|  |
| --- |
| Be a little bit more aggressive attacking the rim in the third quarter, not put so many jumpers, not allowing their defensive intensity to speed us up on the offense. It's about the same honestly. We had a very physical run against New Jersey, a little bit more than we expected, but we kind of took it for what it was. About the same. Definitely, definitely. We've been here before. That's the best thing that can happen to us right now is we've been in this position before, so we know how to react to it. Being down 0-2, never being in that position before we wouldn't know what to do, so we've been here before so we should know what to do and how to catch them. We've definitely talked about the course of the playoffs before the playoffs started, good luck to each other, and since he's been home and rehabbing, basketball highlights, injuries going, and he was able to get successful surgery on his shoulder and stuff like that, and he's just telling me play as hard as possible and lead my team to victory. He's definitely given me some pointers. Well, basically just trying to be more aggressive against Detroit's defense. They're definitely a team where you definitely hold the ball, so just try to score more in early offense and not allow them to set up. Shoot the ball every time, I guess. He doesn't give good advice all the time. He's very active, and definitely he helps the guys that's guarding on the ball. He's a great outside defender. He's very long so you try to attack him, he's very capable of moving his feet and sliding and getting some good shots blocked. He's definitely a big part of the defensive scheme. Our crowd knows how important they are going to be tomorrow. They should come in with a lot of energy, and we look forward to seeing our fans tomorrow night. You're always a little more comfortable at home. We should have no excuses coming out tomorrow with a lot of energy, attacking early and attacking late. Well, we did a great job of coming down the early offense and getting to our offense a lot quicker, attacking a lot quicker before their defense set. They're very good when you allow them to set up. So we did a great job of coming down early on offense, moving the ball, getting it from one side to the other, drive and kick, and it worked for us. It's all or nothing at this point. You either make a series and be 2-1 or you make the impossible and be down 3-0. It's common sense. For me it was the biggest game of my career, and I was happy that my teammates were able to help me get through it, and we won a big game. Any time you get on offensive rebound, it allows the defense not to set. So I just wanted to try to be aggressive and I was able to get to the hole and seen the open lane and was able to make something happen. It was definitely an opportunity for me to just -- just wanting to be aggressive and try to see the whole floor. If a double-team came, try to get the ball up, and if not, try to be as patient as I could, try to get the shot clock, try to get some time off of it. I didn't want to force it to the basket. I was able to take just a very comfortable mid-range jump shot and it was a big play for us. No, all I'm excited about was I was able to get a team victory. This guy sitting next to me is growing up before our eyes, and he played some big minutes for us tonight. Defensively he was very in tune and we responded. I grow a little every night. I need my teammates out on the court to make me grow. You see a guy like Daniel, as young as he is and as young as I am, we're out there working as hard as we can to try to win ballgames. It's a great opportunity and great to see he made the most of it. We ain't done yet. We've still got to hold down home court and try to make it a three-game series. Being in the same situation honestly in the first two games, you don't want to let one slip away again. I could see if we could just get over the hump finally, we could win this ballgame. We finally got the stop that we needed. We finally made the offensive execution play that we needed. I wanted to make sure that the guys were very in tune and know that hey, we need one more stop here, we need the offensive execution, and win the ballgame, and the guys responded. Well, it definitely helps us perimeter guys when you have inside presence, and Z shot the ball extremely well. He defended extremely well and it just spreads the defense out when you have a guy that's seven-foot tall that can shoot outside jumpers and get to the lane. As perimeter guys we need that production out of our bigs, and he showed up tonight and it was great to see. Just not holding the ball as much and allowing our defense to set. Like I said before, they're very, very good when you allow them to set up. I was very aggressive early in trying to attack before their five guys were able to set up on the defensive end. I was a little bit more aggressive on the post, not allowing their guys to bump me out to the perimeter. Once I started getting some easy buckets, that opened up my outside shot. Very productive. Well, we knew it was going to be electrifying tonight, first time since '92. Like I said before, I was a WWF fan at that time, so I don't know what Cleveland sports was doing at that time. The crowd was exciting. We need them to be the same way on Tuesday because they really helped us. It gets us a little bit more energy when they're out there cheering. I mean, they deserve it. We haven't had a Cleveland sports team or Ohio sports team win in a long time, so they really deserve it. I've won a lot of playoff games in my two years in the playoffs. I mean, I just try to be the best player I can be out there for my teammates. You learn from mistakes, you learn from wins and you learn from losses, but this game doesn't put something on me where it's saying, hey, I've finally done it. I've won playoff games before, I've won playoff series. This is a big game and we won it and we need to move on. It's the first time in my career I've ever showed up to the gym three hours before a game. I usually take my nap before the game, and I woke up earlier today, so I had nothing else to do. I didn't want to sit around. I didn't want to continue to answer my phone about tickets (laughter), so I came to the gym and I turned my phone off and I was here, and the guys were still setting up the camera on the baskets. The mindset that I had today coming to this ballgame was we have to win, simple as that. We have to win. And me being the leader of this team, I have to be that guy that sparks this team, I have to be that guy that does it on both ends of the floor, but at the same time, my teammates, when they see that, they have to respond, also, with me, and I guess we did it. I don't know. |
| Just mentally try to prepare ourselves to be focused today and try to hold down home court, make it a three-game series. We've got to try to do our best to try to win the game. We know they're going to come out strong, and we've got to try to match the intensity. No, it's not doing the impossible when you go down 3-1. It's definitely going to be a challenge, but we don't even want to think about that. We want to try the tie the series up 2-2 and make it a three-game series. It was about execution. We've been able to get stops in the fourth quarter. That hasn't been our problem. What's been our problem is we haven't been able to execute offensively, we've turned the ball over, not even getting looks at the basket. But we had a lot of great looks, we moved the basketball from one side to another, made a defensive shift, and we connected on it. For me I watch film all the time, so I got an opportunity to watch it twice already. It was definitely a great performance by our team. We definitely took the challenge and we answered the call. We did a great job of keying up our crowd's intensity, and we showed why we're one of the best teams in the NBA. That wasn't much of me trying to score more, it was trying to be more aggressive, and if that had to do with me getting to the basket and scoring or making the winning play for our team, to try to make a good shot at the basket. One thing we want to do in the second half was just try to execute, especially down the stretch, not turn the ball over, at least try to get a shot at the basket. We knocked them down. It's very important. Like I said before, their defense is very good when you allow them to set up in the half court, and we try to want to get up the court as fast as possible, try to get some early offense opportunities, where we can get to the basket without their defense being set. It's also important for me to catch a rhythm and it's important for our team at the same time, and we took advantage of it. We definitely defend. You know, we take pride in the Eastern Conference about defending, and that's not saying that Utah and San Antonio don't, because they're very great defensive teams, but we rely more on our defense in the Eastern Conference, and we know it's important. Well, it's all about execution down the stretch. We know the fourth quarter is definitely going to be some hard fouls, there's going to be a lot of things going on in the fourth quarter because we know the game is going to be tight. We have to do a good job of executing offensively and defensively and try and take what's there. Definitely. I definitely felt comfortable yesterday by just trying to attack the defense early. I got a few early post catches, didn't convert them like you said, but it felt pretty good to get down there, and it definitely helped the team. Well, last night we did. Today is definitely -- everyone is ready to eat some barbecue, I guess, and forget about last night, but we'll get ready for tomorrow night. What we did was almost everyone touched the basketball. It wasn't just give the ball to me and let me make a play and see if I can get it to somebody else. I caught the ball in the post one time and we did a great job on the backside of flood and Daniel Gibson got a wide open three. The next time we ran our offense I was able to come off a pick-and-roll and hit Z, and then Z hit Drew for an open jump shot. So it's important for us to continue to move their defense because it allows us to get better shots on the backside. I'm not quite sure. Those lanes were definitely there. I just wanted to try to attack as much as possible, and some of the small lanes that I was able to find, I wanted to be able to take advantage of. I definitely took advantage of them and my teammates did a great job of spacing the floor to allow me to get into the lane and do the type of things I was able to do last night. I don't know (laughter). I don't know. Well, as always, you need to be able to adjust -- they're definitely going to try to keep me out of the lane in the fourth quarter and the whole game, but that's been the emphasis the whole series is to try to keep me out of the lane and try to make my teammates beat them. I think my teammates are focused, they know they're going to have to do a big part of contributing, and that's going to allow us to win. He's important to our team. Hopefully Larry is healthy enough to play tomorrow, but we don't know at this point, and if he's not, one thing that -- we've played without him. We don't like to, but we have done it, so it's something that's not new to us. "Boog" has started a lot of games this year, so he knows the role. He knows how big he is, and he knows how to play in front of a big crowd on a big stage. He's mentally prepared to play, whatever role is given to him. It's not about what he did last night or what he's done in the past. He's mentally prepared to go out there and be a big player on our team. We need him out there on the court just because of the way he can shoot the ball, the way he defends, and he's going to be big for us. I have a lot. I believe every time he catches the basketball on the perimeter, he can make a basketball play, and I'm not just saying that he can cast up a three. I believe he can do a lot of things off the dribble, he can shoot the basketball extremely well. On the other end, he plays with a lot of heart defensively, and he showcased that last night. No, it's not all about history here. It's about us trying to hold down our home court, and it's just like us, we've been a very good team after losing ballgames, too. I think they're going to make a lot of adjustments, we're going to make a lot of adjustments, and we'll be ready to play tomorrow. You know, it's a different type of random offense. Last night we got to a lot of random offense but we were able to be comfortable with it. What he doesn't like is when we come down and we take early jump shots, maybe one passing shot or just come down and not get into our sets and not getting our spacing. Last night we had a lot of random offense but it was successful because we had a lot of spacing, we had a lot of ball movement, we had a lot of player movement and it worked in our favor. Oh, definitely. You've got to try to attack this team early, as much as possible, and I think it works in our favor at times. Well, it definitely hurts us. If Larry is not able to play tomorrow it definitely hurts us because he's experienced and how well we've been with him at the point guard and how well he defends and how well he's able to shoot the ball. It definitely will hurt us, but at the same time, the best thing about it is we've played without him. Like I said, we don't like to, but we've played without him so guys are going to have to step up. It's something we can't control. His intensity. I think offensively and defensively he's very in tune, and his ability to knock down open shots. That's definitely a gift for me. It makes sure the defense stays on us, especially with him out on the court, that he can make an open shot and he can get to the lane, also. And then on the other end he's not a liability. That's important for us. Well, we didn't start out too good last night in the third quarter, but we definitely ended it the right way. We didn't get too down on ourselves. I don't know, we have to put our finger on it soon, getting better in the third quarter. No, I just think his before-and-after practice workout, that he definitely stays before (and after). I'm there before practice and he's always there, and after practice I'm shooting and he's always shooting. When I'm off the court, he's still shooting. He has a lot to prove, being a second-round draft pick and people saying he shouldn't have come out of college, he was too young. He has a lot to prove. We were definitely a much better team going into Detroit last year. We won the game just because we have more playoff experience. Last year was based on us making the playoffs; this year is based on us getting to the championships, and we have to approach it with the same mentality that we had. Honestly for the first four games we only have two games to show for it. Have to clean up that third quarter. Good in the fourth, but that third quarter is going to catch up to us sooner or later, and I don't know what we're going to do about it. We'll have to put our finger on it some way, some how, but we got stops down the stretch and executed on the offensive end and made big shots and that's what it's about. He definitely gave us a lift throughout the whole game of attacking and getting to the rim. You know, a lot of guys don't understand that Daniel is much better than shooting an outside shot, which I told you guys after Game 3. He got to the line 12 times, made technical free-throws, and it's different when everybody else is up there. It's about talent, I should be a GM someday, I guess. Make both and the game is over. You know, I don't want to make the first one, I wanted to make both and there is no way they can win the game with four seconds, and we're smart enough to know if we go up four, don't foul anyone and don't contest, we win the game. I've definitely stepped up with my free-throw percentage and it was something I had to get over with. The same thing I did to Gilbert last year. I invented that -- no, no, Scottie Pippen invented that to Karl Malone. But he tried to mess with me and I have to stay focused. I missed a lot of shots I usually make in the third quarter, I missed two lay-ups, I missed a wide-open baseline shot, but in the fourth quarter the game is on the line and I live for the fourth quarter. I love the fourth quarter and I told my teammates, get me to the fourth and it's close, and I'll try my best to win the game and I was able to do that. I think besides Drew grabbing eight rebounds and 18 points, what he did on Rasheed was big; he was able to front him and the way he played defense on Rasheed allowed us on the backside not to double Rasheed, and allowed us to stay home, and he did a heck of a job. And to be able to guard Rasheed and score and get the rebound, it was a big inspiration to our team today. I was very surprised, because I know Larry's history of injuries and -- but when I seen him in the training room with his uniform on, I asked him was he going to give it a go and he said "yeah," and that showed me this is more about the team more than anything, and he did what he could. I mean, he came out there -- just being him out on the court and gutting it through. What he's going through right now was an inspiration for us because we know he could have easily sat out tonight. But him being on the court and saying, "who cares about my injury. It's about this team." And it don't get no bigger than that. |
