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| I think for us, it's never -- our game plan is never dictated. I think for us, we want to push the tempo. We want to move the ball from side to side, and we want to attack. With myself and Ky, we love to live in the paint. We love to attack, and then when the defense collapses, we're going to spread out to our shooters. Tonight they wanted us to be in the paint, and we just tried to take advantage of that. We had 56 points in the paint, and everyone was still in a great rhythm. I think probably the least amount of threes that we've shot and made probably in the postseason so far, but as I keep telling you guys every single day, we're not a jump-shooting team. You guys kept looking at me crazy about it. We're not a jump-shooting team. We're a balanced team, and whatever the game dictates, we're able to adjust to that. I don't predetermined what is going on or how they're going to defend me. I read and react. They played me straight up in the post. I just tried to make quick, solid moves to get into the paint. If they brought help, I was still going to be able to find my guys. You know, whatever the defense is doing in that possession, I'm able to read and react and know what's going on. I've seen every coverage, so definitely we have to be better in Game 2 because we know they're going to have some changes, and that's what the series is about, being able to adjust from game to game, and they're going to make adjustments, and we have to be ready for whatever. Well, we didn't rest. We just didn't have a game. We didn't rest. Coach Lue gave us one day off. Other than that, we was in the gym working, keeping our rhythm, keeping our legs ready for whenever the game was -- whenever we was going to play, so we didn't rest. We just didn't do -- we didn't have a game in front of cameras. Our whole mindset was whenever our game was going to present itself, we was going to be ready to play our game and do it the same way we've been doing that all postseason, and we were able to accomplish that tonight. I don't think we have complacency in our minds right now. We have a goal, and our goal was not nine wins. It's just not my focus. I've won nine games in the postseason before, won 14 games in the postseason before. It's not my goal, and as the leader of this team, I'm going to continue to make sure that these guys understand what our goal is and they know. They know what our goal is, and tonight was just another step in the direction that we want to head into. And we will face some adversity. We will. And we have to be able to handle that, which I think we'll be ready for. Just having the opportunity to play the game that I love in front of some unbelievable fans and unbelievable teammates. When you make plays like that, you know, it's the passion that came through. It was the excitement that my teammates was getting, looking over at the bench, the other four guys on the floor and the 20,000-plus fans that was cheering it on at that point in time, so that's where it came from. You don't know when it's going to happen. Sometimes it just happens. So yep. Well, I think no gas, the Kyrie that I see on a daily basis when you guys are not around is the Kyrie that I envisioned. He's grown every single day, every single week, month, and over the course of these last two years or year-plus, becoming a leader and becoming a staple of our team. We all knew how talented the kid was and how talented he is still today, but his growth and what he demands out of all of us, you know, as the point guard, as one of the leaders of the team. That's what's the best part about it. I mean, you roll out a ball any single day of the week, and he'll play. When you're that age, you can play as long as you want to anyways, but his growth, his mentality, and it's what's great about him right now. Well, the game ball definitely goes to our bench tonight. I mean, you look at plus-24, 20, 18, 17, all the way down, those guys gave us a boost in that second quarter, and I was out there with them. But Channing, Shump, Delly and R.J., at that moment they pushed the tempo. You just got to work at it. In practices we do a lot of work together, but we've got some very smart, cerebral players. Coach Lue is able to mix and match some lineups that he feels best fits, and that's one of the lineups that's been working pretty good for us throughout this postseason that we did not -- like you said, did not use in the regular season. So we've got to continue to work our habits. It's not going to always be as great as it was tonight in the second quarter, where we outscored them 33-16, but we've got to continue to work at it and continue to see ways we can help each other, and if we do that, we'll be fine. |
