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| Paying attention to detail. I don't think in the beginning that we were physical enough. You have to get a feel for how hard Miami plays. I think they smacked us in the mouth, and we got a sense of that. And so we knew how hard we had to play if we wanted to try to make it a game. You know, from that moment when it was 23-10, we started to play to our capabilities. We started flying around. We started getting defensive stops. We started sharing the ball a lot better offensively and just got into a really good groove. I don't feel anything. I expect it out of him. Didn't need to give him no advice. We've been preparing for this moment all season. He's been preparing for this moment all season. I'm happy to be on the same floor with him and in the same uniform. He was, once again, a force in every facet of the game, offensively and defensively. Felt great. Felt great. I've been preparing for this moment for quite a while. Fans, no fans, the inner challenge for myself and the way I prepare myself, it felt amazing to be playing in the Finals once again. We've got so much more work to do. The job is not done. We're not satisfied with winning one game. It's that simple. The best teacher in life is experience. I've experienced moments in my career where you have all the momentum in the world and you felt like you had the game under control, and one play here or one play there could change the course of a series or change the course of a game. One in particular that always rings home for me is Game 2 of the 2011 Finals in Miami versus Dallas. D-Wade hits a three right by their bench. I believe it put us up either 13 or 17. From that moment on, Dallas went on a hell of a run and finished it off with a Dirk Nowitzki left-hand layup to steal that game. That (expletive) burns me to this day. I always talk about the best teacher in life is experience, and I've experienced a lot. That's what prompts me to be who I am today, is being able to have those experiences. Yeah, absolutely. I think you can learn so much more from a win than you can in a loss. I can't wait for tomorrow for us to get back together and watch the film and see ways we can be better and see some of the breakdowns that we had, especially in that fourth quarter, especially in that first six minutes of the first quarter where we can be so much better defensively and also so much better offensively. So I can't wait. I'm extremely amped up about watching the film with our ballclub tomorrow. I'm going to watch some tonight obviously by myself, but I'm looking forward to getting together as a group tomorrow. Because we have great spacing and great shooters. KCP, Danny Green, Kyle Kuzma and Markieff Morris, a list of guys that can spread the floor, it allows myself and AD to be able to do the things that we do in the interior. We try to mix up our game, too. We try to mix it in in the interior and the exterior. But when you have guys that could space the floor like we have, it allows us to do some of the things that we do in the paint. I'm not sure. I've never called him that. We've never called him that. We only call him Do. So that would be a Do question. But you know, just having him in this moment, having him on our side, and I think he mentioned yesterday or whenever Media Day was for the Finals, you just don't -- you never know. You don't get these moments a lot. It's been over a decade since he's been in the Finals. I think he's just cherishing the moment, but also just playing the game that he loves to play -- the cerebral way, the determined way, the championship way, as he's been playing for quite a while now. |
| You know, obviously being in high school, watching the Kobe-Shaq duo was the most dominant duo that I have personally seen in my life from a basketball perspective. Obviously we knew the force that Shaq brought to the table, but the elegance and force that Kobe played with, as well. They were very dominant in what they did on the floor, on both sides of the floor. So to be in the conversation with those two guys, myself and Anthony, myself and AD -- he's going to kill me -- myself and AD, is just very humbling, because I know I grew up watching those guys. I grew up admiring Kobe; obviously, a kid coming straight out of high school. Admired that, as a kid when I was young, and obviously got the opportunity. And the force that Shaq played with. It's very humbling that we can be even mentioned with those greats. I definitely agree. Myself, Coach and AD were not happy with our defensive presence tonight. We know we can be a lot better and we're just, myself and AD, we're not satisfied with just the win. We want to be great. We want to be great, as close to 48 minutes as possible. I know I said it after Game 1, but I'm extremely excited to watch the film tomorrow, as well as a group, to see ways we can be better. We're playing against a very dangerous team in Miami, where they have five guys on the floor that's a threat, as they have shown tonight. So we have to continue to stay on our P's and Q's and cross our T's and dot our I's throughout the course of a game, and if we have