| Just the simple fact of us coming here in Game 1 and 2 and playing so well and falling short, and throughout this whole game we played the same way. The same way we played in Games 1 and 2, and we couldn't leave out of here without getting at least one win, just as well as we've played in this building, and that was just my mindset. I don't believe there was a lot of one-on-one coverage; there was a lot of double-teaming, a lot of triple-teaming, and I just tried to get the ball up. They have to respect my shooters out on the court, with Daniel Gibson and Donyell Marshall and Sasha and Damon Jones and Z, you have to respect my shooters, you can't just leave them open. So I was able to attack once I got the ball back, and make a lot of tough shots. I give all the credit to my teammates. This is definitely not an individual performance on my part, but without those other 14 guys, we would be down 3-2 instead of up 3-2. Why do I have to be surprised? I made a lot of good moves and I was able to finish. It wasn't just like they opened up the lane and let me through there. I made a lot of good moves, my teammates did a good job of spacing the floor and I just wanted to try to finish. They're definitely a great defensive team, but at times I wanted to attack as much as possible and that's it. Just for the simple fact that we won the ballgame means more than anything besides my performance. If I did everything I did tonight and we lost, it means nothing. So the win is the most important thing for us, and we are one more win from getting to our goal. Terrible. Yeah, I feel terrible right now. I'm everything, I'm banged up, I'm winded, I'm fatigued. I've got all day tomorrow. It's going to be tough to get some rest when you got a crazy two-year-old running around the house. So hopefully I can take him to one of his grandma's house. The simple fact that I was able to will my team to victory and definitely pleasing to me. This is definitely a big win, one of the biggest wins in Cavaliers' franchise history, for me and my teammates, it's definitely the biggest win. But we have a goal, we can't dwell on this tonight when we have another game on Saturday. We have got to do our best to try to win that ballgame and get where we wanted to be all year. The Pistons do a great job of making runs and you kind of never know when it's going to happen, but when it happens it's quick. So I just wanted to try to be aggressive and not allow them to make too much of a run, and give ourselves an opportunity to win down at the end of regulation. And it took two overtimes to do it, but as a team we definitely -- this is a gutted-out victory. Team passion, hard work, this is a group of guys that's never going to give up, and team basketball. When you look at San Antonio and you look at Detroit, that's what you want to be at a certain point in your career. They've done it year after year after year after year after year after year. So I respect the Pistons more than any team in the league just because I'm in the Eastern Conference, and I play against them as much as I do. So this is definitely a group of guys that have a lot of fight in them, and we have to take the challenge on Saturday. |
| If I could put into words what's going on in my head right now, man, we would be up here for another three hours. But this is special, the guys were really mentally prepared. We want to give Detroit a lot of credit because they definitely brought out the best in us, but we just believed and guides stepped up, no matter if it was the one guy all the way down to the 15th man on the roster, we believed. Definitely, I ran to Z because when I was first drafted, Z was the first guy I seen. Z has been through a lot, been through losing seasons, year after year after year, and I promised him when I got drafted I was going to try to change it. If you guys remember when I was in New York, I said I was going to light it up like Vegas in Cleveland. Awesome, I told you, I'm going to be a GM someday. I told Daniel before the game, I said, "I believe Detroit is going to double-team me, triple me before I cross halfcourt, so get that gun and get it locked and loaded and just shoot it, don't second guess yourself, just shoot it." And that's exactly what happened, and guys stepped up. Especially Boobie stepped in, knocked big shots down. When they closed out on him hard, he drove the ball to the rim, got fouled and made free-throws. This is definitely a big step in Cleveland Cavaliers history. I mean, when we got Daniel in the second round I believe it was a blessing in disguise, I believe we got a steal. I just knew how good of a basketball player he could be, and once I seen his work ethic during practice, after practice, before practice, I mean, I get to the gym early, he's there before me, we're shooting after practice every single day and I just seen his drive and his passion. And one day we had a sit-around in the locker room when we were struggling and Daniel said, "Man, if every guy in this locker room just plays as hard as I want to play on this basketball court, we're going to be something special." And for a rookie, a guy that really is not even supposed to say something or say nothing at all, I remember that, and you remember what I'm talking about, right? I remembered what he was talking about and I stayed on him from there. I just knew he was going to be something special and tonight it was perfect. You guys know how I am about my team. There is no way we would be here in the Eastern Conference Finals or winning the Eastern Conference Finals if it was a one-man show. It's never happened in NBA history, it would never happen in the NBA where a team has one guy and he does it all. My teammates are my family. I'm with them more than I am with my own family, honestly. And every time these guys come to the gym, we believe and we made it happen. San Antonio is the premier team in our league, playing the best basketball better than any team in this league; they're veterans, they've been there before, they're special. And we've got to be even more intense, even more physically and mentally in tune to what's going on, when we enter into The Finals s on Thursday. But just the simple fact of I've always believed in us, from day one, all you guys know I've chanted championship, one, two, three championships. Every time we brought it up, funny faces at first looked at me. I didn't care, I kept it going, championship, every single day. And we've made it happen. This is special. We felt when we made our run in the fourth quarter it was starting to swing our way, something had to go right for Cleveland sports, something had to go right, and we made a real big run. This game reminds me of my freshman year in high school in the state championship, and what Boobie did tonight reminded me of our point guard, Drew Joyce hitting six consecutives threes, he hit seven threes in a row, and we won the state championship. They doubled me, we kicked it to Drew and he hit back to back to back to back threes in a row. And Boobie is unbelievable, what he's done, how he's grown, and I'm lost for words right now, I'm not even answering your question, (Chuckles.) I'm so excited, I'm not answering your question at all, but you guys know how I feel right now. Yeah, it was a turn when Rasheed got a technical, I guess. I never put a time limit on when I thought we could reach this point, but what I did -- I honestly believed we could get better every single year, and I mean, we won 30-something games my rookie year, we won 40 games my second year, missed the playoffs, and in my third year we win 50, my fourth year we win 50, and we've gotten better every single year I've been in this league, and we added the pieces that we needed to compete every single night and brought in a guy in Coach Brown that stresses defense, defense, defense, defense, defense, defense. And it's unbelievable, you can have so many struggles during the course of a season, so many people criticizing your team, "they don't have enough pieces, they're not a good outside-shooting team, Coach Brown lacks this, LeBron lacks this," but we've also believed and it's always been 15 guys in the locker room that just believed and we have a special team. If you've been up on my commercials, someone wise told me that I couldn't get through Detroit swimming in a pool, so I guess I had to do it on the court. I think it was just our time. It was our time. I think Detroit, we give all the respect in the world to that team. That team is awesome, they're great but I believe it was just our time and we're here now and we've got -- still got business to do. We're going to enjoy tonight, enjoy our day off tomorrow and get back to work on Monday and get ready for the big bad wolf of the West. |
| Wow. I mean, the reaction from the fans and the teammates, the loudest it has ever been in this building was the first time I made the playoffs in my third year and we faced Washington and we ran out on the court on that game, the towels was out and it was unbelievable. I had lost my wind as soon as I ran out on the court. Tonight surpassed that by ten times. I mean, it was unbelievable. I mean, you couldn't -- I mean, you couldn't hear anything but just a roar of those 20,000-plus fans. And they deserve it. They deserve it. The first option was for me to fake up and go for the lob. Two things happened. We had a 16 of Rashard Lewis on Mo, so it was going to be a difficult pass. When I went to go for the lob, Hedo had never been on it. I told Mo, whatever -- whatever it was going to take for me I was going to come get the ball, no matter what happened. If the first, third, second, if all options run, I'm going to come get the ball and I'm going to knock down the shot. It is the biggest shot I have made in my career. Orlando is not in our head at all. We respect that team a lot. This is a very good team we are playing. These are the four best teams in the game right now, you know, and they are battling. We are battling. We are going up big and they are making runs. It is going to happen. They are not in our head at all. We don't look at it as that. It is just two really good teams just going at it and having a pretty good series so far. I just took my time. I just took my time. For me, a second is a long time for me. You know, for others it is very short. I mean, those are -- as a kid, you practice those type of moments, as a kid. As a basketball player, you are sitting in your backyard, you are in the gym and you are five, four, three, two, one (buzzer sound). Those are the moments that as kids -- you don't have to be in the NBA to know what I'm talking about. Everybody know those type of moments. And to hit a shot like that at the buzzer at home, wow. Well, that guy is not in the League anymore. The other 23 is now on the good side now. That other 23 is gone, so we don't have to worry about that no more. (Smiling). No. For one, I think they seen that set before. We ran it one time earlier in the season in Indiana right before the All-Star break, and I was able to get a foul on Danny Granger. Rashard Lewis played it perfect. He stood tall, got in Mo's way and dropped it. If you watch the replay, Rashard Lewis even got a contest on the shot when I got up, but just a little bit too late. I mean, they played it perfect. It is just a good shot. It is a good shot. (Smiling). The same way we guard Rashard, when Rashard hit that 3, we guarded it perfect. Good players or great players just make good shots, man. I wouldn't say put one ahead of the other. That was a great performance also from us as a team, from me as an individual. Tonight was another good performance by me as an individual and us as a team. That's a shot that you will see for a long time, you know? You watch classic games and you see Jordan hit game winners and you go all the way back, Jerry West hitting game winners, and Mattie Johnson going across the lane and hitting the jump hook against Boston. You see all these type of shots, man, always be played even when the game has left you as an individual. Hopefully I can stick my foot in that category with Magic and Jerry West and Jordan and all these other guys that made spectacular plays on the biggest stage in the world. It's something I will probably do after I'm done playing the game of basketball, man. I don't take time to look at what I do as an individual while I'm still playing this team game. When I'm done and retired and I'm gone away from the game, I'm by myself, my family, my kids, I can look back on what I did as an individual. As long as I have 14 teammates, I will never look upon what I do as an individual. That's not how I approach the game. I never seen this side of Mo before either. I've seen him before, I know him. Swagger. You lose all your cool points. You know what to do. Honest answer, when I caught it square, it felt great. It was in the air, it even looked like it was going in. There was a great chance it wasn't going in. Hedo hit a tough shot over Sasha to take the lead. It was -- I just didn't know. I mean, it was like, you know -- I didn't pray as much as Mo did. It felt great. It felt great. If it came out -- it is possible I could have missed that, too. But it felt great. I practice those type of things, man. You guys see me every day. You guys see me after the practice. I'm catching, shooting things that may not happen in a game, but, you know, it happened tonight. No, you didn't. (Smiling). No. As a kid, you wouldn't leave the gym until you made it, though. As a kid, you would do the five, four, three, two, one. And if you missed 20 in a row, you wasn't allowed to leave the gym until you finally made that shot. I was always Jordan when I made that shot, because in my era growing up Mike was always the one who made those five-to-one game winners, the light goes off and the crowd goes crazy. I wanted to be Mike when I did those things. I got that out of my bag of Michael Jordan tricks, I guess. Very good team. You want to try to protect your home court the best way you can. In a seven-game series, you say you have home-court advantage, but in the Eastern Conference Finals and Western Conference Finals, is there really a home-court advantage? These four great teams out here competing at the highest level, we are the four best teams in the League for a reason at this point. To go on the road, one second from being down 0-2, going to Orlando and from zero seconds the shot goes in to being 1-1 going on the road, it is a good feeling for us. We can carry this momentum. One thing about us, we are not going to carry Game 2 to Game 3. It is over and done with. It is a great game. We are a next-game team. We have to figure out a way to play better basketball in the second half. The first thing we need to do is realize that we are not going to blow this team out. When we get leads and they make a run, we just can't get down on ourselves. We have to continue to play. The best thing Orlando has, they have matchup -- they have matchup problems. They create matchup problems with Rashard being at the four, they create matchup players. Very good player, very talented. We have to understand that every possession matters. We cannot take a possession off, and if we have a scheme, we cannot break down because every time you break down against a really good team, they make you play. Just like we would do if a team breaks down against us, we are ready to hit the road. It has been a while. We look forward to it. |
