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| I think it was the play called by Brad Stevens. He did a great job of putting us in the right position, forcing them to have to help and not be able to switch. Al Horford made a great screen and Marcus Smart made an even better pass, and I was able to knock down a shot. It was a great play by Brad. He was aggressive from the beginning of the game. That's what we needed him to be. A lot of people counted us out with Isaiah not being here, and he is a big part of this team. But Smart took this opportunity to come out and be aggressive on both ends of the floor and make plays for our team. He was able to do that tonight. We need Smart to play that way all the time. He's a very good player. We know he's capable of having big games for us on the offensive end, and I think it's definitely going to give him confidence for the rest of the series. I think that one of the good things about this team is we're able to believe in whatever Brad draws up. If it's a good play, bad play, whatever it is, we all believe in it. I think that always helps because you're able to just read and react after that. One of the plays that he drew up when Jonas Jerebko hit the shot, it was for me to lay the ball up. But it was a play that I knew that if they helped, Jonas would be wide open, and he was able to knock down his shot. Those are all plays that Brad makes, and then it's our job to go out there and make sure that we make the next right play. I knew LeBron was going to help. I knew I was going to suck the defense in, and it was my job to act like I was going to lay the ball up, and kick it out to Jonas. I told Jonas to make sure he was ready. I wish he shot a three. But I'm just happy for Jonas. He was prepared and ready to shoot the ball, and he made some really big plays for our team tonight. He made the most of his opportunity. Jonas went games without playing, and now he was able to come in and make some really big plays for us tonight. I just want him to keep being ready to shoot the ball, because we're going to make sure we find him. It was hard. It was embarrassing. I know everyone leaving the arena after last game, we were pretty down. But once we were able to get together the next day, we decided that we're just going to go out and play hard, and whatever happens, happens. We're going to go play with our backs against the wall, come out swinging. We're going to go and play as hard as we can. We're going to be the toughest team. We're going to battle for the loose balls. We're going to play hard consistently the entire game. We wanted to be that team. That was our mindset. We never counted ourselves out. We knew that if we came out and played hard, we would give ourselves a chance. You saw that tonight. And we're going to continue to play that way throughout the series. I think it helped us out a lot. They're going to make plays. It's our job to make sure we're out there playing basketball, not complaining. That was the main thing for us tonight. The foul count wasn't where we wanted it to be. We can't complain about that. We can't control that. All we can control is the way that we play. I kept telling everybody that we can't complain, because it's hurting us on the offensive end because you're thinking about it. You just have to go out there and play the game of basketball. If we continue to play that way and stick together and play hard no matter what adversity we go through, I feel like we're going to be the best team that we can be. It showed tonight. We had a few times down the floor where we were complaining, and it ended up hurting us on both ends of the floor. But we got over it and we were able to stick together at the end of the game and make some big plays. I think it started with Marcus Smart, how poised he was at the end of the game. He was able to get us in our sets and make the right play, make some really big plays for our team tonight. I feel like guys like Jae Crowder and Al Horford, whoever switched on him, they did a great job. Like I said, we understand not only him but Kyrie, they're going to make tough shots. It's our job to make sure that we try to make everything hard on him and have a mindset to chip away. What I mean by chip away is not try to win the game or get back in the game with one shot. Just force enough shots. We understood that we needed to move the ball around, get good shots and get continuous stops on the defensive end. That's big. For a team that you could say that is a young team, we came out here and I feel like we were mature tonight with the way that we played. We were able to stick together, get consistent stop. We're playing against a really good team. LeBron, we understand that down the stretch of the game, he's going to make plays for his team. I felt like we did a great job trying to box guys out, defending him. He's a tough guard, but we really did a good job of forcing everything, making everything hard on him. Marcus did a great job on Kyrie tonight. It's our job to make sure that we have that same mindset next game because if we don't, we're not going to have a chance to win the game. |
| Not only me but Al [Horford]. He helps our team out a lot. You know, as far as talking and trying to lead by example, just playing the right way. You know, that's all we can do. Obviously we're missing one of our leaders, and the good thing about our team, guys -- even Marcus [Smart] before the game, you know, everyone is just making sure we're all locked in and trying to help in any way we can, and if that's by leading by example or being vocal, whatever it is, we try to fill that void. Well, tonight, credit to him. Kyrie had a great game. I got in foul trouble a little bit, and I got switched off, you know, a lot of the times. But we have to do a better job as a team at the end of the day. We understand that he's a good player, LeBron is a good player. It's not just going to be one guy that's going to stop them. It's going to take an entire team, and tonight I felt like our team defense wasn't good on a consistent basis, and that's what led to those guys scoring and getting going. I think all the counters, and