would be satisfied with the result. Well, not a few years ago. A few is probably like three or four. I was still going to The Finals at that point. Probably 23, 24, 25 maybe. I think just because I've had experience. It's not about the younger LeBron or anything like that. I've been able to have experience over the years that's helped me to get to this point. I really don't my game is so much better than it was when I was younger, and I just try to everything that I've worked on over the course of years and the mental side of the game, I just try to incorporate that on the floor, no matter if I'm making shots or missing shots or whatever the case may be. I got it. That's not really our concern. Obviously, I'm a little bit off about it because this is my guy, this is my teammate, and this is a guy that goes out and works his tail off every single night, and people are trying to give him a bad rap. He doesn't deserve it, and I don't like it. But I'm not going to get involved in anything that's outside of basketball. That's not my place. What I care about is how we prepare every single night, how we prepare in the film session, which we will have another one tomorrow, and how we go about trying to win a basketball game. That's going to get 99.9 percent of my mental. But I will protect my guys for sure. Just got to do we defend. Our coaching staff will give us a game plan, and it's up to us to go out and execute it. We had a lot of mistakes tonight. We did some things well, but we had a lot of mistakes tonight that we can clean up on. If we come in with our defensive mindset, as we've had the whole playoffs so far, we give ourselves a chance to advance. If not, then there will be a Game 5. It's current, so I would say yeah. I don't remember how I felt two years ago in a certain situation, but I'm playing through a lot. It doesn't matter. I don't want any sympathy. There's no rest for the weary. If I'm putting on a uniform and I'm on the floor, I have to make things happen for our team. It's that simple. I'm not the only guy that's limping. I'm not the only guy that's cramping. I'm not the only guy that's hurting. There's a lot of guys out there that's playing as well, and I'm one of them as well. So I've got to go out and help our team win, no matter where I'm at. Those three guys, obviously, J.R. and Shump, to answer the first part of your question, they were huge tonight. J.R. gives us a double double, and no one talks about it. Gives us 17 and 10. And obviously, what Shump does, he rebounds, he defends whoever you need him to defend, and he gives us 15 points tonight as well. And the guy next to me, he's been thrown into a situation that he wasn't thrown in all season for the most part, and that's starting, being our starting point guard, with Kyrie being absent the last couple games. And those three guys have answered the call. They've played exceptional basketball. They've defended. They've done everything we need them to do. We need them to do it a little bit more. It's just every game is going to be challenging. As hard as it was to win tonight, Game 4 is going to be just as hard as it was tonight. But those three guys are playing unbelievable basketball. Without them, we wouldn't be sitting here at this point. |
| My emotions, it's very emotional to be back in this city. When I made my decision to come back here, I knew what I wanted to do, but I knew it wasn't going to be easy. It's going to take a lot of hard work and a lot of dedication, and it's going to be the toughest task for me to try to get this team back to The Finals. I've had to step up my leadership. I had to be very patient, which I'm not very patient. I'm not a very patient guy, but I knew I had to work on that. To be able to sit at one point during the season and see us at 19 20 and watching my team struggle and me sitting out two weeks, they wanted Coach Blatt fired, saying we needed another point guard, will LeBron and Kyrie be able to play together? So many story lines was just happening at that point in time. For us to be sitting at this point today being able to represent the Eastern Conference in The Finals, this is special. It's very special. Obviously, from the time I decided to come back to now, it's a totally different team. When I decided to come back, we had a No.1 pick, and we drafted Andrew Wiggins. I understood that we were going to have a very, very young team, a very unexperienced team, and it's going to take a lot of patience and a lot of hard work to get to where I wanted to get this team back to. Obviously, things happened throughout the season, throughout the off season, that allowed us to acquire Kevin Love, and as the season started, to acquire J.R. Smith and Timofey Mozgov and Iman Shumpert that brought our team to a place where I felt that we could compete. But I still thought we had to be very patient, I had to be very patient, being the leader of the team, but I knew we had the pieces that we can compete. Where this ranks as far as my last four Finals appearances, I mean, it's special just because I think it's today, it's tonight, and to know how far we've come as a group, to know how unexperienced we are as a unit playing together, I think that's special in its own