| We covered the three-point line really well today. They killed us from the three-point line last game making, 17 3s, and the whole just great shooting team is 32 percent from the three-point line was to our benefit. We had a conscious effort of getting out to their shooters. If they were going to make some, they were going to make it over a contested hand. It worked to our benefit. That's what we make our mark at, man. We got to find a way to get stops down the stretch. We haven't done that throughout this series until tonight. In Game 1 we gave up a 3 to Rashard Lewis when we was up two. In Game 4 we give up another 3 to Rashard Lewis. That's when we made our mark at it all season, man, by just clamping down in crucial situations throughout the course of a season and throughout the course of a game, especially in the fourth quarter. We finally did that tonight. Just take what the defense give me. When my guys make shots, it makes it a lot easier on myself because they're -- now it allows me to go one-on-one with a defender. They can't help as much. And when they did help, they knocked down three-point shots and Andy got a one-handed layup. That's what I need from my guys. I don't add no more pressure on my teammates, but they know we're a very strong team when they knock down shots. Just close out. We was down one to start the fourth and I knew coach was just going to -- it was win or go home at this point, so I knew I was going to play the whole fourth. Just wanted to -- my guys, they had made shots through the first three quarters, so I knew it was going to be an opportunity for me to probably press the gas a little bit on the offensive end. And they continued to make shots in the fourth. I always feel like myself individually I can always get going any part of the game. That's key. Something that as a unit players and coaches we came up with, trying to figure out a way we can try to exploit their defense with all our shooters out there. And having a live dribble either at the top of the key or free-throw line is key for myself and for our team because now it adds a threat of me jabbing, jabbing, taking a shot or getting to the paint and either taking a shot for myself or creating for my teammates. So any time you are as dangerous as I am or the best guys in this League and you have a live dribble, it makes you that much more dangerous because they don't know what you are going to do. That was huge. I mean, that defense is very good when you allow the ball to just stay on one side and you just dribble and dribble and now you are getting down to five seconds on the shot clock and now you got to try to race and get up a good shot. By Mo and Delonte and also Daniel coming and pushing the ball up the court and getting us into our sets early, it allows us now to be comfortable with now attacking it with ten on the shot clock instead of five. Getting the ball moving against this team is key. Hedo is an all-star in my mind. You look at their team, you can say they have four all-stars with injured Jameer and Rashard and Dwight. Hedo is -- him and Rashard, they are clutch players they have. Just try to take the challenge. At this point it's -- you got to just take the challenge, man. Especially when you are on your last leg, you just got to take the challenge, and I did that. That's what I do. I attack no matter who is in the paint. No matter what's going on, I just try to attack. Even though I know he is a defensive player of the year, you just got to try to attack a guy like that, man. He is very good with space. If you allow a guy like that to get space, then he is able to jump and create and block shots. That's how he gets a lot of his weak side blocks and coming across and blocking shots. If you don't give him much space, you hit him, make contact with him, it is tough for a guy like that to get off the court. I don't know. I think Dwight was just in here, like, five minutes ago. So I don't know. (Smiling). I'm good. I think we started out the first two games with a sense urgency. They just made a run and we weren't able to slow it down. They just caught us off guard. At this time, either you win or you chill at the house, you are playing with the kids a lot. You sit back and watch the finals. Something I envisioned. I signed up to play for a long time in the series and this season. There is always a sense urgency when you are on the brink of elimination. Thanks. Yeah, man. I slept really well. Difficult to sleep at 5:00 in the morning, you know what I'm saying? Wake up late in the afternoon but feel good. Both teams. Both teams need to win. We need to win to keep on going, and they need to win to close out. Pressure -- I have never been a big believer in pressure. I don't really believe in it. So I'm the wrong man to ask about pressure. It's a challenge. We all know how big and strong he is. I try to bring that same intensity when I go to the hole and just try to meet at the ends, I guess. It's tough. It's tough sometimes. You get beat up sometimes going in the air, but you got to continue to be aggressive, continue to try to get him in foul trouble. Just try to attack. They are a very good team. My game is all towards attacking and what the defense gives me. You know, Dwight is their anchor on defense. If you attack the anchor, then it is tough for that defense to standstill. We got to continue to be aggressive. I mean, any time you get the Defensive Player of the Year off the court, it's a lot. Imagine if KG fouled out last year in the playoffs, it is a totally different ball game so that's key. I think what we did in Game 4. We pretty much lost that game on an out-of-bounds play giving it to Rashard. We know we can play well. I mean, a team is dangerous when they know they are on their last limb and especially with us. I think we are very dangerous at this point. I mean, it is going to be a crazy atmosphere. We look forward to the challenge. Paul probably -- Paul and Kobe are the best guys that we have in our game, and Dirk, at that elbow right there, sending it to the free-throw line. So I stole a little bit from those guys. No, I haven't. But against this team, I think you have to change up sometimes and that's the point on the floor where most teams can't dole from because I can see both sides of the court. If I'm on one side, they make them load from one side. Me being in the middle of the court with shooters on both sides, it is tough for a team to defend that. It is probably going to be something we go to late in the game. Yeah, especially when teams went zone. Coach K would put me at the free-throw line. I would be that guy I caught it at the elbow, I can either attack or I can see both sides of the floor having Carmelo and Kobe on both wings. So I did that a lot. It helped, of course. I mean, any time you can do some things in the game, you know, in a previous situation, you get comfortable with it. And I was very comfortable being at that position last night, just catching the ball with a live dribble at the free-throw line with shooters on both sides. A lot. When Coach broke up the teams -- we were in the starting lineup, of course. When Coach broke up the teams, we all went at it, all 12 guys. You got 12 of the best players in the world. We helped each other get better every day. He's challenging. He's great. Dwight is going to be the most dominant player in our league for a long time to come. Dwight is going to be great, man. He's young. I'm young. We are just going to continue to grow. Mo's pace is always high. When he's making shots, he's confident. He believes he can make any shot on the court. He came off an opening. He is going to be aggressive, and he's going to take shots. He's going to live if he misses them. He is going to live if he makes them. He wasn't worried about the consequences of missed shots. He just came out and believed he would make every one. It's been five games. It has been every possession for five straight games. Exactly. So I was built for it, man. I don't -- I don't die down. I didn't die down at no point in the game last night. Wasn't tired. Felt great. It is just -- when you haven't seen something like that for a long time in this league, it is easy to say there is too much pressure on a guy. I live for the moment. I'm okay with it. There is fatigue on both teams. It is almost June. There should be fatigue. We can only -- the body can only take so much. But both teams are just trying to get through and just trying to stay mentally focused. At this point, fatigue is a factor, but mentally you have to be more in shape than you have to be physically. Oh, yeah. The rest that I've gotten during the season with the way we was playing the basketball throughout the season has definitely helped me. I only averaged 36 minutes a the game throughout the regular season. I knew in the playoffs it could bump up, and I was ready for it. Throughout this series I averaged 40-plus minutes and felt like the same 36 minutes I played during the regular season. |
| You have to adjust somewhat. Of course. I can't say we don't have to. Because you have different guys out there that does different things. You just kind of play it by game. Play it by series. And the lineup that coach puts out there, you float with it. We've had enough minutes with every lineup as far as who has been the starting point guard and who has been the starting center, we can be comfortable with it when it happens. Absolutely. We have to do a better job of rebounding. Fourth straight time we've gotten outrebounded by the Bulls in the regular season. That's where they're very dominant. We did a great job of holding them on forced attempts. 38% from the floor. They got up to 42, 43%. We allowed them 13 to 21. Me and D-Wade is athletic enough. We're aware enough to see where the ball is coming off the rim, or first coming off, to go get it. At this point Absolutely. That's one thing we can learn from, the regular season, the postseason. To learn from our mistakes from the previous game and then move on. We've done that. We're looking forward to the challenge. We're excited about tomorrow's opportunity to be here and try to steal home court. That's just energy. You can't practice hustle plays and getting on the floor and getting loose balls and things like that. Nobody practices those. Joakim doesn't practice diving on the floor on loose balls or outworking. You don't practice those. It's in you. You have to be determined to go get it. Is it a pride thing? It's competitive. This is the biggest stage. If you don't have it by this point, you're in the wrong business. I've been down before. Absolutely. I know it means a lot more to him personally playing a meaningful series in his hometown. At the end of the day, even though the fans boo him, we all know they still love him. You have to respect a kid coming from the inner city from Chicago that's done the things that he's done as a professional on and off the court. We all know how they really feel. But they have to root for their team. Whoever is wearing that jersey, that's who they're going to root for. Whoever is not, they're going to boo. We understand. |
| Those guys are trying to seize the moment just as much as we are. They have a game plan and we have a game plan. Whichever team executes at a high level close to 48 minutes is going to win. We talked about that too on the plane. We were watching the film. This is the first time the lineup we envisioned at some point in the season finally had happened with us, Mike Miller, UD and CB out on the court at the same time. It worked. We haven't been able to ease into anything this year, right? I didn't bail our team out. We're all in it together. I made a few plays down the stretch. If we didn't continue to get stops defensively and give ourselves an opportunity to get in that position, we wouldn't be 1-1 now. It isn't a bailout. This is a 48-minute game. I made a few shots, but the screen that Mike Bibby set for me to get open on the three, you know, the movement that we had, for me to be able to get open in those plays. It's not a bailout. It's about teamwork. Heat years, 50. Like 29 on his birthday. There's no time for exhaling. We're in the Conference Finals. We understand this team is a very hard-working team. They're going to try to steal home court back. We've done some great things on our home court in this postseason, and we're looking to do that. Our fans deserve it. We're going to go out here and give it 110% the same way we played in Chicago Game 2 and see what happens with the final result. Just try to keep a body in front of them. Try to make him stay out on the perimeter. He's so quick and so fast, he's going to break your defense down. When he does, our bigs did a great job of being there for us and having a high hand. When he hit the floor, had to go to the free-throw line to shoot two free-throws or making him take some contested lay-ups. We did a good job. He missed a few shots. You have to just try to stay in front of him as much as possible. It's easier said than done. But we have the personnel and the lineup changes that we just throw different bodies at him and continue to try to keep him off balance. We knew that our third quarters haven't been the greatest in the postseason. We knew in order to even the series, we had to come out with a sense of urgency in the third quarter, and we did that. We got up by as much as 11 in the third quarter that gave us enough lead that when it was tied and we couldn't make a shot in the fourth, a couple of balls go here, a couple of balls go there, we were able to have enough of a lead in the third quarter where we could manage. That's what it's all about. We got out and we changed our halftime, our warmup thing. Usually guys we play so many minutes, we use it as downtime. We got out and got a good warmup and came out with a sense of urgency in the third quarter. It's improved over the years. When you first -- of course, my rookie year you don't -- after game 30, you are about ready to quit. You hit that rookie wall. I played 27 games in the season in high school. It took me a couple of years to get into NBA-game shape. My first two years I didn't make the postseason, so after a few years in the postseason, I started to do more to try to enhance my wind. I've been able to be in some pretty good shape where I can play 40 to 45 minutes in a postseason game and be okay when the next game comes. At this point, it's the postseason. Whatever it takes. If I'm able to be out there and I'm not hurting the team by being out there playing 40 minutes or 45 minutes, I'll be out there for my team. I did a lot of swimming this past off season, just try to take a lot of the grind off your legs when you're in the pool. I do pilates and yoga to stay in front of the curve. I feel like it's helping me. Does it work for everybody? I don't know. I'm not a guru on how to be in the best condition. Let me sit here and tell you that. But it works for me. It's tough to say about a curve. Like I said, pilates classes, yoga classes, I did a little swimming, auditoriums back home. It was back home. I can't tell you exactly where it's at. It's a secret place. We hold a secret society over there. We don't tell too many people. Yes, the same with the swimming. I mean, I didn't want to miss those ones earlier in the season. Of course not. You want to come through for your teammates anytime you're in those situations. When you're put in those situations time after time after time, you're going to miss some. Ultimately, if you have confidence in yourself, if your teammates continue to have confidence in you, you're going to come through for them. And you're going to come through for yourself. Those shots result in a win, of course it's gratifying. I can't say it's not. I just have to keep it going. We have a true professional team. Look at Dampier, the situation. He started a lot of games for us. E. House has played some big games for us, made big shots for us. And those guys are not particularly playing right now. But their spirit, they come in every day at practice