a breakdown, being able to cover for one another. But they do a great job of putting your defense in positions that you may not be accustomed to. We definitely were not happy with our performance defensively tonight. Hopefully we can be -- well, we know, not hopefully, we know we can be better in Game 3. Well, I guess if you look in the sense of the size and the power and the speed that Shaq at his size played with, you could look at my game throughout the course of my career and say that. And then you look at the elegance and the ability to shoot the ball and the ability to play in the paint as well as post up and get to the perimeter, I guess you can say that you can have some of AD's game that could compare to Kobe's game in that sense. Obviously, all four of us are all different positions. Kobe was a natural 2-guard. I'm kind of a, I don't know, whatever position. Shaq is a center. AD is kind of a hybrid, as well. But I guess all four of us, we have a winning mentality and we just tried to make enough plays out on the floor throughout the course of the game that would benefit not only ourselves individually but for the most important thing, for the better of the team. I can't even believe I'm up here talking about myself and AD with Kobe and Shaq. Check his résumé. It's that simple. I mean, he's put in the work. He's been there through everything that the Heat franchise has seen. He's seen it all, done it all. Just check his résumé. There's not many guys that talk about it and also be about it, and he's one of them. If you want to be in the foxhole, that's somebody you want to be in the foxhole with. I think I was talking about force because Shaq's name came up. There's no way that you can talk about Shaq and not have that word come up. From the team's perspective, I think we've done a good job of, one, not turning the ball over, but also still being able to play with force, as you would say. Play with tempo offensively, get good looks. Get good looks that we like and, make or miss, live with the results. We have to play with that type of force defensively, but also from the cerebral side, as well. Thinking the game a little bit better as they are going through their offense and their pace and their force, as well. We've got to be a lot better obviously on that side. For one, from a competitive standpoint, going against Frank's teams in Indiana when we had our battles and I was in Miami, you understood how well those teams were coached. It starts with the head coach, and the players are an extension of the head coach. So I had that memory of that, just battling those Indiana Pacers teams. And then for me, I've always been a coachable player throughout my whole life. I've played for multiple coaches and I've always been a coachable player. So you know, the respect, more importantly, he's the head coach. The head coach should have the respect from all his players, no matter who you are, if you're really serious about trying to make an impact or really trying to do something special. It was just that simple for me personally. |
| We know that we can't turn the ball over versus this team. They are very active defensively. It starts with myself, being the starting point guard of the team, having five first-half turnovers, eight total for the game. Can't do that, obviously, because it gives them more possessions and doesn't allow us to set our defense. They are really, really good offensively, so you just can't turn the ball over against that team. I take full responsibility for that. I thought Jimmy was phenomenal. He did everything that they needed him to do tonight and he came through big time in a big-time game. We'll watch film and see ways we can be better going into Game 4. But I thought he was great. I mean, you just said it, he got into some foul trouble. You know, they even -- one of the shots he made when he had four fouls, they still tried to slide underneath him and get him a fifth in the third. I think the foul trouble made him a little passive, because he wanted to be out on the floor but he couldn't be his aggressive self offensively and defensively. I think the fouls slowed him down a lot tonight. They continued to make shots, and we had some turnovers. We didn't make shots. They came out and executed after we took the lead. Jimmy, like I said, he had his hand on all those plays pretty much. Obviously, we have to do a better job of that coming down the stretch. But I like our fight tonight, even as poorly as I believe we played. When you have an opportunity and you don't make the most of it, then you come back the next time. I mean, it's not like the series was over if we won tonight. We know for sure that Miami is never going to quit, no matter if we won tonight and they go into a Game 4, 3-0. I know how resilient that bunch is and how resilient that coaching staff is and their franchise. I don't ever feel like we let our guard down. Also, I don't feel like we're concerned. We're not concerned. We know we can play a lot better. We have another opportunity to take a commanding lead on Tuesday. You relish that opportunity. We learn from our mistakes pretty quick. You know, obviously