| I've seen everything. I've seen a lot, and the best thing about it, my teammates have read and react, and either given me space or given me outlets for me to make a pass to them. Tonight was another example of that. Well, I mean, it's always difficult to deal with me. I think it adds even more when you have two All-Stars with you, two guys that command multiple eyes any possession. They're so in such a great rhythm right now, I've been able to just pick my spots and do other things to help us try to win ballgames while those guys take the load. Tonight was an example of them giving me a little bit more space, and I just tried to make some plays. I don't think it feels like a streak. I think it feels like we won one game. We won the next game, and how do we prepare and be better the following game. We've taken one step at a time. We haven't overlooked any steps along this process thus far, and I think that's part of the reason we're in this position today. We have to be much better, obviously, in Game 3, going into a very hostile environment, going in there where they're extremely loud. They play well, they play faster. But we've enjoyed the process to this point, and once we got to it, we've tried to take care of business, and then once it's over, we want to learn from that instance and move on and see how we can get better the next time. Well, it's hard to say. Obviously last year there were no excuses even with these two guys out, and for me personally and the rest of the guys, we gave it everything that we had. So I didn't feel sorry for myself, didn't feel sorry for any of my teammates. We didn't feel sorry for nothing because we gave everything that we had. As far as my body, I've been telling guys all year, this is the best I've felt in a while, and I've been able to do things outside of the game that kind of help me, and then when I get to the game, obviously you have two guys like this to help you. It takes a lot of everything off of you when you have two All-Stars that can do great things. Well, I think it's a collective workload that we all put on each other throughout the break. Like I said, Coach Lue gave us one day off, and that was the game after the Sunday game in Atlanta. I believe we got Monday off, and from that point on, we all worked together just to mentally prepare our bodies, physically prepare our bodies, waiting around to see who we were going to face in the next round, but we just stayed on top of each other, trying to understand, and how can we learn from the Detroit series when we swept to the next round. We've all put in our individual work. When we're not at our practice facility, and then when we all get together, we just combine it all and just try to make the most of it. Well, first of all, for me being in a position where -- it just always takes me back to my childhood and watching so many of the greats playing basketball and saying I wish I could be a part of that or at times saying there's no way I could be a part of such a great league, there's no way. Just the statistics don't look right for me as an African-American kid growing up in the inner city. I played both sides of the fence as a kid growing up. To be in this position today where I see my name linked to a lot of the greats that have played this game and paved the way for myself and Kyrie and Kev, it means a lot. It's very humbling. It's an opportunity for my family to be proud, for my fans to be proud, so that's just a lot of respect with that. I was actually, to your second question, jogging into the locker room like we usually do off the floor, and obviously I saw a legend outside of our locker room, and I slowed my pace up drastically just to embrace a legend being in our building, watching us play. What he did for the game, the championship runs that he had with the "Showtime" Lakers and him being the all-time leading scorer in NBA history and so on and so on and so on, it's just respect. When you see a guy like that, when you put him in a class with like Jim Brown and Muhammad Ali and Oscar Robertson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, those guys all laying that same thing, Bill Russell. It was a pretty cool moment. Elaborate. We're good. We've got Tristan on our team. . We don't need them. We've got Tristan. I think it's just the even-keel mentality that he has. He's always preaching next play. Just always next play. We come to a timeout, no matter what's going on in the game, he just continues to breed confidence and talk confidence to us, the unit that's on the floor, the unit that's off the floor. Just a sense of calmness. The game is so fast. The possessions come so fast. There are a lot of things going on in between the game, and when you come to a timeout or whatever before the game or at halftime, there's just a sense of calmness. T-Lue has been great for us as the captain of this ship, and us as the soldiers or whatever you want to tell us or call us on the boat, we're just trying to follow his lead and execute it the right way. |