and help us get better and play like it's a game situation. When you have true professionals, it's not about the I, it's about the we. And they understand that. We respect that to the fullest, being in that situation. Man, if you had to play back-to-back in the postseason, no way I could play 45 minutes a game. It would never happen. With the time that you get off, it definitely helps the body to recover. But also at the same time, it's whatever it takes, honestly, in the postseason. I feel like personally if I'm not out there hurting the team, I'm out there playing big minutes, I feel I should be on the floor. If I'm out there and dogging and not playing at a high level defensively and I'm not helping the team and I'm playing these big minutes, I should come out and sit on the bench. Me just being in good shape and me continuing to -- when I'm on the court, just trying to help the team as best -- the best way possible and go from there. Yeah. We do a good job of mixing it. You don't want to stay off your legs too much. You don't want to become sluggish. We got out a little bit yesterday. Had lunch. Got into the city a little bit. At night you just try to get off your legs as much as possible. It's a fine line, because you don't want to get out of rhythm. We come in here and get work in during the day, and then we try to relax during the night. I don't know. We're just worried about Game 3, which is tomorrow night. We come out with the same intensity that we did in Game 2, we give ourselves a good chance to win. It happens all day. It happens all the time. You dream about it, hosting that trophy up, the title, seeing the confetti rain. You have to have that vision. If you don't have that vision, I don't know exactly what you're being a part of this postseason for. I have that vision all the time. Even when I'm awake or I'm sleeping. No, that's his. I'm good. If it takes home court, that's what it's about. They talk about they haven't lost two games in a row. So we're going to protect home court, and try to come out with a win. We'll see what happens. Something has to give. I don't know. It's unexplainable. Do you have any tattoos? You ask me how my tattoo feels, you can't explain that either. You have to be under the needle. Under the boards, it's a grind out there. You have to be physically and mentally strong to want to be out there and come up with the rebound. There are times you're down there battling, and you still don't get the rebound. You have to be physical for one, and you have to be mentally strong as well. |
| I was seeing two defenders all night. Two or three defenders. I came into the game knowing that they were going to try to load up on myself and D-Wade. So I just changed my game plan tonight, be more of a facilitator. If I needed to get it going offensively, I could. The great thing about it CB had it going. When we have someone going on our team, we continue to give the ball to him and continue to feed off their energy offensively. And he brought it home for us tonight. I think defensively what we've done all year has worked. We have a system, and we make adjustments at times. But we stick to our guns. We know defensively when we're active and guys are on the string and if one guy gets beat, another guy is there to help him, we're very good. So Derrick Rose is a great player. He's going to find creases. He's going to get his shots. That's what great players do. We try to make it tough for him. Try to make it tough for not only him but his teammates, also, make them take tough contested shots. It's a long series still. Through three games we found a way to just play our defense and not dictate our defense on what they do. We just play our game. They were great tonight. Bibby knocking down two huge threes for us in the third. And I think 'Rio (Chalmers) coming in and having his hand. He also got a strip, a big steal for us. He was solid. Derrick Rose is a great player. Our point guards just try to stay in front of him as much as possible, trying to contain him. They're doing a great job so far. Our point guards are very key to our team. When they play big and make shots and also defend like they are doing, we're a pretty good team. I mean, I think they're looking at it how we looked at it after Game 1, saying if we can walk out of here with a split, then we feel comfortable going home. That's what they're thinking. Coming into our home building, we have to continue to give our fans what they want. That's wins. We come in with the same mindset as we had Game 2 and Game 3. Defending, executing offensively, we give ourselves a good chance. It's a very good rebounding team. We've done a great job of just trying to lower those offensive rebounds and second-chance points each game from Game 1 to Game 2 to tonight. And if we do that, we give ourselves a good chance. We're looking forward to it. We're playing desperate too. Both teams have been playing hard. We're just as desperate as they is to win another game at home. I mean, two or three games, I would say. We just bring it to them with a game plan. Guys are finally understanding how important every possession is. This being the semifinals. We were playing great defense in the Boston series at times and the Philly series at times. But I think these games consistently, this is the best we've played. We have to keep it going. No, I do push hard all my 44 minutes. I don't go out there and dog any of my time on the floor. But I think it's the luxury of having guys that can make plays besides myself. D-Wade can make plays, CB can make plays. Udonis made plays for us last night -- I mean late in the fourth. We have guys that can go get it. That's the luxury of our team. I'm happy to have it. I don't know. Just trying to play hard and win basketball games. That's a question for D-Rose I guess. I like to play any style. Any time you are compared to a great -- to a hall-of-famer, to a multi-ring championship player like Magic coverage it's humbling, honestly. I can play any style. I try to take what the defense gives me and go with the flow of the game. That's what we pride ourselves on. Especially the fourth quarter. We feel like if we go into the lead in the fourth quarter it's going to be tough to beat us because we pride ourselves on defense in the fourth. And we consistently could get stops and get stops and get stops, we have enough guys that can make shots on the other end of the court. We're able to break the game open. That's what we've been able to do the last two games, game 2 and Game 3. We got stops and got stops and got stops, and then we just consistently worked the offense and made a few shots and was able to bust open the game. Emotions get played. I'm not saying with Joakim -- I'm speaking about that was right. I don't think it was right what he said. But emotions does get said throughout the course of the game when you get emotional. We know there's going to be microphones. We know there's going to be cameras around. You have to be cautious about what you say. You try to control your emotions as much as possible, even though it's a very intense game. But we know. It comes with the territory. You get the great press, you get the bad press when you do something wrong. As role models to kids and as role models to people who watch us every day, we understand that. We have to own up to it. He's a good player. Let's not take away from the fact the guy is a max player. He got max money. He has done some great things in the postseason. If you look at his postseason numbers, he's played extremely well. We knew he wanted to get out there for his team. Eight rebounds and things like that. He played a great game last night. Offensive rebounds, made big shots for his team. We knew that, we talked about it coming into Game 3, he was going to be more aggressive. Derrick Rose was going to be more aggressive. We have to make sure we key in on them and shut down the other guys too. Their team is a little bit different than ours. They have two max players. I was the only max player on my team. They got some great complementary players as well. You know, I can relate. I can definitely relate, being -- having the coach of the year and getting the MVP and then going to get out and go against people who have multiple guys that can go against you and break you down. I can relate to what he's going through right now. They have a great team. I'm not about to sit here and say this team is down and out. That's a great team. We are looking forward to the challenge. We know they're going to bring it in Game 4. Yeah, man. I'm hurting a little bit right now, but I'll be all right for Game 4. It's the camera -- you guys -- the media and camera guys are too close on the floor, and there ain't no room for comfort. Makes us a very tough team to beat when he's aggressive like that. Inside and outside. We always say he's the key to our team. He's a relieve guy for us. Anytime things are going slower, me and D-Wade aren't getting anything in the perimeter, not getting anything in the paint, we can always go back to him and know we're going to get a good shot. Number three guy, as far as the shooting percentage in the series, behind D-Wade and -- who was it? Yeah, Gasol. Those other guys. CB is . He's doing a great job. Just capitalizing on the attention we get. He's making them pay. No, nobody messes with CB. You leave a guy like that alone. You have to worry about the quiet guys always. First you missed the block on that play. D-Wade coming weak side and getting that block. It's whatever it takes at that point. Joakim got a hand on it. I wanted to try to fight him as much as possible. I was able to strip the ball away from him. Dove on the ball. The ball was headed out of bounds. Once I tipped it and I saw it rolling and I saw UD, I already knew we had the ball. Nobody is going to take the ball from him. That was just a great all-around team possession for us. It came at a big moment in the game in overtime. First of all, the two dunks were great. There's no point guard in our league I think -- besides, you have Russell Westbrook, he makes plays like that. But D-Rose on the break, he goes to a jump-stop and finish it with an and-one and then he breaks down our defense, split pick-and-roll and he gets in there against probably our best shot-blocker in Joel Anthony, and dunks the ball for an and-one. He's a special player. Those plays are spectacular. That's why he is who he is. What was the second question? With a player like that, you just try to keep him out of the paint as best as you can. He was attacking our defense a lot, getting to the free-throw line. The last shot all you could do is contest. There's not too many guys that are going to block his shot on the jumpshot. But I just tried to make it hard on him, get the contest. I made him take a tough one. As far as guarding him throughout the game, I take pride defensively. It doesn't matter who it is, if it's Derrick Rose or starting off on Luol, it's whatever it takes for myself and for our team. If that means me playing extensive minutes guarding D-Rose, then I'll do it. I don't have a problem with that. I play both sides of the floor. I love defense much more than I do offensively. I just take pride on that side of the floor. We were able to get enough stops. It's great when you have guys behind you that also love to play defense, also. So you know you got help if you get beat. I got beat on the baseline, D-Wade got the spectacular block. So you take pride on that side of the floor and it pays off for you. Defense is our staple. We know in order for us to win basketball games we have to get stops and we have to play at a high level. That's all we're about. We know offensively -- at times we have rough stretches where we don't score, but we give ourselves a great chance to win every game because we defend. And that's what it's about. I mean, we're looking at a Game 5 as a must-win. We're going to every game saying it's a must-win for us. We take it upon that challenge, going back into the madhouse. We know it's going to be extremely loud. They're going to feed off their fans. We're going to try to play as desperate as we've played the last three games. It's been since '06 for D-Wade, '07 for myself since we've been to The Finals and it's one game away. We're not taking anything for granted. We're just continuing to play our game and take one game at a time. It starts with Game 5. We have a family bond. Drake has always been supportive of myself, and everything that he do I'm a supporter of his. So it goes beyond what you guys see at the game. We talk on a regular -- everything, about family and everything. What we have is a real family. It's not just because we are successful what we do. We really care about one another on a day-to-day basis. Anytime you get a friend that can come and support you in what you do, I really respect that. He has a busy schedule. I respect that. Anytime I get some free time, I try to come and support him as well. Absolutely. Tonight he just played free. Everything that he gave us tonight was what we always expected out of him. He didn't think about it tonight. Every time he caught the ball -- what we've been telling him all year, "when you catch the ball, just shoot it." He's probably the only guy on our team that can shoot any shot he wants to. Even me, D-Wade and CB, Coach gets on us sometimes if we take ill-advised shots and things like that. Mike Miller is a guy who can shoot any shot he wants. Tonight he did that. He caught the ball, he shot threes, made a pull-up, and then what he's always been doing when he gets minutes, he rebounds the ball extremely well. He had nine rebounds for us and they were all key. Like I said before, that lineup we talked about this summer, myself and D-Wade and CB, Udonis and Mike is something we always envisioned, and it's coming together at the right time. That's a great last question. |