right now with the games being every other day pretty much, it's the film room. It's the film room and it's how well we can make adjustments from the film and take it to the floor, and we have done a great job throughout this postseason. So we are going to definitely have to do that because we're playing against a very, very, very, very good team. We have to learn from our mistakes and be better on Tuesday. Love it. Love it. One of the best competitors we have in our game. We love that opportunity. For me personally, I don't know how many more opportunities I'm going to have, so to be able to go against a fierce competitor like that is something I'll look back on when I'm done playing. I'll miss those moments. Both. I just think we can be better, obviously. I don't think we started the game defensively in tune, and then offensively taking care of the ball. Like I said, we had some careless turnovers. It starts with me, like I said, and I take full responsibility for that. I'll be a lot better on Tuesday with that, understanding that they are very good with their hands. They are very good with the stripping. You can't allow this team to have extra possessions. You can't turn the ball over at that high a rate, especially at this point in the season, as well. I'll be a lot better with the security of the ball and the turnovers and things of that nature. We as a team will be a lot better defensively with our game plan. |
| At the end of the day, if you're on the floor at crunch time, then I believe in you. Whoever is out on the floor with me, I believe can make plays, and tonight was a case in point of KCP. Stays ready. He works on his craft. Like you said, that three in front of their bench was a huge three, and obviously the drive at the end of the shot clock was two big back-to-back plays in the fourth quarter, where we needed to continue to score versus this team. It's kind of two different things, two different points you're making. You never stop striving to be perfect or be great. And you know that a perfect game is not going to happen, but that don't mean you still don't strive to be as great as you can be every night. Now, every game has its own adjustments and things of that nature, and tonight was one of those games where we had to win on the defensive end and make some timely shots. But I think when you start thinking like, okay, well, I can't be great tonight or we can't be great tonight, okay, we just have to figure it out, then you sell yourself short. Me personally, I would never do that as long as I lace them up and put on a uniform. But I love what we did tonight. I think the fourth quarter, obviously it's winning time. You've got 12 minutes to buckle down defensively with the lead, kind of hold that lead, and then you have to execute offensively. Obviously, I didn't know the stat coming into tonight. But for us, that's just the mindset. We've got 12 minutes. If we have the lead, it's our job to outscore the opponent or to hold them to [as many] points as us, which is the same exact thing, because if we win the quarter, we win the game. That's kind of been our mindset all year long. He's a big shot-maker late in the shot clock, early in the shot clock, fourth quarter, first quarter, everything in between. It was just a great set up by Do [Rajon Rondo]. The possession before that, Do was able to fake it like he was going back to him, carry himself into the lane and get a layup. And then the very next possession, he was able to find him and AD just kind of stared at the shot clock, knew it was late in the shot clock and obviously trusted his shot that he works on consistently. So big-time shot, big-time play for our team to be able to put the game away. You kind of know momentum plays and momentum shots, the score and the time, what's going on within the last few possessions. They were going back and forth with us, and we were going back and forth with them. Duncan Robinson hits one off the glass at the end of the shot clock for a three. Bam hits one off the glass right there before that we thought possibly went out; obviously it didn't count. Herro hit some big shots. Me and Do had a clean rebound, we're both going for it and we smash each other in the paint. They kick it out to Jae Crowder and he hits a shot. To be able to get some stops and then make a timely shot, up six, you know if you make that shot, that three to put you up nine at that point in time of the game, then you know that you want to get one more stop obviously, but you have the time on your side because it's a three-possession game with 39 seconds. Most veteran ballclubs will be able to survive that. Just a big-time play, big-time moment not only for AD but for our ballclub and our franchise. No. I mean, for me, it doesn't matter. I can go every other day if that's the case. But I'm going to take full advantage of it. Gives me an opportunity to continue to get my body right, my mind, everything in between. I'll take full advantage of it, but it does nothing for me besides just getting a little extra day -- I guess it does. I guess it does do some, but it's not needed for me personally. There's certain momentum