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| I thought they had great game plan Game 1. He was the start of it. He was my matchup, and I think they did a great job of communicating throughout the whole game, knowing where I was and knowing where our teammates was. Brad and the coaching staff did a great job in Game 1. You commend that. We have an opportunity to look at a lot of film tomorrow, and see ways they were making us uncomfortable, making myself off balance and not have a rhythm all game. So we'll be much better in Game 2. No, I've seen every coverage, pretty much. For me, Game 1 has always been a feel-out game for me, if you've ever followed my history. So I've got a good sense of the way they played me today and how I'll play going into Game 2. Every year is a different challenge, no matter if you're going against the previous Celtics team or the present. They've always been well coached. They've always had multiple guys on the floor that can do multiple things, and they've always had two-way players. That challenge has never -- it's not like it's been different. It's always been that same challenge. So for me as an individual I just try to get better every year to put myself in a position where I can be successful. Well, I mean, three-point shots is a part of our DNA. It's what makes us the best team that we can be. I think even early on with the shots that we had, we had some wide-open looks that just didn't go. I think in the first quarter, J.R. [Smith] and Kev [Kevin Love], G. Hill [George Hill], they had some great looks, they just didn't go. We're okay with that. We're absolutely okay with that. And we're going to take those same looks going into Game 2 if the opportunity presents itself. Well, like I said, I'm going to get the opportunity to break down the film tonight and tomorrow and see ways that we can be better to offensively have a much better rhythm. Well, I mean, you definitely have to adjust. That's what part of the playoff series is about. The teams adjusting from game to game and seeing ways you can be better. I think that's an obvious question. Well, I mean, you're asking a tactical question as far as something I can't control. That would be a Coach [Tyronn] Lue question if he wants to change the lineup or not. I think our coaching staff will give us the best game plan to go out and win, no matter who is in the starting lineup going into Game 2. The three-point shot has been a big part since we pretty much assembled this team four years ago, and I think it's going to be a big part of it throughout the series, as long as we continue to get the ball moving and guys feel in good rhythm. I think it started from their momentum and what they wanted to do started from the tip ball. Horford tipped it right to Jaylen Brown and it looked like we had two on them, and next thing you know he's getting a lay-up right off the tip. So that kind of set the tone right there. We missed some shots, they made some shots. Horford hit a big three and also was able to get an and one and get Kev his early two quick fouls. So it kind of just started from the beginning. What do you mean? Are you asking me were they more physical or are you saying? No, physical basketball is part of playoffs. That's what you expect. I don't think you can just say that because you're not on the floor, but physical basketball is part of the postseason. So it's easy to make a narrative when you win or lose to say, okay, you guys played bad offensively and you lost, and then you win, and it's like, oh, you played better. So physical basketball started from Game 1 in the Indiana series when Indiana punched us in the mouth too in Game 1, and it's been like that throughout. I don't think so. I thought offensively we got to where we wanted to get to, but they also shut off a few things that they wanted to do as well. But I don't think it was a rhythm thing. We had some really good looks. We had been off before in previous years when we had weeks and week and a half. So that has nothing to do with it. At the end of the day you play the game when the schedule comes out and you get ready to go. What happened? We ran them -- the first possession we ran them down all the way to two on the shot clock. Marcus Morris missed the jumpshot, fouled it up, they got a dunk. We came back down, we ran a set for Jordan Clarkson, and he came off and missed it. They rebounded it, and we came back on the defensive end and we got a stop. They took it out on the sideline. Jayson Tatum took the ball out, through it to Marcus Morris in the short corner, he made a three. We come back down, missed another shot. Then Tatum came down and went 94 feet, did a Euro step and made a right-hand lay-up, timeout. There you go. I have zero level of concern at this stage. I didn't go to college, so it's not March Madness. You know, you get better throughout the series. You see ways you can get better throughout the series. But I've been down 0-1, I've been down 0-2. I've been down before in the postseason. But for me, there's never no level of concern no matter how bad I played tonight with seven turnovers, how inefficient I was shooting the ball. I'm just as confident going into a series whether it's a 0-0 series or I'm down 0-1. So we have another opportunity to be better as a ball club coming in Tuesday night, and we'll see what happens. |