| We're just seizing the moment, honestly. You know we got one game to close them out. We've been in this position twice this year, and we've done a great job doing it. Different circumstances being on the road, but we look forward to the challenge. You know, it's been great. Last night was great. It was what we had expected of him. We were happy for him last night to come out and play his best game in probably the biggest game of our season. So he did a great job. I think it's great. I tweeted a long while ago about seeing him -- he was in the studio doing the game. I said he looks a lot better patrolling the sidelines. So I think he'll be great. He's a great coach. Did what for me? No. Mike Brown is a great coach. He brought us -- he gave us a success we hadn't had before in that city, and it started with his defensive concepts. He brought in a defensive mindset that we didn't have. 50-plus wins, he was coach of the year, got us to the Finals, won the Eastern Conference Finals. We was competitive year after year because of him and his coaching staff. I respect him and am grateful to have had him as a coach throughout the years that I had him. He definitely helped me become who I am today. Yes. It was great. When you look back on it, you always say you probably take things for granted, when you look back on it. I look at it, we could have been better. But I think we had a -- man, we had an unbelievable relationship. Like I said, I knew his family. I respected him as a coach. Him being a young coach when he first got to Cleveland and growing those five years. Great time. If it's true, when it's official, I think the Lakers got them a great coach. First of all, we love to play the game. If you don't have emotions about this game in this stage, I think it's a problem with you. We always do that. You look at all our wins or all our games when we fight hard to come back in a game or we just feel like it took a lot of energy out of us, we always embrace one another after the game. That's something we do as a team. People have given us a knock over that, which is crazy, but we don't stop that for nobody. It's just about embracing that moment, understanding how big that game was last night. And to use extra innings to get that win, it meant a lot. Absolutely. It's tough. I don't remember it being this tough in '07 when I got there, but it's tough. It's been a long road. We are one win away. We missed a lot of lay-ups to start the game. We missed a dunk. D-Wade had a wide-open dunk to put us up 6-0, he missed that dunk. I missed a few lay-ups. We didn't have it going offensively. But one thing we did, we defended that quarter. Gave up 19 points. I felt like I had a -- I feel like I had a good rhythm. Just tried to keep us in the game, either assisting or scoring all those points in the first quarter, and then late in the game defensively trying to take the challenge on Derrick Rose. He's a great player. I feel like I'm a pretty good solid defender. I just wanted to try to make it tough on him, and make it tough on the team. That's -- nothing from our season has been easy at all. That is not even in our vocabulary or in our pre-game speech or anything. Nothing is easy. We work for everything. We come in and prepare ourselves every day to get ready for a game. So we're just looking forward to it. That's the only way we play. When we play like that, we're a great team. We're desperate. We want to win and we want to close out on their floor. We're looking forward to the challenge. We know it's going to be tough. They have some of the best fans in the world. So we'll see. No, we've played so much basketball right now, we feel like -- we are trying to compete for a championship. Tomorrow is our next step. Is a win guaranteed tomorrow? No, none of us knows that right now. We're going to come out with the same intensity we've got since after Game 1, and we know we'll give ourselves a great chance to win. Just trying to seize the moment and understand these opportunities don't present themselves every year. Me and D-Wade talk about it all the time. If you would have told us wouldn't have an opportunity to be close to the Finals in five or six years, we would have thought you was lying to us. It's been '06, and '07 for myself. I'm just trying to seize the moment. I understanding what type of team we have. Understanding we have a good enough shot. We don't want to waste the opportunity. How bitter? I got swept. I didn't win a game. It was very bitter. Every time I got knocked out of the playoffs it was bitter. Losing the Eastern Conference Finals to Orlando. Second round to Boston last year. Second round to Boston the year before in Game 7. It was all bitter times, man. I'm a competitor. I want to win. Yeah, but if you lose, if you're a competitor, the Finals -- you're trying to -- you lose four games in the Finals and you lose a Game 7, that's kind of similar, to myself. After that Game 3, the confidence was -- we didn't have much confidence coming to Game 4. They were a better team. I said it after that series. They were the better team. San Antonio was the better team. We learned from that. When you get to Game 7 against Boston, who eventually won the title, and we had -- it was one or two possessions we could have stole that game, I was hurting too. Absolutely. I think about it all the time. I even go back and watch some of those games and see how I wasn't that good of a player, especially on both ends of the floor. You just try to use those moments. There's no way I should be on the floor on a team that I can't win a game in a series. You use that as motivation. You go in the next year and you are playing some great basketball, probably the favorite, and then you lose the Eastern Conference Finals to Orlando where a ball here, a bounce here, a bounce there, and then you win it. And then seeing Boston two years in a row, where you get to Game 7 on their floor and you have an opportunity to win, and then last year, having an opportunity, being up 2-1 in the series, and losing that series. I got a lot of motivation. There's nothing I'm trying to go out and seek. But I've been in situations where I haven't succeeded, and trying to change it. I was aware we missed four in a row in the fourth quarter. I was aware of that. We did a good job of being focused. When we get up to the free-throw line, those are the times where you don't have to play against their defense. You don't have to play against Chicago's defense when you're shooting free-throws. You have to try to maximize that opportunity. And we did it. I think his drive, man. He coaches as if he was on the court and he wanted to play. He loves -- helped us get better every single day. We never wasted an opportunity to get better. It showed. Ultimately, we didn't win a championship, which we wanted to do in Cleveland. I know he wanted it bad. I wanted it. We didn't win. We got better every single day. We brought the fans in Cleveland what they hadn't seen before. No. Do you think L.A. texts me? I mean, both of them are gratifying, honestly. Me being a defensive guy, I would rather have the defensive shot block. I have had a few in my career where I blocked a shot to end the game and we won the game or had to close out on free-throws. It's gratifying. I have had a game-winning shot at the buzzer. Both of them are fun. You think about them all the time. Your family is a big part of what you do every day. When you're out on the court, you think about it. You don't want to let them down. You don't want to let your kids down, when you go home and those are the ones smiling and saying what happened, dad? Why did you miss that dunk? Why did you miss that play? Why did you turn the ball over? You want to be great for them. Knowing Mike's situation, I think it was definitely a relief for him to play the way he played last night, thinking about his daughter at the same time. Not much of a change. It's something I did all year. It's something I've done over my career, being a point forward. It's not a big change at all. I'm in great condition, man. I'm solid. No, we've just seen our body language change. Me and D-Wade said we want to watch the last four minutes of the game and see exactly what happened. We don't honestly know what happened. We know some big plays happened, and we know we won the game. It went so fast. Our body language changed, once we got stops and finally made a few shots. I have to give a lot of credit to Chicago, Coach Thibs, D-Rose and the rest of those guys. That defense we faced this round is tremendous. Like I said, coming -- I said it coming into this series, this was going to be an offensive struggle for both teams. That's exactly what it was. We both, Chicago and us, we both pride on the defensive end. You know, once we made a few shots, we felt like we could get stops in the fourth quarter. That's what we build on. We build on getting fourth quarter stops. D-Wade made some unbelievable plays. Got an and-one on transition on D-Rose. Got a four-point play. I was able to make a few shots and we continued to get stops. It's going to help you. I've been in situations where I say why me at this point? But you have to keep working and be put in those positions time after time after time where if you fail, you have to be ready to take that challenge again and again and again. When you're a leader, D-Rose -- he earned the MVP. He's a great talent, unbelievable player. Chicago got a great -- not only a great basketball player, but a great kid, too. What he's done for this city and what he's done for this franchise in just three years is remarkable. The sky is the limit for that guy. I mean, wow, as a fan, he's going to get better and better. Hopefully we don't have to continue to see him in the postseason. Yeah, we will. It's not refine, it's just being put in those positions. I never lost confidence in my ability. I know what I'm capable of. My teammates never lost confidence in me either. That's the huge thing. When your teammates continue to look at you down the stretch and say, we need you to bring this game home for us, we need you to make plays offensively and defensively, you never lose confidence in yourself, too. This postseason has been a good run for myself as far as being able to close games. But I've done it in the past. It's just the thing when you fail in late-game situations, those are the ones that people remember. They don't even remember the ones when you do well. I just got to keep being put in those situations, like I said, and not be afraid to fail. Like I said, it seems like yesterday when we were just on the Air Force base. It's just hard work. Like D-Wade said, everyone comes into the season wanting to win. You just got to continue to push. You know you're going to have a lot of ups and downs in the NBA season. It feels like the roller coaster, like the world is caving in on you, but you have to stay together. That's what we've been doing this postseason so far. A lot of work to be done still. The hard work doesn't stop now. When you have those times when it's just us, those are the ones that help you when you get in situations like not only tonight, but in the postseason. It's no sense of relief right now. We still have work to do. Like I said, we will look at this moment tonight, have a little bit of time tomorrow to go over this moment, what we just accomplished, but we get ready for Dallas very soon. We don't take for granted this win and take for granted being the Eastern Conference champs. We're not going to take that for granted. There's a lot of teams, 15 teams in the Eastern Conference that set out to do the same thing starting the season. But we have a lot of work to do still. We look forward to the challenge once the Finals begin on Tuesday. I guess it's work, first of all. Putting the extra hours of work. Me and D-Wade always, for the most part, we stay after, get shots. Late-night get shots. Just trying to work on our craft to get better for our teammates. Not only for ourselves, but for our teammates to come through in situations like that. When you have confidence in your ability to go out there and perform, that helps. Being put in those positions help. Like I said before, when you have the confidence from your teammates to take those shots, or even when you miss, they still look at you like we want you to take those shots again. We have that confidence coming from the other 13 guys in our locker room. For myself, just stepping up. Just stepping up for this team and trying to do whatever it takes to win. And if that's making a big shot late in the game or if that's trying to get a defensive stop, I try to take the challenge. Nothing technical. Just repetition. I understand a lot of the backlash that came with me going to Miami, but I understand also that I did what was best for me, what was best for my family and what was best for me being a professional athlete. I understand what this league is all about. I wanted to team up with some guys that I understood that would never die down in the moment. The opportunity presented itself with this great organization, and D-Wade came to me and said it was possible. We made it happen. You know, I'm happy. In anyone's job, they always try to find some way they can do their job and be happy doing it. And that's where I am right now in my life, as far as on the court and off the court. I just keep on -- I'm trying to get better every day. Not only as a basketball player, but as a father, as a friend. All the above, I guess. |
| First of all, I'm honored to be here again. Now with this franchise, it's an honor. As a player we worked hard. I worked hard individually to get to this point. I had a lot of visions of being at this moment and the now it's hit me. Being on the floor and seeing the championship logos, The Finals logos, I'm very excited. I got an opportunity to see the trophy yesterday and take pictures with it. Hopefully we can bring it home. Yes. They make you do everything with it. Besides take it home. I mean, it's great satisfaction to be here. But we have a lot of work to do still. It's been a great ride so far throughout this postseason. We played some great teams starting with Philadelphia, then going with Boston and then Chicago. Three great teams. And being able to be in this moment, we've all had a vision where we all worked hard, from the start of training camp on the Air Force base. And to be here is very humbling, it's very satisfying at this point. We want more. I don't know. That's something for you guys to break down and look at the numbers and the everything. I'm hungry for one. That was my goal coming into this league. It's been my goal. I've seen the vision over the last few years. I haven't had an opportunity to get there. I played in The Finals before; didn't win it. I got to the Eastern Conference Finals before against Orlando; lost. Had some years where we were the best team in the league in Cleveland and we didn't get back to that point. I have had this vision and now I'm back here and I'm looking to change the outcome. I feel different because I'm older, more experienced. I'm a better player at this point. You know, going into the Finals with the Spurs, I said it at the end of that Finals, I said they were a better team than us. It would have been a lot harder to digest it if we had came into a Finals with a team that we felt like wasn't better than us, didn't execute better than us, wasn't a veteran club and would have beat us. I thought the Spurs were a better team than us and took advantage of all our weaknesses. They've been to that position before. Right now I feel more comfortable because I feel like we have a veteran ballclub and we have three guys that have had rings, Eddie House and D-Wade and Udonis. We have guys that have been in the postseason year after year after year. When you have that experience, when you have guys that can make plays and take over games, you like your chances. We don't know. We don't really get into it too much. You know, we've got a lot of flack this year over mostly because of myself. And we've tried to use that as motivation every day we get on the basketball court. But just play the game of basketball. That's all we can do is play the game of basketball at a high level. Play Miami Heat basketball. That's defending at a high level with speed and athleticism. And then sharing the ball and being the team offensively. As far as this villain thing and things like that, we don't -- it is what it is. People are going to say whatever they want about us. We just got to continue to go out there and just play our game. You hear it all the time. Always say, to go down as one of the greats, you have to put a ring on your resume. I mean, as an individual, you have those dreams and you have those goals. You want to be a champion. Do you care as much as what people say about your career as far as your body of work? I don't know. I think you look at Dirk's numbers, they speak for itself over his 13-year career. You look at my numbers so far in my eight-year career, you know, it kind of speaks for itself as well. As individuals, myself and Dirk, we both are competitors, and we both know the ultimate feeling is to win, is to win a championship. Not for whatever everybody else think, but for the people we have around us. That's our teammates, our organization, our families to be able to have that moment and have that feeling. Well, I mean, it all depends what type of guy you are. For me personally it's driven me. It's gotten me better. I go back and look at some of those games, I look at myself and say, you are a much better player than you were then. That comes from playing games, playing postseason games, losing, winning. But I took from that Finals that I just need to become better, not only as a basketball player, but as a leader on and off the court. Just use it as fuel. Is it going to happen the next year? It can happen to you individually where you become a better player. But does it always get you back to the Finals? It doesn't. There's a lot of guys that have been in The Finals, and lost and never got back. You look at Allen Iverson who got to the Finals and took the 76ers to The Finals. He was great every year, every year after that, but he was never able to get back. I'm humbled. I'm blessed that I'm able to get back to this point and to be able to redeem myself for that time when I was in The Finals against the Spurs. I'm looking forward to guarding anybody. I don't care about guarding anybody. I mean, that's what I do. I'm a defensive guy. I'm not sitting up here and saying I can stop Dirk. I don't think no one can single handedly stop Dirk. He's a shot maker. One of the best shot makers we've ever had in this league. Whoever Coach puts me on or whoever I need