plays throughout the first half. There's a certain rhythm that you have either offensively or defensively that if that call is made correctly, then you continue to stay in that zone. You continue to stay in that rhythm. And if the call is wrong, it can throw you off of your rhythm. So we've wanted to challenge some things in the first half that we just felt like, okay, even if we were right, maybe that's not the time; we've still got our rhythm, we're good, whatever the case may be. But we felt like in that particular moment, we were playing some really good basketball. We were defending at a high level, and we knew for sure, we knew 100 percent, because I was guarding the ball, I knew for sure I didn't touch the ball. Herro tried to float it over me and it hit the backboard, then hit the wire. Coach is always kind of like, you know, 50/50 about it, and obviously as a player on the floor, you hate to tell your coach to challenge when you're not 100 percent. But I was for sure 100 percent about that play. For me, I mean, at this point in the season, I don't care about rest. I really don't. I don't care about sleep. I don't care about resting throughout the game. Obviously, I come out of the game. Coach has a rhythm and rotation that we live by and we go by. But I don't care about resting because I can rest in a week, max, if it happens to go there. I could rest for a month straight, which I won't do because of who I am; you guys know that. But I can rest then. I can sleep eight hours and get up and eat and then go right back to sleep if I want to. When I woke up from my nap this morning after our team meeting, I just felt that. I felt that vibe. I felt that pressure. I felt like for me personally, this was one of the biggest games of my career. I just wanted to relay that message to my teammates, the type of zone I was in, the type of moment it was, and the kind of team we were playing against. After the Game 3 win, that confidence they had, the confidence they still have even after tonight's loss. They are just a gritty, so damn-well-coached team. I feel like if we're going to be a championship ballclub, if we want to really be a championship team, that we got to have that same grit and that same attitude. It was my mindset. I'm still in it. You can see my mind kind of working right now. Yeah, that's why he's the Defensive Player of the Year. We said that all year. His ability to play one through five, guard anybody on the floor, take the challenge, not only guard on the perimeter, continue to protect the paint. Guards drive on him. It's hard to score on him. You see how high Herro threw that ball up? It went in, but he had to throw that thing up to the skyscrapers, right? That guy can do everything defensively. Guarding the ball, guard the post, slide his feet with guards, contest, can body up with bigs. I mean, need I say more? I think that's the best part. That's the best part. I get so excited -- like right now, I'm excited about our meeting tomorrow watching film and breaking that down and seeing things that we can do better. Seeing things that we did do well. Thinking about the adjustments that they possibly or will do, because I know Spo going into Game 5. That's the best part about it. It's a chess match. When you get to this point in your career, having your mind at a high level is so much more than the physical because we're all -- at this point, we're all great players. We're all here for a reason. We're in the Finals, Both conferences, anybody that is on the floor, they are on the floor for a reason. To be able to think through the game and understand and see the adjustments and try to make plays before plays even seem like they are going to be possible, that's the best part for me personally. |
| I mean for me, I've always stayed even keeled. You know, throughout the highs, throughout the lows, you stay even keeled and get better with the process. You stay in the moment, which I am, and understanding that we can be better. And how we make the adjustments and how we learn from tonight, tomorrow in our film session and when we get together and prepare ourselves for Sunday, will show the difference. Obviously it was back and forth, big play after big play. A couple, you know, questionable calls that swayed their way and put Jimmy to the free-throw line. Obviously, we can't do that. He's been damn near perfect at the free-throw line in the series. We just needed to get one stop. We felt like if we could get one stop, we could do something on the offensive end. But we got a hell of a look. We got a hell of a look to win the game, to win the series. Didn't go down. And then we got the offensive rebound, we turned the ball over. I thought we had a lot more time than I think we even thought after the offensive rebound, and a pass wasn't executed as we would like. But we've got to be better. We've just got to be better in Game 6 and close the series. Listen, at the end of the day, you don't predetermine anything and you take the game as it's going and you play. You play each quarter, you play each possession and you live with the results. You don't think about what could happen at the end of