he's able to shoot the ball. You know, you can't get into him too much. You can't back off, back off him. He's a great finisher. He's a good player. He's one of the best point guards in the NBA, and you know, you can tell he puts in a lot of work in his game, a lot of respect from myself, my teammates, but like I said, we have to do a better job at defending him as a unit, trying to make everything hard on him. He definitely got a great rhythm going tonight, and I felt like we had a chance to make it harder on him. We'll watch film and figure out what we need to do better, but we will be better next game. I think we might have had one in the first half, and then we had three quick ones, which led to baskets for those guys. That [was an] emphasis that Brad had at the beginning of the game, make sure we're getting good shots because that helps our defense, and we weren't able to, we were forcing the ball a little bit, not making the same passes we were making in the first half. And against a team like this, you don't have room for errors like that because it usually leads to buckets on the other end. I mean, it's our defensive principles. Obviously you have to be smart about who you're guarding, but we can do a better job at the same time stopping someone that's getting going that way. Even if it's just showing your hands or talking, letting them know that you're right there beside them to give them a little more confidence to be able to guard the ball. I feel like we can do a better job at that. Get good shots, stop turning the ball over. He wanted us to stay together make sure we're not pointing fingers. That's a time when leadership is important because you know whenever a team gets on a run, sometimes you try to get it back in one play or sometimes you try to play one-on-one basketball, but we needed to continue to play the same way that helped us get the lead and helped us get easy baskets, and that's one of the things that he told us, and I feel like it was an important time of the game, and it definitely shows his leadership. I think just taking care of home. We owe our fans a better performance, and we know that, and we're going to play hard. You're going to see a team playing hard, very hard, the entire game. |
| We're definitely disappointed. I feel like if we weren't, there would be a problem. We all feel like we put ourselves in a great position to go further in the season, especially the last game. We were in a good place to be able to win a second game in a row, but it's been unfortunate for us. The injuries, and not only that, but us not being able to finish games the way we wanted to. We've been playing against a very good team, all credit to those guys, but we feel like we should be here and we feel like we should be a championship-contending team. The great thing about this is the experience. We were able to go to the Eastern Conference Finals, learn a lot about being in this position, and I feel like it's going to help us for next year. I learned a lot. As a player, the coaches, the players, my teammates, they pushed me the entire year to be the best player I can be. It's all credit to those guys. They brought the best out of me. Every single practice, every single time we watched film, as far as holding me accountable. Those guys just wanted me to be the best player I could be. I feel like them pushing me every single day and Brad pushing me every day made me the player I am. I'm going to use this time during the summer to continue to grow as a player so I can come back next year and help our team in any way I can. I think we've always responded to the doubt, people not believing in us. It was just unfortunate today. We got a bad start, and we couldn't get the lead. We had some great stretches where we were playing good basketball, but the start of the game was so bad, I felt like it was hard for us to come back. Even when we scored six or seven points in a row, I mean, we were still down by 20 points. Like I said, we can learn from all the mistakes that we made this year, get better as individuals over the summertime and be ready for next year. After the game, obviously, we were all disappointed in the way we ended the season, especially with the losses at home. But like you said, we were able to take a lot of positives away. Out of all the teams in the NBA, we're one of the three teams left at this time of the year, and that was one of our goals. Obviously our main goal was to make it to the championship and win it. But for us to be in the Eastern Conference Finals after the first year of this team really being together, adding additions like Al Horford and Gerald Green, I can go down the list of guys that we needed to learn to play with, and for us to talk about where we wanted to be and actually make it, it's a big-time accomplishment. But this leaves a certain taste in our mouth, getting here and not getting to the championship. Cleveland just outplayed us in this series; credit to those guys. But we'll be a better team next year, and we will make sure that we put ourselves in a great position to make the Eastern Conference Finals and give ourselves a better chance at making the championship. Yeah, it could be. I mean, it's out of our control as players. The organization is going to do whatever is best for the Celtics, which I totally respect, and I know my teammates do as well. But we can't worry about that. We had a great year together. If guys are here, if guys aren't, we all wish the best for each other. But I do feel like this is a special group. We all gave our heart every single night, played as hard as we could. I respect all my teammates, and I really appreciated playing with all the guys I had a chance to play with this year. A special group. I do. Like I said, this is our first year together -- adding Al Horford, who's a very good player -- and I feel like you only get better the more you play with each other. The sky's the limit for this team if we're able to keep together core guys and add some new pieces. I feel like Danny Ainge and our entire organization do a great job of putting the right guys together to help us be a contender for a championship. |