to take the challenge on, it doesn't matter to me. As far as what? I don't know. Dirk is a great player. There are a lot of great players that have played in this league. Dirk is one heck of a player. The things that he's able to do out on the floor, the shot-making ability, everyone said, you forced me to a bad shot. Really it's not a comfort shot for him. It looks like a bad shot if you don't know basketball or you don't know his game. One-legged fadeaways off the glass and pull-up jumpers off the dribble, pump fake, pump fake, fadeaway, things like that. He's a great player. Ultimately for me it was about being in the position to compete year after year after year. And not only being able to do that, but being able to do it with one of my best friends, one of the best players we have in this league today in Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh. I know what this league is all about, about having multiple guys on the court that can dominate a game. With teaming up with these guys I feel like we can compete for a lot of years to come. We've proven a lot of people wrong so far. We have a lot of work to do still. Ultimately that's what it's about. Me being happy and also being able to compete at the highest level. That's what there league is about. This league is about. No, I mean whatever. Whatever it takes for our team. You know, if I need to be on Terry or anyone on their team, I try to take the challenge. Our defense is pretty good. It's never me just guarding someone individually. But I do take the challenge on any individual matchup that I'm against. And tonight happened to be Terry mostly in the second half. We needed to lock in. We came out in the third quarter not paying attention to detail. Gave them an open three. DeShawn Stevenson hit an open three. Dirk hit an open shot at the top of the key. We just weren't paying attention to detail about how we were going to defend this team coming into the game. Once we slowed down and got back into what we know, what our strong point is, and that's getting stops, we were able to get out, D-Wade was able to get an and-one. Make another shot and we made a run. Defense. I think in order for us to win basketball games, we have to defend and we have to get stops, and our offense will speak for itself when we continue to get stops. I think for me going into the fourth quarter, I know it's winning time. That's when the game is won. So I got to try to dominate my individual matchup defensively, and then try to execute as best as possible. Try to get good looks, not turn the ball over. And we did a good job of doing that tonight. We got stops and we executed on the offensive end. D-Wade said that to me. Congratulated me after the game on my first Finals victory. I mean, it feels good because it's the first game. And we played well as a team. We got a lot of work to do. We'll come in with the same mindset on Thursday, and looking forward to this challenge once again that's in front of us. It's one in the books. We're excited about this game. Tomorrow we prepare for Game 2, and obviously there's ways we can get better. They play a lot of zone, and the zone is to pack the paint, keep our drivers out of the paint, myself and D-Wade. And dare us to shoot threes. I think our bench came in and did a great job, Rio (Chalmers), Mike Miller did a great job against that zone, knocking shots down. We needed that boost off the bench. We know how strong their bench is, and our bench matched them tonight. And they played extremely well. When they were in the zone, they knocked down shots. Rio gave us a big boost. Mike Miller gave us a big boost, and everyone contributed. Pretty much. Yeah, dare me to shoot, that's pretty much gone. I think people will still live with keeping myself and keeping D-Wade on the perimeter, but it's just my confidence. I put a lot of hard work into it, and understanding that you got to be a two-way player in this league. You have to be able to shoot the ball, you have to be able to drive and do other things to not only get yourself involved, but get your teammates involved. Tonight once again I shot the ball extremely well from the outside, but more importantly, it helped our team get a win. That's what it's all about. I think it was left unsaid. They understand I've been in some big games. I've been in the Finals. Didn't win a ballgame in '07, but I've been in big games before. So basically it's the same conversation we had before every game. Let's get ready to go out and continue to improve as a team, as individuals, and help lead this team to a victory. He's right-handed. He'll be all right. Dirk is right-handed. He shoots the ball extremely well. That left hand is just a guide hand for all shooters. We all know that. It won't affect him. He's still going to be great. He's still Dirk. I mean, just to answer about D-Wade, when D-Wade is dribbling the ball, dribbling it and he gets in his rhythm, and pulls up for a three, once that went down, I knew he was feeling really good. We're rhythm players. When we get in a good rhythm, we get in a good groove, we feel like every shot we take is going to go in. Those are two cases of it. We always said that. We always said we would figure it out. We always believed in our abilities. We always believed as a team. Everything we went through, the pitfalls and the downs was going to turn and make its course. We just stuck with it and understood it. We have guys that have closed games before. We just had to figure out how to do it together. We've done it by ourselves. CB has closed games in the past. D-Wade has closed games in the past. I've closed games in the past. What we had to figure out is how do we do it together to maximize our team potential. Those pitfalls early in the season has helped us get to where we are now in the postseason. It's not like we have big deficits at halftime. I seen the stats last night, down two points to Chicago, three points here, two points to Boston, one point to Boston. It's not like it's a huge deficit that we're trying to come back from 12 or 14 points down. Usually it's just good basketball at this point in time. We happened to be down. We've played I think -- if I'm doing my math right, we've played 16 games. So we have had ten other games we wasn't trailing. We just got to continue to play our game and not worry about if we're trailing or not. We don't want to trail. We don't want to trail at all throughout the whole game, if it's possible. But we just got to maintain our focus. Like I said, it comes from failure throughout the season. Having games where we felt like we could or should have won games late in games and we just didn't execute. I said last night I was used to closing out games in the last seven years. CB was used to closing out games and D-Wade was used to closing out games. One thing was figuring out how to do it together. We were used to doing it individually early on in the season. Me making a play or CB making a play or D-Wade making a play going back to our last few years. Once we figured out how we were going to do it together for the better of the team, we started to close games out, figure things out, figure out certain sets that would work for us in late-game situations and go from there. That's what it's about. We understand that Game 1 is over. We played well, but there were some things we could have done better. We now move our focus to Game 2 and approach that game like it's our last as well. We continue to come into our home court and try to protect home court. We understand Dallas if comes in here and does a great job of stealing one of our games, then they feel -- they forget about Game 1 as well. So we have to come in with the same mindset. Huh? What do you mean "cool"? He cool. There you go. It was great. I had an unbelievable meeting with not only Pat but Micky and Nick Arison and Coach Spo and Zo came. It was a great meeting. Basically gave me the blueprint about how this organization is ran, both on the court and off the court. The great thing I got out of that is about how important family is. I'm a big believer in that. Always have been throughout my life. I appreciate that, and also the product they can put on the floor as well. With D-Wade and also at the time they were talking about they could get CB as well and another free agent. I thought it was the right move. No, not at that point. I definitely seen something at that point when we were all talking about the players in this organization, I definitely have something to look forward to. I think it was just a big shot, period. It was a close game at that point in The Garden. To be able to make that shot and tie the game up, it was a huge shot. It definitely was a shot that we needed at the time, and I was able to knock it down. And I just kind of just took that momentum from that game, and moved on to Game 5. Now I'm here, made a big shot in Game 2 in Chicago and a few key shots in Game 5 also in Chicago from behind the arc. And then last night I was able to make a few, also. It's not my game, though. I'm not a three-point shooter. I'm an attack guy. If a defense is going to allow me to sit and measure up a three-pointer, I'm going to take it. I have that much confidence in my shooting ability. I'm an attack-first guy. That's what I'm best at. I don't care how many threes I make, I understand that my game is in the paint. Yes. It was a bunch of them. I don't know. I guess reading the situation. Taking what the defense gives me. They played a lot of zone. So in the zone it is to keep your perimeter attackers out on the perimeter. I was able to make a couple just swing, swing situations where the defender ran at D-Wade or ran at Mike Bibby and I was sitting in the corner by myself and I was able to hit a couple. I made a couple off the dribble. One at the end of the third and one right before the end of the third. I think like a minute on the clock I was able to pull up for a three. Just try to take what the defense gives me, and not force anything against this defense. They play so many styles, from man to zone to matchup and things like that. You have to kind of be patient and go with it. Just play our defense. This is the most challenging offense we've played in this postseason, because of the firepower that they have offensively. They have multiple guys that can shoot, multiple guys that can put the ball on the floor and create for others. They have guys in the paint that also can create in Shawn Marion and Tyson Chandler, who gets into the paint, and makes some things happen around the rim. It's a challenge for all of us. We come out with a game plan, Coach Spo and the coaching staff gives us a game plan and we go from there. Kind of just use our instincts, our athleticism and our communication defensively to try to read and react. Just seizing the moment. Understanding this is a great opportunity for not only myself but for our team to seize the moment and try to take full advantage of it. Am I going to make every shot or close every game out from now on? I hope so. I don't know. But I do put myself in the position, I do have the confidence that if I have the ball in my hands or if I get the ball in my hands that I can make a play, not only for myself but for my teammates to help us win that game. We're a really good team down the stretch now. It has a lot to do with our team as far as trust, it has a lot to do with myself and D-Wade and just the position Coach has put us in in late games to have us have an ability to come down the stretch and make shots for our team. I guess it's a confidence of closing games out, but it's also the trust you have for your teammates. When they look at you and see you need to close a game out. No matter if you fail, they look for you again to do it again. |
| It's all about trusting your teammates. D-Wade, we ran a two-three pick-and-roll. They put two on the ball. D-Wade hit me first. I had Tyson Chandler closing on me. I saw CB wide open. I don't care if he missed 15 in a row, he was wide open and that's his sweet spot. He was able to knock it down. It's the trust we have in each other's ability, no matter what the point of the game is at. It's not even that. We play our defense. This is the toughest offense we've played all year as far as how many guys they put on the floor that can make plays. Not only for themselves, but for others. Unbelievable shooting team. And they make you stay in tune. You can never relax or they make you pay. Our defense always tries to extend offenses further than where they usually start. That's just our defense. It has nothing to do about them not being a paint presence or anything like that. It's just our defense. That's how we played all postseason all year. I think you're concentrating on one side of the floor. All you're looking at is the stat sheet. Honestly, I'm a two-way player. Since D-Wade had it going offensively, so we allow him to handle the ball, bring it on offensively. You should watch the film again and see what I did defensively. You'll ask me a better question tomorrow. Like D-Wade said, we had all the confidence in the world in our defensive scheme. UD wanted that matchup in Game 2. So we knew when he got this matchup, he was going to make Dirk take a tough shot. He made that shot before. He will make it again. At least we just make him work for it. Make him take a turn-around jumper. UD stayed in front of him and it rimmed out. It was a huge stop for our team. It's just we're teammates. At this point there's no room to hold anything back. There's nine or eight days left in the season. I think our friendship allows us to don't care about that moment. It's living in the moment. That situation he had every right to say what he had to say to me. As a competitor, you love when guys challenge you. He challenged me in the locker room at halftime. He challenged me on the court. As a competitor, like I said, I respect that. Something that -- I don't know if my kids are asleep right now. No, my kids stay up late. It didn't look well. All game you could see it watering. You could see him messing with it. Just trying to keep a tissue during time-outs to keep it padded. But he fought through it. And then you definitely respect that. CB is really hard on himself. He's his own critic. He knows when he's not playing well. As teammates we try to keep him upbeat, let him understand how important he is to this team. He's grown. Not only just this series but throughout the whole postseason. This is the furthest he's ever played in a postseason. So he's excited, and he's done some great things for our team. He's going to continue to do great things for our team. We always say he's the most important player to our team. No, I did win. We won. (Laughter). That's all that it's about. You know me, anybody that knows me throughout the years, all I care about is the W. No matter if I'm scoring. I'm not just a scoring guy. I've got a lot of points in my career. I have had some teammates who have given me great confidence and ability to go out there and score a lot of points. But I've done other things. I don't have to score points to be effective. Not only did Chris Bosh make the game-winning shot, but D-Wade had a hockey assist. I got the assist to CB and Udonis Haslem set the screen on Dirk to get him a wide-open shot. That's what it's about. This is a team game. Even though I know I get a lot of the headlines, bad headlines, D-Wade gets a lot of the great headlines, CB gets a few headlines, this is a team game. We understand as a team we have to play together to win. It's not just about me. I don't think it can't be too many. I think there are slight adjustments both teams make from game to game. Like I said, Game 4 of The Finals, which you've been working on all season since training camp is what you have. There's not too many things you can change. You can make slight tweaks offensively, defensively that can make you be a little bit more on point when you see a situation happens. But right now it's about the team that's going to play hard, going to use their instincts and just play on a string. You have to trust one another as teammates both ends. Not only us, but Dallas as well. I think when our communication just -- we didn't care about -- it's all about winning. Once we started communicating that -- I think it started early in the season when