the game and things of that nature. You don't get caught up in the aftermath. You have to live in the moment and prepare yourself each and every possession, because if you start to wander and your mind starts to go, you make a mistake. One thing about this team that we are playing, they make you pay for every mistake. It's the same as when I was playing against Golden State all those years, you make a mistake, they make you pay. So we have to understand that. I mean, they’re vets. They’re vets. I don't think too much need to be said to them. I believe they will be much better and I'm not saying they even played bad tonight. Everybody in the lineup tonight that got minutes gave the effort. We just had some mental breakdowns at times, and they make you pay for it, like I said. We've got to look at the film tomorrow and see how we can be better. That's the beauty of the game, being able to compete at the highest level. You take those opportunities and you live in the moment. You're trying to make plays for your team and be successful on both ends, and we were both just trying to do that and trying to will our team to a victory. You know, he was able to make one more play than I was able to make tonight and come away with a victory. I thought AD made a heck of a play at the rim. I felt he was chest to chest with Jimmy, making him change the trajectory of his shot and the call didn't go our way. I felt like, you know, at that point in time, I think it was a tough call, but they made the call. We still had an opportunity to win. But we feel like, you know, with AD and with him at the rim and him contesting things like that, it could have swayed our way, but it didn't. Well, if he's on the floor – I mean he's a warrior, man. Just him being out there, hobbled, just brings a lot more confidence to myself and our team. We know the nicks and bumps and bruises he's played through throughout the whole season. We have to pick it up for him and pick it up for any one of our brothers if they are hobbling or lobbying or not at their full strength. Just the makeup of our brotherhood. I've always played the game the same way since I was a kid and I've had success doing it. And I won't let a play here or a play there change my outlook on the game and how I play the game. I mean, if you just look at the play, I was able to draw two defenders below the free-throw line and find one of our shooters at the top of the key for a wide open three to win a championship. I trusted him, we trusted him, and it just didn't go. You live with that. You live with that. It's one of the best shots that we could have got, I feel, in that fourth quarter, especially down the stretch with two guys on me, Duncan Robinson and Jimmy, and Danny had a hell of a look. It just didn't go down. I know he wish he can have it again. I wish I could make a better pass. You know, but you just live with it. |
| I think personally thinking I have something to prove fuels me. It fueled me over this last year and a half since the injury. It fueled me because no matter what I've done in my career to this point, there's still little rumblings of doubt or comparing me to the history of the game and has he done this, has he done that. So having that in my head, having that in my mind, saying to myself, why not still have something to prove, I think it fuels me. I think they are all special in their own right. They all have their obstacles, things that went on throughout the course of the year, both on and off the floor. But one is not less than the other, because when you're able to put yourself in this position to be able to win a championship, first thing you start to think about is how much work you've put in over the course of the year. How much you've sacrificed, how much you've dedicated to the game and to your craft. That's always been the most fulfilling thing for me, besides seeing my teammates as happy as they are. Being able to know that you can put the work in, literally trust the process, live about the process and then see the results. I think not only from a basketball player, but from everybody, whatever craft, whatever workspace you're in, to be able to put the work in and live along the process and build along the process and be able to see results, I think we all live for that moment. To answer your first question, with so much going on inside the bubble and everything and us going into the unknown, it was kind of hard for me personally -- once I got inside here, I said, okay, this is my mission: I want to win a championship; this is why I'm here. It was hard for me to focus on other teams and what other players were feeling. I didn't engage in that. I didn't look for it. I wanted to keep my energy in the right space. And over the last couple days, you definitely thought about it. You thought about just being here, how successful it is. I commend Adam Silver and the NBA, Michele Roberts, Chris Paul and everybody at the NBPA to make this happen and to make this work. I think we can all say from the social injustice conversations, the voter suppression, police brutality, to have this platform, have our players be able to unite like that, it's