| I felt like I needed to go back to the locker room, which I did, and kind of recalibrate. It was a tough blow. Obviously incidental. His shoulder hit me right square in my jaw. Just wanted to go back to the back and make sure everything was fine. But I don't think it -- it didn't affect my game after that. No, I don't think so. I think that's easy to say. I think we had some good looks. We had an opportunity. It was a two-possession game. We were down six. We had a great trap in the corner on Jaylen Brown, and I felt like we played great defense and a foul was called on Al Horford, he goes and makes two, we don't score, and it kind of sends it back to a 10-point game after that. Not as well as we would like to play in the second half. It was a two-possession game at one point. We had a great defensive sequence that ended up in a foul for them, so that didn't work out for us. I think Marcus always makes plays at the right time. His ability to play multiple positions, but they put the ball in his hands and they trust him to take plays for others. He has a really uncanny ability to get into the lane and either creates for himself or create for others, and he did that tonight with the nine assists and also had some offensive rebounds and also some missed shots. He's always been very productive for their ballclub. With turnovers. Turnovers and not defending full shot clock, especially in that third quarter. We've had our third quarter woes this whole season, and tonight was another example of that. We have an opportunity to go back home, protect home court. We're going to use these days to really dive in on what needs to be done to help our ballclub be successful. They did what they had to do, and that was protect home, and now it's our time to try to do that, as well. We have a few days, like I said, and we're going to see what we're made of on Saturday. I was checked for multiple things, and I passed them all. That's why I was able to come back and finish the half. How will I digest it? I'm going to go home tonight and see my three kids, see my family, recalibrate, see my mom. I think I'll be fine. I'm not going to lose sleep over it. You go out and when you lay everything on the line, at the end of the day, you can live with that. I'll recalibrate as far as how I can help this team continue to be successful, how I can do some things to make us be even more complete, and I probably -- the only way I probably won't get no sleep tonight is if Kev [Love] don't get asked a question asked. I'm going to lose a lot of sleep if someone doesn't ask him a question. I'm leaving. I mean, it's the Playoffs, so we expected for it to be physical. I wouldn't expect anything less. I think we matched the physicality today. We gave ourselves a pretty good chance with 36 minutes, and that 12 minutes in the third quarter, that killed us. But as far as the physicality of the game, I think we was what we needed to be as far as that. |
| Just tried to put myself in position to help our team. I think tonight as a group, even when things broke down, we just covered for one another. We made them make extra passes. We made them make extra dribbles. We were flying around, and I just happened to be one of the guys on the floor that wanted to fly around as well. I don't know. I think my passing is up there with every other aspect of my game. It was something I kind of just knew I had when I first started playing the game of basketball, to be able to see things develop before they actually developed. Then it was on me to kind of put the ball on time, on target to my teammates ever since I was a kid, and I started playing at age 9. To rate those -- first of all, with Tristan and Larry, being able to set the screen and get the man off my body for me to create some separation. The first left-handed pass to Larry, I was able to keep my defender on my back for a little bit. I saw their bigs step up just a little bit, and me having the ball in my left hand, I could pass with either hand so I was able to kind of shuffle a bounce pass to him for him to dunk it. The second one to Tristan was going right. Tristan set a great screen, and Marcus [Morris] tried to steal for the ball so I was able to go behind my back to the left-hand side and then I saw [Aron] Baynes step out onto the floor so I was able to wrap that around him to Tristan. And then on the third one, I rejected a screen-and-roll and Baynes stepped up again. I saw Marcus trailing me a little bit, so I saw I had the wrap-around pass because the other defender on the weak side didn't pull in on Tristan. I don't know. Seemed easy, right? They're all pretty difficult. Don't try it at home. (Laughter). It's very important for our guards to be aggressive. No matter if they are making shots or not, we want them to be aggressive. It just keeps the defense at bay. It allows me