we just were struggling. We were trying to be too unselfish. I've always said that trying to change our game, I thought that was going to be for the better of the team. At the end of the day, we had always just say whoever has it going, we kind of just go to. D-Wade had it going last night. I have had it going at points in this postseason where they've come to me, come to me and I've been able to close for our team. It doesn't matter. At the end of the day, it's the win. If it's D-Wade making a crucial basket or me making a crucial basket or last night, CB making the game-winning shot, that's all that's about. No, I just want to win. Individual, I think my individual stats will take care of itself. Like you said, in a series I've averaged 38 points a game and we've lost in the Eastern Conference Finals against Orlando. This is a team game. My resume will speak for itself after I'm done with this game of basketball. What me and my teammates are trying to accomplish now is the only thing I'm worried about. When I'm done, I'll let you guys figure where I should be placed. They're very similar, because they force you to help -- they have so many dynamic players on the court at one time. You look at Boston, Ray Allen, Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett and Rondo, these four guys can all break you down at one time. So everyone is live. You can't relax off anyone of them because they'll all make you pay. That's the same with this Dallas Mavericks team. When you are coming down the stretch and you have Jason Kidd and Jason Terry, with Dirk also and Shawn Marion and Tyson Chandler who also can create things off the glass, you never have a chance to relax, ever. So mentally you have to be in tune, because if you do, like we've done a few times in this series, they make you pay. I think the difference is he had a super duper green light. Like he told you before, he had no conscience in '06. He knew that he really had to go out and score 30 every night to give his team a chance to win at times. He's a smarter player now. That just comes with age. It comes with experience. It comes with games that you play throughout the course of your years. I mean, he's the same great player I faced my first seven years in the league. A guy that can break you down off the dribble, create at the rim, can make shots from the outside. At the same time, a two-way player who also plays defense at the same high intensity. I just think he's a little older, but not old at all. Just a little older. Not at all. I've never been afraid of constructive criticism. From my coaches, from my high school teammates. I had four best friends in my high school team. Those guys would get on me all the time if I ever did anything wrong. Something I've been going through my whole life. When you have good friends and you have friends they are not afraid to tell you when you're wrong. That's on the court or off the court when you're doing stuff that shouldn't be done. So it wasn't hard to adjust to. I understand that if he's yelling at me or trying to tell me to do something better, it's for the better of the team, to help me get better individually, vice versa. It didn't take no time to get used to. I know I'm not bigger than this team or I know everything. I still got a lot of improvement to do. The only difference for me in '07 and now, it takes a lot more preparation. Being young, I wasn't ready for the preparation for the NBA Finals at that point. Being my first time. I wasn't prepared mentally. Coming into this season, I prepared from day one. Being around two guys who had already won rings, three guys including Eddie House and Udonis and D-Wade, I knew how to prepare throughout the course of the season to get to this point. So it is great when you are around guys who have been in this moment and who actually got to the mountaintop, to lean on at times. We have a luxury. We have a luxury here. We got guys that have been in this moment before and not afraid to be in it again. |
| I don't know. We just feel more comfortable out on the court, no matter who is out on the floor with us. We try to complement one another. When one guy is flowing. We try to feed off of each other's energy and always try to stay in attack mode to help our team. We get to the free throw line as individuals or try to spread out our three point shooters and allow them to make plays as well. It's definitely a high comfort level right now. We just want to keep it going. That's a veteran ballclub. They're mentally tough. One of the most mentally tough teams that we have in this league. So we don't even put in the factor of them being fatigued. We don't let that be in our head. We try to work our games, work our habits, the coaching staff gives us a great game plan, try to execute that, and hopefully it continues to result in wins for us. I mean, just they are a championship caliber team. No matter what injuries goes on, I look at them as a top opponent, as a top contender, and as a competitive group. Anytime I look out there and I see Paul and I see Ray and KG and Rondo, no matter who they have in their supporting cast, I feel it's a championship caliber team. I approach every game with a high intensity both mentally and physically. It's going to be tough on all of us. We have to be in tune with Rondo. He's probably the number one unpredictable guy we have in our league as far as how he forces his action. A lot of his points come in transition where you kind of you want to lull to him, but also he spreads off the threes. He's that good. He's that good that he forces a lot of our triggers. He forces us to pay a lot of attention to him, and then he's able to get him a shot or get someone else a shot. We try to make it tough on him, like we do any other guard or any other player in this league. We try to make it tough for him and wear him throughout the game. But he's a great talent. Defensively, no matter what year or group they have out there, they're great. So you try to get the ball moving from one side to another. When it comes back to you, I try to attack. I was able to attack early in the game. Also in a lot of my post ups I was able to get to a lot of my shots I was comfortable with making. So just always try to be on attack, no matter what point of the game it is. And I was able to get a couple to fall for me tonight. It doesn't what our complementary guys do never show up in the boxscore, especially our centers. They go out there, they defend at a high level. They get us open offensively, setting great screens and transition and also in the half court set. We find them, they try to go up there and finish. Everything we get offensively from our centers is always a bonus. It puts no pressure on them offensively. We just want them to play hard, rebound and defend. We know the opposing team is going to sag off our centers, try to clog up the paint. It's been like that the last two years. But they understand their role, and that's what makes them so good. That doesn't change anything for us. We expect to hit the deck every single game, me and D Wade. It's how we feel like teams approach us. They feel like they need to put us on the floor, hard foul us. It doesn't change our approach. We still have to be in the attack mode no matter what happens, because that's when we're at our best as a team. We feel like we didn't play our best basketball tonight. We had some great looks offensively, but we had a lot of breakdowns defensively. So we didn't play our best game. And we want to just try to continue to get better throughout the series. We come in tomorrow, we're going to watch a lot of film, break down the film, see the ways we can get better offensively and defensively. It's a good sign. It's a good thing for us, but we understand we didn't have our best game tonight. So we will prepare and we will be better on Wednesday. First of all, it let's us know we're active. We're playing the rim and playing the ball. Definitely a defensive stop is just as effective as a big dunk. They are both momentum changing plays. Especially when a guy feels like he has a good lane to the rim and someone comes over and gets a block. That definitely helps us offensively, because once you get the block in, most of our blocks aren't hit out of bounds, so it allows us to get out in fast break and get out on the floor. So it helps us a lot. You like Chris Bosh's name. I'm starting to believe that. You mention him every single day. You don't go one day without saying Chris Bosh's name. We have to rebound, and I have the ability to rebound, so I'm just trying to do whatever it takes to help our team win. I mean, we enjoy it. We're always looking to run out on transition. We're just trying to make a transition. Off the rebound, or right off the turnover, we're trying to make the pass, the easy bucket for us. It's a good heads up play. He was one of the greatest receivers. I'll tell you that. Man, how do I prepare for something I already think is going to happen every game . That's possible. We had some great looks. Didn't go down for us. D Wade was able to get into the lane and make some great plays. We start to see it, and we're ready for it. I don't know. First of all, that's a question you should ask him. What adjustments do you think he'll make. I always expect for a great player to be great. He's one of the best players we have in this league. I always expect him to be great each and every night. I feel humbled now, first of all. I remember when I first came to the league and five straight or something like that. I was like, wow, that's unbelievable. I hope I get an opportunity to play in the Conference Finals. This is my fourth. I'm humbled and blessed to be able to be on some great teams, great teammates, great coaches. For sure. For sure. More relaxed, and more I think of my teammates as well. Just more focused. I mean, I've been around here before. So I've got to be more relaxed. No, honestly, I mean, when I first played against him I wasn't into the defensive side of the game like I am now. But he's a great player. You have to try to make him do things that he may not want to do. But he's still going to make shots, because that's how good he is. He makes plays. He can shoot the ball, he can handle the ball, he can post up. I try to make it tough on him. He's a great player in the league. Say that again? That's all. We all know how K.G. is. He means no harm. Be able to put together a good game. We won Game 1 and . Doesn't tell me anything. I expect it to be every game I play in. Me personally. It doesn't surprise me. It's not like I have to gear up for it. I'm already geared up for it. First of all, just to be playing this time of the year is exciting. There are a lot of teams that's not playing right now. We're blessed that we're able to be a part of this. You know the history. You know the Boston franchise is great. It's always fun to go against them as well. It's a great time for us. Get to the free throw line. Like I said, I expect physical play. I expect to be quote, unquote, thrown on the deck. Whatever the case may be. I have to go to the free throw line and go up there and make them. I made a few adjustments. We had a few miscues, a few communication breakdowns in the second quarter when we gave up 35 points. and we gave up eight offensive rebounds as well. As players we can get better to help out. It's another game. Playoff game. We have to protect home court. Playoff game is not one or two games. It's going to be a long series. I don't personally D. Rose. I've never had a conversation with D. Rose. It sucks that it happened. I wish him a fast recovery and hope he gets back . I don't know what he's going through. I've never had that type of injury. So I can't imagine what he's going through. I hope he comes back 100%. 110% because I am a fan of his. I love the way he plays the game of basketball. I love what he brings to his game. Get healthy. |
| First of all, Rondo was absolutely amazing. The performance he put on tonight will go down in the record books. He played the whole game. He made all the plays and tried to will his team to a victory. He showed tonight why he's an all pro and one of the superstars in this league. He's a unique player. He's an unbelievable player. He gave everything that he had tonight. As far as after the game, it was a battle. We never felt like we won the game or lost the game until there were zeros on the clock and we looked up there and there was 115 to 111. We were able to win this game with so many ups and downs throughout the whole game. But it was exciting to be a part of it and to win. Absolutely. Always feel like he's going to make a play, no matter what's going on in his game at that moment. I always feel the next play he's going to make a play to help us push forward. And he was definitely doing that late in the game. He made some unbelievable shots. Made some drives, kicked to UD for a big time shot as well. He made some big plays for us. We ran a play, D Wade was able to hit me on a pass to the rim, and I missed the lay up. I felt I had a good look at it, but I was kind of off balance. I was racing trying to get the offensive rebound to give us the last possession. I had a great look at it at the end of regulation, it just didn't go down. And then started the overtime, I missed two free throws. Like you said, I tried to help us win. Whatever it took, whether it was offensive rebounds, trying to get a defensive stop or whatever the case may be, trying to be out there to help my teammates win. I was happy to be able to make a few plays. I mean, there's parts of the games where you have iso ball, but it's not what we want to do. We don't want high doses of that. We want to continue to work our habits, continue to do what we've been doing over the course of the season. If the pick and roll blows up, we have to get the ball from one side to another, and not try to force anything. Now the clock is at a disadvantage for us. They showed us something different tonight defensively, which we knew they would. We knew they would make a change. That's why this series is going to be great, because both coaches are going to make adjustments throughout the series. We get an opportunity to watch the film tomorrow, and we'll go from there. Absolutely. That's what I told Rio in the game after in the locker room. He kept us afloat by his play. When D Wade didn't have it going, Rio made big shots. Especially in the second quarter, in the third quarter as well he kept us afloat. He stepped up, made some big shots and gave us a lift. He gave us a third punch that we needed in this game. So he played a great game. You guys are tired too, huh. I appreciate it. |