something that you will miss. You will think back on it. I think one of the biggest things, besides the social injustice, all the things I mentioned, we had zero positive tests. We had zero positives tests for as long as we were here, 90-some days, 95 days maybe for myself. I had a little calendar I was checking off. But on a serious note, no positive tests. That's a success for everybody that was involved. I can't really explain it. There's just certain things you just know. And any type of relationship, you kind of just feel, you know that vibe. You have that respect. You have that drive. Sometimes you can't explain what links you with somebody, and then it's that organic. Sometimes, you don't even try to explain it. You guys ask me about my relationship with AD, the first thing I think about is the respect, the no ego, the challenging each other. We want each other to be better than actually ourselves. I want AD to be better than me. AD want me to be better than him. Every single night, every single day. And we challenge ourselves. I think that's a part of it. It definitely reminded me of it, just the excitement, the "I can't believe this." I definitely saw myself, 27 LeBron, 27 AD. I definitely saw myself in that. And what it did for me in my career, it basically let me know that the work I put in on my craft, and the way I play the game, how I was taught to play the game when I picked up a basketball when I was eight years old, it's okay to play that way and be able to win. No matter how many people tell you, you should maybe shoot more, you should maybe do this more, you should maybe be like him more, it let me know that the way I play basketball and the way I was taught to play basketball is the right way to play it, because you do see results. And then it just continues to boost your confidence. Not saying that AD doesn't already have confidence, but it takes it to another level. To answer your first question, absolutely. I think you wouldn't be human if you didn't have ups and downs in the bubble. At times I was questioning myself, should I be here? Is this worth sacrificing my family? So many things. I've never been without my family this long. Missing the days of my daughter being in kindergarten, even though it's through Zoom. Missing my son's 16th birthday, which we all know is a big birthday if you have kids. Seeing my middle child continue to grow and be who he is. First of all, big-time shoutout to the late great Steve Jobs, because without him, without his vision, those FaceTime calls wouldn't be possible. Absolutely, I've had ups and downs throughout this journey. For some odd reason, I was able to keep the main thing the main thing. When I talked about all the stuff that I missed, they understood that, too, and that made it a lot easier for me. To answer your second question, it doesn't matter where it is if you win a championship. A bubble, Miami, Golden State -- it doesn't matter. When you get to this point, it's one of the greatest feelings in the world for a basketball player to be able to win at the highest level. Well, I can't sit here and say one is more challenging than the other or one is more difficult than the other. I can just say that I've never won with this atmosphere. None of us have. We've never been a part of this. If you've been here throughout the start -- I mean, we got here July 9th. Our ballclub got here July 9th. It's October what -- I don't even , October 11th now. So this was very challenging and difficult. It played with your mind. It played with your body. You're away from some of the things that you're so accustomed to to make you be the professional that you are. So this is right up there. I heard some rumblings from people that are not in the bubble, oh, you don't have to travel, whatever. People just doubting what goes on in here. This is right up there with one of the greatest accomplishments I've had. What gave me faith is that Rob Pelinka told me he would do whatever it takes to make sure that we would become a winning franchise once again. Obviously, championships are not promised, and I don't expect that. But he said he would do whatever it takes to make this franchise, whatever personnel changes he needs to make, any part of our organization, he would do it, because he wanted to win just as much. And for me, being able to get Jeanie back to this point, that's something that fueled me as well. This is a historic franchise and to be a part of this is something that I'll be able to talk about and my grandkids and kids will be able to talk about; their pawpaw played for the Los Angeles Lakers. It's like playing for the Yankees and winning or playing for the Cowboys and winning a Super Bowl, or the Patriots. It's like playing for the Red Sox. So to be able to win with a historical franchise is something that, no matter if your mind wavers away, you can always remember what you're doing it for. I don't want to lie to you. I did, but if Jeanie at some point would ever want to reveal what I said to her, that's up to her. It was just a special moment and I know how special it was for her. So it was just in the words of, "I'm proud to be a Laker." |