and Kevin to have more open lanes as well when those guys are being aggressive, looking for their shots. You saw that in G-Hill's mindset to start the game. He just had an aggressive mindset that if they're going to slide under his pick-and-rolls, he's going to shoot it. He gets a swing-swing, he's going to shoot it. He's going to attack. And the same for J.R. We always sit up here and talk about how much pressure me and Kev try to take off our teammates. Those guys took pressure off us tonight. Their aggression just settled us in and allowed us to play free as well. Well, I think if you look at any boxscore throughout the postseason or throughout the regular season, if you're able to get four, five, six guys in double figures, most of the time that team is going to win. You look at the shot chart -- me with 12 and Kev with 12; G-Hill with 11 and even Jordan [Clarkson], his 18 minutes throwing up 11 attempts as well is just well-balanced. Obviously every game doesn't work out that way. We can sit up here and say why doesn't it happen like that every game, but it's just not how the game works every game. But tonight was good ingredients of that for us to be able to get everybody involved. Even Kyle [Korver], his shots in the second half, J.R.'s shots, everybody felt in good rhythm. It's my job when everybody is in a good rhythm to just make sure I get the ball exactly where my guys need it, where all they can think about is just shooting it and just trying to put it on time on target. |
| Obviously we were a lot better defensively, flying around and making them take contested shots and making them make the extra pass and still being able to fly around. Our communication level has been up obviously in the last two games. As loud as it is in the Garden, we've got to be able to transfer that energy and that communication into Game 5 in order for us to be better than we were in Game 1 and 2. I mean, we don't know what we're going to see in Game 5. Only the game gods know that. We know it's going to be a hostile environment. We know their fans are going to be very energetic. But we have to just have our same mindset we had when we came home for these two games. If our minds are there, we put ourselves in a position to be victorious. I've loved Kyle ever since we made the trade to get him here. I have no idea how Griff [David Griffin] was able to pull that off still to this day. He's just a true professional. There's not many of us '03 class guys still around. I feel like we're just cut from a different cloth because we've been around for so long. We have this work ethic and you see him every day putting in the work, putting his mind, his body into it. It's not about his age. I think it's just always keeping his body in the right position, especially in tonight's game. He's guarding -- how old is Jaylen Brown? Can somebody help me? 21? He's guarding Jaylen Brown, one of the most athletic wings we have in our league. He's 21 years old. Jaylen can fall on the ground 10 times and probably spring up and just as likely never feel it. I don't remember Kyle falling too much like that. I've got to keep his body as fresh as possible. But listen, he's doing whatever it takes to try to help us win, with the blocks, with the strips. Obviously his shot making is very key for our team as well, but it's just the intangibles he's doing for us defensively that has put him in a position to be on the floor. Like you guys always hear me preach about, the best teacher in life is experience. From Game 1 in Indy until now, the experience, the atmosphere, he understands what the postseason is all about now. The more and more time he gets, no matter if it's the 10 minutes he got tonight or if it's the extended time in Game 3, he continues to play good ball for us. That's key for our team, and it's key for him as well as he continues to grow. Yeah, there's not a defense that I have not seen. There's only so many that you can actually provide on the basketball floor, and I've seen them all. Pretty much through when I started to play high school until now, so I've seen them all. But they do a really good job with their communication, trying to force you to do things that you -- try to not do so well or kind of second-guess yourself. For me, that's why I put in the work in between days and try to work on my game to where I don't -- you can't force me to do something I don't want to do or I don't have too much of a weakness. I work on every aspect of my game. But more importantly, my teammates are putting me in position and wanting me to be in attack mode and trusting me to put our guys in position to be successful. It's not about me. It's about the collective group, and I'm one of the byproducts of that. I don't know. Listen, any time I'm in the same breath with the greats, I know you guys hear me say it over and over, it's just humbling. To know where I come from, you guys know a little bit of the story. But you guys don't know the full story about where I come from and the struggle that I had. You guys know about the single-parent struggle, and y'all done heard that