| Well, first of all, I give a lot of credit to Toronto. They played an exceptional game tonight. We didn't play our game, and they made us pay for it. I mean, it is a little adversity. Why not? It's the postseason, and you lose a game. This is our first loss of the postseason. I would count it as a little adversity. We've got to go back to the drawing board, not fix everything, just fix a few things, and be much better on Monday. Obviously we weren't as great as we've been tonight. I think early on at the start of the game we weren't as physical as we should have been, especially coming into a building that we knew we had to be a little bit more physical. Understanding they were going to play with a lot of speed, a lot of force, so we didn't start the game as physical as we should have at the point of attack. Also I think we lost track of some of our keys that we came into the game with, allowed us to kind of get sidetracked throughout the course of the game. Then in the second quarter, our second-quarter lineup didn't do a great job of paying attention to detail, and they was able to bust the game open and score 33 points in that second quarter. They had 39 for the whole second half. Allowing them to score 60 in the first half is not the type of game that we want to play. I think it's good for them. It's good for them. First little adversity, first individually in a long time, and I think it's good for them. I think they'll be much better obviously on Monday, but it's good for them. When someone is not shooting the ball extremely well, obviously we don't want two of our big guys not to shoot the ball -- it's going to be difficult for us to pull the game out like that. Even though with our shooting in the 30s, it was still a five-point game at one point in the third quarter. But we know they'll be much better. J.R. did a great job of trying to pick the slack up for both Kyrie and for Kev. Channing [Frye] tried as well and I did as well. But those guys will be better. They'll watch the film, and they'll be much better on Monday. That's what he's been at home and every playoff and every regular-season game. We understand he feeds off the crowd, but he's also a huge impact on the glass at home. He gives them a lot of energy, he gives them a lot of second-chance points. He had eight offensive rebounds. He cleaned up the glass on all of our misses in the first half. I think he had at one point 14 rebounds and no points. The guy just stays in his lane. He definitely gave them a boost tonight. Same way you've got right now. We don't really have a reaction. He has a great block, we're trying to get back on defense. We're not watching him wave his finger. But he probably admires him. We all take something from somebody. If I shoot a fadeaway, I got it from MJ. Throw a no-look pass, I get it from Magic. He [J.R. Smith] shoots fadeaway threes, I don't know where he gets those from. We all admire somebody, so it's no big deal. That's a great question. You know, obviously teams and a lot of players are kind of taking it a little bit. At the end of the day, I'm important to this team. I can't afford to react in any kind of way that will get me thrown out of a game, but I will protect myself. I will protect myself. When I was in high school, I got low-bridged playing in an AAU tournament as a junior in high school. A kid just low-bridged me and I fell and broke my wrist. That kind of thought always plays in my mind either when I'm getting thrown to the ground or if it's a borderline dirty play. I always think back to the Jay Z phrase and a line he had: "If I shoot you, then I'm brainless; if you shoot me, you're famous. What am I to do?" That always plays in my head. Every time I feel like I want to react, I've got to keep my brain. I'm not trying to sell a call. I got hit with an elbow. I didn't know from my own teammate. I thought it was DeMarre , but I watched the replay, it was from my teammate. So no -- sell a call for what? There was no call there to be sold. That's it. I was going to say something else to you, but I'm going to leave it alone. |
| It wasn't enough because we got off to a horrible first half once again in this building, and you're playing catch-up the whole game. So every defensive possession feels even more intensified when you've given up so many points in the first half. I think they've averaged 58 or something like that in the first half here, and in the high 30s the second half. It gets a little bit more intensified, but it just goes back to the first half. We're not starting off games the right way. The second quarter has been really bad for us here, so we've got do a better job of that where we can't dig ourselves such a big hole and now every possession feels even more intensified late in the game. Well, I mean, of course. We've got to be more well-balanced. We started the game, we had some great looks, but when they're not going, you've got to be able to try to switch it up and get into the paint and see what you can do. I was able to get into the paint a little bit, Kyrie [Irving] as well. But we just haven't shot the ball from the three-point line. That's part of what they're doing as well, but it's part of us being a little bit more conscious about, okay, if it's not going down, then we've got to get into the paint a little bit more and then kick out for threes as well. I think I played to the game plan that I wanted to play, both offensively and defensively. For me, I gave everything that I had in the 46 minutes that I played, both offensively and defensively. I felt great. Tried to get my guys involved, get myself involved. My individual game plan was pretty good. I don't know. I've got to watch the film to see the mistakes that we made. But they put it on us good in the second quarter, obviously 30-17. I think Kyle [Lowry] hit some huge shots in that second quarter. DeRozan