right. No matter what happens from here on out, to see what we've accomplished being a first year team together that's had different changes throughout the course of the season, that's faced so many obstacles throughout the season injuries here, transactions here, lineups here it's something we can be very proud of to this point. I'm a guy who believes in unfinished business, and I understood what these people were going through, the people here not only in Cleveland but in Northeast Ohio and all over the world who love and bleed wine and gold. I also knew there were a couple of guys here that were very special, in Tristan Thompson here to my left and also in Kyrie Irving at the time, that could help me get to a point where I've been before. So to be at this point tonight sitting up here talking to you guys, like I said, it's very emotional and very just something I don't know. Could I foresee this? At the beginning of the season, I couldn't. I couldn't foresee us being in The Finals at the beginning of the season because I just knew that we just had to get better and I just saw how young we were and how young minded we were at that point in time, but I knew I had to lead these guys, and if they just followed my leadership, I knew I could get them to a place where they haven't been before. It's a hard working city, and if you work hard for this city, they work hard for you. They give everything back to you. That's what J.R. Smith to my right, Tristan here to my left, and the rest of the 12 guys in the locker room, we're just trying to work hard for the city, and they give it all back to us, as you saw tonight with 20,000 plus fans. I don't know how many chapters we have in the book as far as this season, but there's at least five. Just from the start of the season to us making the transaction to acquire this guy to my right and then Shump and then Timofey, to us having injuries, to us getting to the postseason, to Kevin Love being out for the postseason, to Kyrie getting banged up and being out for playoff games we have so many different chapters to this season that's defined who we are. But one thing we haven't got caught up in is feeling sorry for ourselves. It doesn't matter. If someone is out, the next man up. If someone is not 100 percent, then as a brother, you pick that guy up. That's what it's about. That's what it's about. That's what teamwork and trying to accomplish a dream is all about, being able to sacrifice yourself and what you can do for the better of the team. That's what's got us to this point. Don't ask me another question until you ask one of these guys a question too, by the way. Don't say, hey, LeBron, I'm from channel don't ask me a question. Ask these guys. Give me a break. But you look good. You fit. My message at halftime I think we were up 17. My message to the guys at halftime was my mission was to get Joe Harris into the game. That's what I told the guys at halftime. I said, our motivation for the second half is to get Joe Harris in the game, and they answered the call. Steal offensive rebounds. That's J.R. for you. I was just looking in the right direction. For myself, I think we all here know how long it's been since a champion has been in this city. I mean, you can try and not focus on it. You can try to say, okay, well, it's not about that. But we all know it. The one thing that we can guarantee as a team, as a group, 15 guys, our coaching staff, people that travel with us on the road, whatever the case may be, that work every day, is we will give our best shot. No matter who comes out of the Western Conference, either Golden State or Houston, we're going to give it our best shot. Our coaching staff will prepare us the best way they can, and I will as a leader have our guys ready for it. Win, lose, or draw, because you can't predict the future, you don't know what's going to happen, we will give our best shot. That's all from myself. That's all I can ask of my teammates. That's all I can ask of the coaches. And I hope everyone here understands that it's not easy. It's not easy to even get to this point. It's so hard just to win an NBA game, and the fact that we've won three playoff series so far, it is very, very difficult, and if you've never been in this situation, you don't know how difficult it is. The only people who can talk about it one of my best quotes or favorite quotes of all time is Theodore Roosevelt. It's called the Man in the Arena. I suggest everyone read it. It's basically about, if you've never sweat or bled or been in an arena and having the dust go up in your face and never battled, you have no idea what it takes to be in the arena. So for me as a leader, all I can do is lead these guys, which I will do. The coaching staff will give us the greatest game plan they can to win against Houston, to win against Golden State, but as far as guarantees, I cannot guarantee anyone. I can't guarantee the championship. That's not what I'm here for. I'm here to lead. But I will guarantee that we will play our asses off. We will, from the first minute to minute 48, or if it's overtime, 53. We will do that. At the end of the day, that's all I can ask for. That's all we can give. But we will be in The Finals, I can guarantee that. |