story. But there's a lot more to it, which I'll talk about when I'm done playing ball. But to know where I come from, small city 35 miles south of here, and to hear I'm in the same category or talked about and jumping these greats in the playoffs -- it's like I was a kid and I watched the playoffs so much and I was like, I would love to be a part of that, that moment, that atmosphere. I think it's pretty cool. You hear the scoring, the field goals made, and for a kid that really doesn't care much about scoring. I'm just watching them, breaking down film and seeing what's the best possible chance for us to be successful versus their defense. I think this league is all predicated on trying to find mismatches. That's every team. If you look at the four teams in the postseason now, Houston is trying to find mismatches, Golden State is trying to find mismatches, Boston, and us as well. We're all trying to find mismatches for us to try to be successful offensively. It's not much of a secret. You just try to execute once you get the mismatch or you feel like you have a position where you can be successful offensively. Then you try to execute or just try to get a bucket. We've been very successful in the last two games with doing that. Boston was very successful the first two games with doing that. Tristan has been everything for our defense since he got back into the rotation, got back into the starting lineup. He's just been who who I've grown to know over the last four years. Just always taking the one-on-one challenge. Just having this meanness and toughness about him, not only offensively but more importantly defensively versus anybody. He will guard anybody. That's not saying that they won't score on him, but he will always take the challenge. He won't shy away from any competition. He's been great in the postseason. It's not even these last two games, but in the postseason in general. |
| I had my moments. But I think everybody at this point is tired or worn down or whatever the case may be. Still trying to make plays to help our team win, put us in position to win. We had moments. We had an opportunity, but we didn't make enough plays. Well, I think defensively we held them to 36 percent shooting. I think turnovers was another thing. We had 15 turnovers for 15 points. But defensively we were in tune. We gave up 96 points. Offensively, we couldn't make. We couldn't make. We were 9-for-34 from the three-point line, missed seven free throws. Obviously in the postseason, scoring 83 points, you're not going to win many games like that. But defensively we gave ourselves a chance. We stuck in the game. Even in the fourth quarter we made a run and cut it down to 11. At one point we had two opportunities to cut it to single digits and missed some really good looks, two three-pointers. We couldn't make. And if you don't make, it's going to come back to bite you. We've got to defend like we did tonight. We've got to make some shots; that definitely would help. I think going back home, we have a comfort level. A lot of our guys have a comfort level of being back home and playing off the fans and playing off our crowd, playing off that court, being more comfortable being back home for Game 6. We look forward to having an opportunity to force a Game 7. It's up to us to see if we can come back here for one more. No, not at all, because I've never went to any season saying, OK, let's have a Finals streak. It's just all about just win every game and it should put us in position to play for a championship. I've been in championship mode since probably '09. We weren't able to get there then. Obviously I made the move to Miami. I was able to go there four straight. And three straight since I've been back here. It just happens because I've been able to play with some great players, play with some great teammates, coaching staffs that have been able to put us in position to go to The Finals. I've never said, OK, this is my third one or let's try to take to a fourth. It's just the way the game has been played and I've been able to be successful. We have another opportunity on Friday to be as good as we can be, play Cavs basketball on our home floor and force a Game 7. You're asking me or -- my confidence? Well, for me I think I look forward to seeing us respond on Friday night. I know how well we've played at home in this postseason. That's the only thing I can worry about right now. I'm not worried about a Game 7. You have to worry about Game 6. You can't put yourself in that moment until you take care of the present. We're going to have another opportunity tomorrow to watch some film, go over some things that we can do better -- as we've done after every game in the postseason -- and see ways we can be even better for Game 6. I don't know. I have no idea. You have your coaching staff prep you. They put you in position. They feel like this is the best for us to be as good as we can be as a ballclub, and it's up to us to go out and execute it. Everybody is different. I know how I prepare myself. I know how I prepare going into each and every game, no matter if it's