hit some big shots as well. I've got to go over the film, but obviously 30-17 is not a good ingredient for a win. Well, first of all you tip your hat to DeMar and Kyle. They did a great job. They're All-Stars for a reason. That's why they're here today. They've carried this team all season. But even at the end of the day, as well as they played, we still had a chance. We still had a chance to win the ballgame. That's all you can ask for. But what we can't do is dig ourselves the hole that we did in the first half. I think defensively when we made that run, we played some really good defense. I think we had a couple breakdowns that I know in my head that happened throughout the run, but they also made some tough shots. They made some tough shots. They made some tough shots while we were making that run. Cory Joseph made a tough runner over the top of me going right. I think Kyle made a couple tough ones. DeMar made a couple pull-ups as well. We followed our game plan as much as 95 percent of the time. I can remember two plays that I'm not going to say right now that I wish we had back. But while we made our run, our defense stepped up, and that was good to see. I think whatever lineup coach [Tyronn] Lue puts on the floor can go the distance. We're all professionals. We have a great group of guys, so no matter who's on the floor, we have to execute. We have to play to our identity. I think our second unit did a great job of giving us a boost and whoever comes in after that has to continue to play at a high level. We do a great job as a first unit at times of picking up our second unit, and then at times our second unit does a great job of picking us up. At the end of the day, whoever is on the floor, we have to play with the same intensity both offensively and defensively. I've been blessed with a gift to pass the ball and to see the floor, and I just try to take advantage to help my teammates. I think that's one of my biggest gifts. I love getting my guys involved and making them feel a part of something special. Even me being in my 13th year in the NBA, it all started when I was a kid. My little league coach always said, There's no I in team. Obviously, we've all heard that, but when you get guys involved, it makes the game a lot easier. It's always stuck with me to this point today. I think it's a sense of the outsiders, which I've never really got involved with, saying we may never lose another game. I don't get involved in it, besides talking to you guys and when I see you guys, is all I know about it. I don't know anything that's going on outside because I don't watch. I don't watch sports TV. I don't read news clippings. I go home and I watch cartoons with my kids and watch movie channels and Man Vs. Wild and things like that because that's what really is important to me. What the outside people say, I don't really get involved with. And I am a confident guy. I'm always confident in my ability and what I can bring to my team, whatever the case may be, whatever the circumstances are. Going back home, we have to play a lot better, and I think we will. I definitely thought we had finally got over the curve of how we wanted to play here in this building. But you've still got to get stops, and they did a great job of just making shot after shot after shot, even when our run was happening. You give them a lot of credit with that. They withstand our run and us giving up 54 percent shooting, a lot of it in the first half. Like I said, when you dig a hole like that, I think we were down by 18 at one point. Again, when you dig a hole like that, like I said, every possession after that is so intensified. We got to a point where we were up, but we made a couple more mistakes and they was able to pull away. I think they did a good job of kind of moving him around. With me on him, they feel like trying to get me up off of him with a screen, either with a guard so they can force the switch -- that's part of our defense. But when they screen with a big, we have a goal that we want to try to attack. I think we'll be a lot better on what we want to do and how we want to handle those two guys, because they're playing exceptional basketball. They're 28 for 43. I mean, that's top-of-the-tier numbers right there, and they both went for 30. We've got to be much better in our schemes and doing it a little bit harder as well. |
| We understood that coming back from Game 3 and Game 4 we just didn't play our defense the right way. We didn't play how we should have played, and they took advantage of every moment. We had to get back to our staple. We had to get back to what we wanted to do defensively in order for us to play a complete game. That was the most satisfying thing, the way we defended, holding these guys to 39 percent shooting. I've been a part of some really adverse situations, and I just didn't believe that this was one of them. So it's just been very calm about the whole situation, understanding that our guys knew what we did and what we didn't accomplish in Toronto. I'm not taking away from the fact how big of a game this was, because it is -- it's a Game 5 on our home floor and the series tied 2-2. But from the very moment that we lost Game 4, I was just very