elimination or 0-0, whatever the case may be in a playoff game. So I can speak for myself and know what my mindset will be on just trying to help us, like I said, do every facet of the game, to try to extend the series. We'll see what happens. No, I knew exactly what they were going to do tonight. They switched it up a couple times with their defense as far as what they were doing with my pick-and-rolls when I was either setting or handling. But at this point, it's not even really about X's and O's. I've seen all the defenses that they can put out there, so nothing was surprising. I'll speak in the present, and I think they're a very well-coached, well-balanced, hungry team. They've got a bunch of young guys that were drafted very high and drafted very high for a reason, because they can do multiple things. They can be aggressive offensively. They can defend. They can shoot. They can put the ball on the floor. They can make plays for themselves and for others. I can speak for this moment right now. I don't want to really talk about other previous teams I've played against. I've played against a championship Boston Celtics team before, in '08, when they beat us in seven games. But right now this is the present, and this team is really good. Like I said, they're well-coached, they're well-balanced and we like the challenge. No. No. I'm fine. And I didn't mention the fatigue, either. One of you guys did. I'm fine. I had two turnovers where I felt like they were really bad. My first turnover, I saw something happening and Marcus Morris did a great job of reading it. I threw it up ahead to Kev [Kevin Love], and he picked it off. My second turnover, I went baseline, lost my footing on Marcus Morris, another turnover. A couple of them, one in transition to Jeff Green, I thought I put it on his hands, and he kind of fumbled it. Wish I could have that one back and maybe bounce pass that one. I had a backdoor one to Swish [J.R. Smith]. It hit his hands. Maybe I should have not thrown that one. It was a little bit in traffic. Al Horford was right there, but it hit Swish's hands. Maybe I should have taken that one back. I had a post-up on Terry Rozier that they doubled from the baseline. Jayson Tatum got his hands on him and I had a guy wide open. I should have faked high and thrown it low. My last turnover was just very, very careless on Terry Rozier. We had a pick-and-roll, I got the switch and I just lost it out of bounds away from their basket. So that's my six turnovers. I think out of those six, maybe three of them were just careless. I think the other three were attack turnovers, and I'm OK with that. |
| I think they responded exceptionally well. Our second quarter, our guys that came off the bench -- Jordan [Clarkson], Jeff [Green], Kyle [Korver] and Larry [Nance Jr.] -- they just gave us a huge boost in that second quarter. That's the reason why we outscored them by 16 in that second quarter. It was just huge. We needed it obviously more than ever tonight with the situation that we were in. I didn't get a good look at it, either, or I would have been able to avoid it. After the game, I didn't know who got me. But after the game Larry asked me if I was I OK, so I'm guessing he was the culprit of it. I just felt someone fall into my leg and my leg kind of went in. I felt some pain throughout my entire right side of my ankle into my leg. I was just hoping for the best, obviously, because I've seen so many different injuries, and watching basketball with that type of injury, someone fall into one's leg standing straight up. Luckily, I was able to finish the game. The love of the game causes reactions like that. Understanding the situation and understanding the moment that you're in. It was just a feeling that you can't explain unless you've been a part of it. That's all. Just try to put myself in the best possible shape each and every year to be able to go for the long haul. Now, obviously I get a minute, couple minutes here, per quarter, would be great, but it's not what our team is built on right now. Our team is built on me being out on the floor to be able to make plays, not only for myself but make plays for others. It's just the way we've been playing, and we've been succeeding with it. I was able to play 46 minutes today. I got my couple minutes, I guess. Well, I wasn't coming out in either case. Obviously, I would have had to literally have a real, real, really bad injury -- I don't even know if this is ... that's not even wood; I'll find some on the way out -- to come off the floor with the opportunity we have to be able to force a Game 7. Just go out, trust what you've built on all year. For me, I don't put too much added pressure on myself. I just go out and play my game. It's a Game 7. It's something that you wish you had when you're done playing, but more than that, it's just basketball for me. I know what I'm capable of doing, and I'm going to trust everything I put into it. As soon as I leave here, I'll start to prepare. I'm going to get in the car and head back to Akron. As soon as I get home, I'll start my treatment. I'll do the