calm about the whole situation, seeing the good that we can prepare and get better for Game 5 instead of looking at all the bad that we did. Just mentally just having these guys focus, and they answered the call. Well, first of all, like you stated in the first part, having someone like Kevin who can make that pass. He's been throwing outlet passes, chest passes full court, for a long time now, probably all the way back to high school. Obviously we saw it at UCLA, we saw it at Minnesota, and now we're starting to get that connection here, and we have it. For me, it's fun for me that I can be a receiver again, taking me back to my football days, and just try to keep the cornerback on my hip and not look up until the ball gets there, and then I'm able to finish. It was a huge play, and in that particular case, we kind of even talked about it while the jump ball was going on with Swish [J.R. Smith] and he was able to lead me to the rim and I was able to finish. Well, I don't believe that's true to the first part. Kevin has always been out of his shell; he just doesn't do it around you guys because it's not about that. What we do as a team, we keep everything in house, and besides RJ [Richard Jefferson] bringing out Little Kev recently, everything has been in house. But Kevin is a great guy, a great teammate, and tonight was just a bounce-back for him. He knew he didn't play his style of basketball or how he wanted to play to help us win in Toronto. He wanted to make a different outcome of it, and he did that tonight. He's a true professional. : I mean, it's very difficult and you feel like you're by yourself. I've been there before, when you're a big part of a puzzle, and things just don't go the way you either dreamed about it or the way you thought it was going to be. You feel like you're by yourself for 24 hours or 48 hours or however long the case may be. To see him come out the way he did tonight, just aggressive from the beginning, his first bucket, his first paint touch -- his first touch was in the paint, a right-hand jump hook. We knew from that point on that that's where he wanted it, and we continued to go to him. So it was great to see him bounce back like that. Because we didn't get to this point in our season by me taking over every game. I kind of laugh at it when I hear from you guys, when I do my media availability, people saying take over the game. My presence on the floor is much bigger than what numbers talk about. When you have a young superstar like this guy [Irving], you have Kevin, who's a superstar as well, and they've helped us get to this point, so you don't just throw in the kitchen sink because we lose two games or we didn't play as well as we could. There may be a time when I may have to have one of those big games, but until then, just relax. It's great for sure. Any time you're able to clock in under, for me, 35 minutes, it's great. But my body has been trained all season to do whatever it takes. Tonight was one of those instances where I didn't need it as much, but I've trained my body over quite a few months now to -- whatever Coach needs me, whenever this team needs me, I'll be ready for it. That they were ready for it as well. They were ready for this moment. Our crowd was ready for this moment. They were amazing, as always. Give a lot of thanks to those guys. They were amazing from the beginning. It starts with our floor general. Our floor general came out, and I think he had 12 in the first quarter. He got to where he wanted to get on the floor, his pull-up was working, his three in transition was working; e led the team, put us in position to succeed. And obviously Kev had a huge first quarter as well. Everybody else just followed their lead after that. Well, for us, rebounding is always a big part of our staple, especially for Double-T [Tristan Thompson] and for Kevin, for myself, and Ky is starting to get down there a little bit as well. We want to get stops. We want to defend, and when you're able to make a team miss, you want to clean the glass, and we were able to do that tonight. We held them under their shooting averages obviously from the previous two games, so we were able to clean the glass and that allowed us to get out on our break. It's a huge key to our success. If we understand that, we put ourselves in the best possible chance of winning. We showed it in Toronto Game 3 and Game 4 when we got down 16 or 18. We showed we're capable of doing -- all the way down to Game 4 we had a chance to win. We've got to come out from the beginning, and it starts with the Big Three. It starts with myself, Kev and Ky, and we've got to do a great job of pushing the tempo, getting these guys ready, and we'll be much better. We'll be more prepared. Our coaching staff gave us a great game plan in 3 and 4, and we didn't execute it. But we'll be more prepared. Well, you were the first person to bring it up to me. I had no idea. I really don't play my career off accomplishments. If they happen, so be it. I've been blessed to be in a position where I can play the game that I love and be around some great guys, and my kids get an opportunity to see me do some special things. My only mindset is to at this point get our guys mentally and physically prepared for a heck of a game on Friday night in Toronto, and if we're able to come home victorious, then the streak continues. If not, we prepare for Game 7. But that's my mindset. My mindset has never been about, I guess, records or streaks or things of that nature. |