same all day tomorrow from before we leave to go to Boston, and then once we get into Boston I'll do that as well. Try to get as much sleep as I can with tonight and with tomorrow and even on Sunday before the game. That's the best recovery that you can possibly get, is when you're sleeping. It'll be around-the-clock treatment, and we'll see what happens. I don't know. I don't really talk to myself much, to be honest. I don't talk to myself much. I just go out and play. I have a drive. I have a love of the game. I have a passion for the game, and while I have the opportunity to lace my shoes up and put a uniform on, then I try to go out and do my job to the best of my ability. Does it always work out? Obviously, no. I'm not undefeated in my career. Does it always -- me playing great? I haven't always played great in my career. But I just always want to try to maximize when I'm on the floor, and I've been able to do that in my 15th year so far. You've got to be poised. You've got to be able to handle a punch or two. And you've got to be able to combat that and be just as solid and just as aggressive on the offensive end. We know it's challenging. They're 10-0 on their home floor, and they've been very successful against us, obviously, at home. But if you love challenges, then this is a great opportunity. What's your name? I appreciate you saying I've been clutch my whole career. There's not many like you, I tell you. There's not many like you. Either you're being very kind to me because it's National Wine Day or you know I love Brazil or I don't know what it is right now, but -- OK. There we go. No, I guess just being -- first of all, my teammates and my coaching staff have given me the reins to take the shot or make the play late in games. When you have that ability and when you have that confidence from your 14 teammates and then your coaching staff and then you put the work into it, it's just a matter of just trying to come through. Like I said, I haven't always done it in my whole career, but I've never shied away from it. That's either making a shot or making a play. I was taught the game the right way ever since I ever started playing the game of basketball. My first year ever playing little league basketball, we won a championship. My coach at the banquet gave everybody an MVP trophy. Everybody. And that right then, I knew that this is a team game. It's not about one individual and how much one individual can do in order to win championships. In order to win, you have to have a full team. And that's what it brought it down to me. The second year we won it again, and we all got MVP trophies again. It's just been instilled in me since I was 9 years old, when I first started playing, of what it means to be in a situation where your teammates rely on you. Just making the right play no matter if it's a shot or if it's a pass. I've always just been taught that. I've embraced a lot of situations as you grow up. I think that's just all part of experience and things of that nature. I mean, I love being a husband now. Did I embrace that at 18, 19? I don't think so. I mean, I've never been around married couples. As you get older, you just grow into more things. I didn't love wine until I was 30 years old, and now every other post is about wine, National Wine Day. So you learn and you grow and you know what's best for you as you get older. That's just all of us. I think that's what being a human being is. You find ways that you feel like you can grow and what you like and what you dislike. At 18, I don't think I'm the same player that I am today at 33, and I shouldn't be. I don't think me personally I should be the same person that I was at 18. I'm just much more seasoned. |
| To be honest, I haven't even really kind of processed it. It was a great atmosphere tonight to be a part of that, be a part of another Game 7 on the road. Those are things, like I said, when you're done playing the game, you can only dream and wish that you could be a part of that once again. I haven't really processed the fact about going back to another Finals yet. I know that's where we're headed. I commend my teammates and my coaching staff and everybody that put the work in, even some of our staff that is not in the limelight, behind the scenes. This was a complete team effort. I don't know. I just know it's the present, and that's what I'm all about. I'm a guy who lives in the present. For me, I just want to try to make plays tonight to help our ballclub win, to put myself in position, put my teammates in position to be successful. We were able to do that. There was a lot said, but more importantly, it was just a mutual respect and the competition. Me and Al, we've had a lot of battles in the postseason and been on a lot of All-Star teams together. I've always had a lot of mutual respect for Al and the way he conducts himself, not only as a player but as a professional, both on and off the floor. That was the moment there. And then with Jayson, I just love everything about the kid -- the way he plays the game, his demeanor, where he comes from. I know his parents. I