| I never got involved in that because we're not entitled to anything. We earned the right to be here and represent the Eastern Conference in The Finals. We work our tails off every single day. We commit to one another and we sacrifice to one another. We're not supposed to be here; we earned our right. We earned our right to be here today. It's an unbelievable atmosphere. These fans, they mean a lot to their team, and I think the team gave everything they could throughout this whole season. To go to a place they've never been before, to get to the Eastern Conference Finals, and to win two games on their home floor as well, in front of their fans throughout this Conference Finals, it just showed their appreciation. They were unbelievable all season long to this point, and they definitely showed that toward the end of the game, all the way throughout. There's definitely a different feeling. I didn't appreciate last year myself personally on getting to The Finals. Just so much was going on in my mind, knowing that Kev was out for the rest of the season and knowing that Ky was dealing with injuries all the way from the first round. I just didn't appreciate it. It's definitely a different feeling. Having these guys right here at full strength, having our team at full strength, and the way I feel personally, I appreciate this moment, to be able to be a part of it and to be there once again. We wouldn't be at this point today going to The Finals without those two. Throughout the first three rounds, they've been the reason why we've played at such a high level. They've accepted the challenge. They wanted to get back to this moment. Ky being out seven months, this guy [Love] doing rehab for three-and-a-half months on his shoulder, they just had so much built up -- anxiety or rage or excitement or whatever the case may be throughout the whole process, just to be back on the floor and to show why we were all put together. For us to be at this moment, I know they have a lot to say about it, so please don't ask me the next question. Ask one of those guys. It doesn't matter what's going on on the outside. It's not our problem. It's not what we're about. We've got 15 guys, we've got a coaching staff, we've got a fan base, we've got an organization and management and everybody on a day-to-day basis that we represent, and that's all that matters. We all preach the same words. We all go about our business the same way every single day. So what goes on in the outside world doesn't really matter to us. It just feels great to go out there and sacrifice and play for guys that truly just have the same goal in mind, truly care for one another both on and off the floor, and that's the results of it. We didn't have champagne, so we took waters. That’s it. I did. Like I said, I didn't appreciate last year, what we were able to accomplish in our first year. I'm just truly blessed. I mean, the man above has given me an unbelievable ability, and I just try to take full advantage of it and to -- I get to do what I love to do every single night, and that's to play the game of basketball. That's my life. It's everything, and I give everything to the game. To be in a position where I can go out and help a group of guys get to places where either they haven't been before or been but want to accomplish even more in their careers, it just means a lot. So a lot of emotions were just going through my head at that point in time, talking to Doris, and just appreciating what I've personally been able to do throughout my career so far. It means a lot. The game of basketball has given me everything, and I would never cheat the game, no matter how many games I win, no matter how many games I lose, that really doesn't matter to me because I really just give it all. That's why I can sleep well at night. I don't really get caught up in all of that. We're going to prepare ourselves. Our coaching staff will prepare us, and we're going to go out and give it our all, and we're going to live with the results. I know our city deserves it. Our fans deserve it. But that gives us no sense of entitlement. We've still got to go out and do it. We've still got to go out and prove ourselves and be as great as we can be every single night we hit the floor. We look forward to the challenge. We're still okay. We're not great yet. We've got one more round to become great, so we look forward to it. Yeah, we know what we said to them, but I don't think it's for everyone. But what those two guys have done for this franchise and this city and this fan base, nothing short of amazing. Being two All-Stars, carrying those guys through a first-round seven-game series, a second-round seven-game series and then a Conference Finals Game 6 in their home building, they were spectacular. They were great. These fans here, I know they know what they have, and they sure appreciate talent like DeMar and Kyle. So it was fun competing against them. |