just know he's just built for stardom. He's built for success. And that's both on and off the floor. Two guys right there that -- Boston is very lucky to have them. It's what's been asked of me, and I have to be able to just try to figure it out. I don't know how I can compare it to other seasons because I can only think about this one in the present. It was asked of me tonight to play the whole game, and I just tried to figure out how I could get through it. Throughout timeouts, I was able to catch my breath. At halftime, I didn't come out and warm up. That was my time to recalibrate and catch my wind again. It's what's been asked of me from this ballclub. I'm the leader of this team, and I'm going to give what I've got. My teammates, they respect that. Well, it's now six. It was five, now it's six. It's now six seasons in one. I guess this is the last chapter for our team in this season. It's been a whirlwind. I mean, it's been Cedar Point. Sorry for you guys that don't know much about Cedar Point, but it's been a roller coaster. It's been good, it's been bad, it's been roses. There have been thorns in the roses. There's been everything that you can ask for. I've said this has been one of the most challenging seasons I've had. But like I told you guys, you guys are around us every day, right before the break, right before the trade deadline, I kind of reset. Didn't know if we were going to make trades or not. Didn't know what we were going to do with our team. But I just kind of reset my mindset and said, OK, this is the season and let's try to make the most of it. That's what's gotten me to this point, gotten our team to this point. His number was called, and he just answered the call. It's amazing. Listen, at the end of the day, what he does on the basketball floor is extra credit. This guy had open-heart surgery a few years ago. The game was basically taken away from him, and they said it's possible you'll never play the game of basketball again. The fact that he can put on a uniform every day and do the things that he does out on the floor -- I don't care if he makes a shot. To make big plays like he made tonight -- for him personally, it's the cherry on top because the game was taken away from him. So for him to be able to do what he did last game after Kev's injury and then obviously start tonight, it's big time. I mean, I don't know because I don't really hear it. I don't really get involved in it. I kind of know the narrative throughout the season if we lose. If we have a bad month, I already know what's going to happen on the outside world. I've been a part of it. If we win, I know the narrative. I get it. It's all a part of the storyline. But me personally, I don't really get involved in it. I'm kind of over that at this point in my career. But I think Coach Lue, he feeds off of it. Some of our teammates kind of feed off of it, on just people counting us out and counting them out personally. I think this tonight was another example of counting my guys out, saying they've been struggling, they won't play well on the road and whatever the case may be. And counting my coach out. I think they all rose to the occasion. I mean, if I did, I wouldn't tell you. I wouldn't tell you. (Laughter.) That's a good question. You tried to get me there, right? the end of the day, the game is won in between the lines, and we have an opportunity to play for a championship. That's all that matters. No matter what the storyline is going to be, no matter if we're picked to win or not, let's just go out and play ball. We're going to have a great game plan. We're going to try to get better throughout the series, and we'll see what happens. For me, I don't know, I'm kind of like the wrong guy to ask because I just like to compete. I have a love for the game. I have a passion for the game, and everything else will take care of itself. I think defensively we were just very, very sharp. Very, very sharp. We were flying around. We were moving around and that continued to just keep us into the game. Even with some of the plays that we made in the first half where we weren't knocking down shots, I always kept my confidence in my teammates and know that if we had the same opportunity in the second half they were going to knock them down. And they did just that. It's been a satisfaction in the fact that I like to be successful. But more importantly, just the work that I put into it. I mean, it's an every-single-day work ethic that I have while I'm playing this game, while I have the ability to play this game at this level. I love the competition. I think about the teams that I've played over this run and the players that I've played over this run, slightly. But more importantly, me just being healthy. I've been healthy throughout this run. I put a lot of work into my body, into my craft. Being available to my teammates and being available to my franchise, the two franchises I've been with, and throughout this run is what's been more important to me than anything. Always being available. I'll be available for at least four more games. And we'll see what happens. |