| You just said it, it was a must win game for us to continue our season. I'm happy we were able to put together a complete game for the first time this series. We were close in Game 1. We played really good in Game 1. Since then we hadn't played a complete game that we're capable of doing. So that's what I'm more excited about than anything, that we finally put a 48 minute game together. And it allowed us to win this game, a game that we had to have. I don't know. I don't know. I haven't really I haven't watched the film or anything like that. I just tried to make plays for our team throughout the whole game, as long as I was on the court I wanted to make plays, both offensively and defensively, to give ourselves a chance to win. I think I did that tonight. In an environment like this you want to have a big game. I wanted to be there for my teammates, no matter what was going on throughout the course of the game. So like I said, I'm happy I was able to make some plays both offensively and defensively to help us win this game. This was a gut check for us. And it's good to see we were able to bounce back after that loss, after that Game 5 loss at home. You just try to keep the pedal going, keep the pedal down and just continue to be aggressive. I felt like I was aggressive from the opening tip, and the guys continued to find me. I tried to keep it going. I felt like that a few times in this postseason. And it's a great feeling to be in when you feel like everything you put up is going in. But you just can't you can never let go. You can never let it die down or anything like that. You know you have to continue to put pressure on their defense, and I was able to do that. I don't know. I take every game as its own. I will continue to be aggressive. I will try to continue to play at a high level like I done the whole postseason. If it results in these numbers or whatever the case may be, I'm going to go out there and play my game and play as hard as I can. I don't really care what the stats say. I won't regret Game 7. Win, lose or draw, I'm going to go in with the mindset like I've had this whole season. And we'll see what happens. I wasn't paying too much attention to those guys. I was focused on what we had to do as a team, as an individual, to help us win this ballgame. I was in such a zone I really didn't I wasn't trying to pay too close attention to their expressions or what they were going through over there. I was just doing what I had to do to help our team win this game. I have no idea. I don't know. I didn't use any motivation. I just went to my habits. I went to what I built over the course of the season, over the course of the years, and just went out and played. I wasn't going to feel sorry for myself or anything tonight. I just go out and play as hard as I can, as I said, and try to make plays for our team. And at the end of the day, whatever happens happens. I can be satisfied with that. I didn't need no extra motivation tonight. It's the postseason. I know how big these games are. Every game is big. So that's my motivation itself. But I didn't need any extra motivation in this game. I just went to my habits, what I built ever since I started playing this game. I don't really get too far in sports talk radio or anything like that too much. Over the postseason I've been doing a lot of reading and been watching movies and things like that. I don't really hear the outside noise of what's said about me or what's said about our team. As a team, we never get too high, we never get too low. So we kind of just try to stay focused on what's at hand. And over the course of these 48 hours we've just been worried about Game 6, how can we prepare to win Game 6. And our coaching staff gave us a great game plan, and as players we tried to go out and execute that. For me this game is all about team. I was coached that way as a kid, and it was instilled in me ever since I picked up a basketball. As an individual you can't do it by yourself. No matter what my numbers was tonight, nowhere near we would have won this game if the other 14 guys weren't in tune and wasn't focused about us trying to win this game. So two guys come to me or three guys come to me, I'm very good at math, that means someone is open. I believe in my teammates, and they're going to knock that shot down. So that's how I play the game, and I will continue to play the game like that, because it's gotten me to this point. No, it doesn't mean that. I'm basically saying this whole team is about getting back to the way I play the game of basketball. I said that to all you guys, seen the interview I did with Rachel before the season. You guys have all seen it. In a great place right now as far as the game of basketball on the court and off the court. So I'm looking forward to Game 7. See you all in Miami. |
| I mean, it's been a journey. It's been a long ride, like he said. But we're happy we've been able to put ourselves in the position, and not take we didn't take any days off. We knew it was a process once again this year. We're just going to take each ride each hump, each obstacle as it came to us. We couldn't shortcut anything this year. We're happy to be back in this position. We look forward to the challenge. What we're saying to each other, it's time. It's time. We want to give a lot of credit to the Celtics. They got a hell of a coach in Doc Rivers and great players. They pushed us as hard as any team has pushed us thus far. But everything we were saying going into the fourth, it's time. Let's play our fourth quarter defense, what we're capable of doing. I'm glad we were able to do that. No. I got to be in attack mode, no matter what's going on throughout the course of the game. I always know that he's going to figure it out. So it's not to say that I see what's going on with his game, so I have to be more aggressive; I have to stay aggressive. It's going to help our team a lot. I don't have to worry about him. Last series in the Indiana game where he didn't play well, I didn't even go to him or say anything to him. I know he's going to figure it out. It's just the player he is. For me I always have to be in attack mode and try to help our team. I envisioned it every day we worked out. I understood what his passion was. I understood what his drive was. We pushed each other every single day. That four day span, we called it hell week, that we worked out in Akron. He was a little upset about the series in Dallas, where they got eliminated by Dallas, and I was as well. So we pushed each other each and every day. I envisioned us getting to this point. Like I said, I was happy for him that he's able to get to the Finals. I'm looking forward to going against him. It's only right. It's only right. We look forward to the challenge. It's going to be a big test for us. Chris is big. Game ball automatically goes to him. Without his production tonight, we don't win. Come off the bench, 19 8. It's huge. It's something we haven't had. We haven't had that type of activity, that firepower off the bench since we got here. It's unique. It's very unique that CB is coming off the bench, but it may be something great for us. As far as the play, the three pointer in the corner, I felt like when I got the drive, that KG may sink in and try to take my drive away. So when I seen that happen, I just kicked it to him, and he just lined it up and made it. He made three of them tonight, and all of them was big. The game ball definitely goes to him. He was big time. Competitors. They're great. You can never relax. You can never relax at all on the court when you're competing against those guys. You can never feel comfortable. You always feel on edge when you go against them. This is their chemistry that they built over the years. It's like no other team that I've ever faced in the postseason. They're great. They're great. As far as the scrutinized, I don't get involved in that. For me as a competitor and as a player individually, I just try to do whatever it takes to help our team win. I do the things in the offseason to prepare myself to come into the season to be dominant, and I try to lead by example and lead by my voice every night we step on the floor. That's on and off the court. I can't worry about what people say about me, about my game, about who I am as a person. I can't get involved in that. People can have their own opinions, and rightfully so they can have their own opinions. For me I just go out and play at a high level, and do whatever it takes for us to win. And I can be happy with that. 'Spo talk already? I'm starting (laughing). This guy is starting. That's all I know. No, I don't think it's interesting. I don't think it's interesting at all. We've played some good ball. It doesn't matter who starts or who finishes the game. James Harden doesn't start, but he's always on the court at the end of the game. Jason Terry doesn't start, but last year in The Finals he was in the fourth quarter every game. CB didn't start tonight, but he was in the fourth quarter. It doesn't matter who starts, or finishes the game, it's who is being productive. That's what it all boils down to |
| It was very important. Any time you get a lead in this series, it's important, no matter if it's a double digit lead or one point lead, because both teams are playing great basketball. Any time you can get a quick start and get a lead, it helps. He's been a huge lift. He's been a huge lift for us. He's shooting the ball extremely well from the outside. He's making plays both offensively and defensively. We're going to need it. We're going to need it. The series is going to be so tight that we're going to need guys to step up, and Shane has been there in the first two games. We've just got to continue to do what our staples are, try to get back in transition, level them off, make them take contested shots. They're very good when you miss a shot or you turn the ball over at getting out and getting early buckets. We've got to continue to be conscious about our turnovers, and then when we miss a shot we've got to have three guys back just to try to level them off and not allow them to get those transition buckets. It meant everything. We had played too well in the first 36 minutes to try to let this one slip away from us. We knew we were going to keep coming. We knew they were going to keep fighting. They've been doing it the whole postseason against all the teams they've played against, especially on their home floor. We just wanted to make one more or two more plays than they made and come out with a victory, and we was able to do that. For me it's all about aggression. You know, I just try to get into the paint, make things happen, create for myself, create for others and put some pressure on their defense. For me that's what my game is all built around. Well, I mean, for me, I want to guard the best and the biggest point of the game. KD is an unbelievable talent. I think we all know that, we all see that. He can make every shot on the floor. Just try to keep a body on him, take contested shots. He got away from me a couple times, got a couple threes that I am not too happy about. So I'll watch the film and try to figure that out. On the last play they were down two and I figured they were going to go to him. He got a small step on me, I just wanted to try to keep a body on him, make him take a tough shot, and he's made tough shots all year, all series, and just that one he missed it. I mean, when you get to the championship, teams got to win on each other's floor. The two three two doesn't mean much, I guess. I don't know, you've got to these are the two best teams. They're confident no matter what building they're in. We're happy now that it's a 1 1 series and we're going back to Miami and will take control of the home court. It doesn't mean that the series has changed. Both teams can win on each other's floor, and both teams are confident. I mean, as a competitor, of course you would have been angry. Like I said, I just tried to keep a body on him and make him take a tough one. Shane has been huge. Going against him in my career, I understood how smart he was, I understood how competitive he was, especially on the defensive end. I was very excited when we was able to sign him in the off season. He's a big part of why we're here today and competing for a championship. He's meant a lot for our team, he's meant a lot to me, being able to guard guys as well as the top scorers. He did it against Carmelo Anthony, from Carmelo Anthony to David West to Paul Pierce and Brandon Bass all the way down to Ibaka and Kevin Durant. He can guard multiple positions and allows our team to have so many options defensively. He plays a big part in that. I mean, I'm a confident guy. On a big stage like this in a big game like this, every point counts, every point matters. So you go to the free throw line, no matter how hostile the environment, and try to knock them down. You live with your routine, things you practice all year, and you live with the results. Like I said, I'm happy that I was able to go up there and make a few plays, go up there and make my free throws. We needed it. We needed every point tonight. That's just we want to make enough plays to win basketball games, not to answer any questions about what people have to say about us. I mean, it's a huge game for us. We understood that we wanted to split. We had an opportunity in Game 1, but it kind of slipped away from us in the fourth quarter, they took control of the game. And Game 2, we wanted to come out and get the win. We didn't want to go home being down 0 2 even having three games on our home floor. It was good to see the sense of urgency to start the game, and then late in the game make enough plays to even the series. You know, for me I always want to be aggressive, and I don't think there was just one guy that can guard me. You know, I'm always looking at the next line of defense and seeing the rotation coming. Sometimes it doesn't work in my favor. I got into the hole one time, Ibaka got me from behind, got a block. But I don't think it's just one guy. You can't just put one guy on me and allow him to be on an island and defend me one on one. It's about being aggressive and taking what the defense gives me. When I shoot double digit free throws, that means I know personally I'm being aggressive when I'm getting to the rim. At the end of the day, it's helping our team. |
| I don't remember that play. What happened? I'm serious, which one? Oh, yeah, yeah, on the break. Just trying to attack. We got a great block. I think we got a block, and Rio got the ball, and I started to call for it then and there, but I told him to go middle, so I just filled the lane and Rio hit me and I was able to finish. I seen KD going for the charge, so I kind of went away from him a little bit and was able to get the block. I don't know, just trying to make plays. I told you guys, last year I didn't make enough game changing plays, and that's what I kind of pride myself on. I didn't do that last year in The Finals. I'm just trying to make game changing plays, and whatever it takes for our team to win, just trying to step up in key moments and be there for my teammates. Well, how I was feeling down 10, we weren't playing our game. They made us stagnant and they came out in the third quarter and attacked us, and we didn't attack back. We did that the last minutes of the third quarter and we was able to cut the lead, I think even taking the lead with D Wade's free throw. We didn't play good to start the third, and we can't do that. We can't do that against an explosive team like that. But it just shows our character, how we was able to come back from that and make plays and regain the lead. Well, that's our mindset, period. That's just how we play. We always feel like we want to grind out games. No matter how well we may be shooting the ball from the outside, no matter how many lay ups or dunks or fast break points we get, we always feel it's going to be a grind out game especially since we're playing against a great opponent. So it was that. It's not. We don't have that mindset. Our mindset right now is coming into tomorrow we try to get better. We have to get better in Game 4 because everyone makes an adjustments, everyone comes out the next game and does a better job. In the fourth quarter we had an opportunity to extend the lead, and we turned the ball over. We turned the ball over nine times in the fourth, I believe, and that's not winning basketball. We know they're not broken. For us, we just want to improve. We want to improve each and every game, and we look forward to the challenge of Game 4. Well, we've got to make big plays. You know, we understand our supporting cast is going to be there for us no matter what's going on throughout the game. But if the game gets tight, one of the three of us, or all three of us, have to make plays to bring home the win. You know, it was great to see us able to close this game out tonight. We had a comfortable lead, but they made a run. They made a quick run, cut the lead to one, and then I was able to hit Chris for a lay up. He got fouled, made two free throws, was able to get a stop, and that's what it's about. It's about us just trying to step up when our teammates need us the most. Well, we felt like they were going to come out aggressive, so I wanted to counter their aggression with aggression. Put pressure on the rim offensively or get offensive rebounds, I was able to get five offensive rebounds to give us extra possessions and get some second chance points. Looking at the stat sheet, we had 46 points in the paint, 11 second chance points. So that's good. And also we had 35 free throws. That's a really good number for us. When we're getting to the free throw line, even when we don't shoot the ball well, that's a plus for us. Just always trying to be in aggressive mode and do whatever it takes to help our team come out with a win. I mean, size doesn't matter. It's about just will and determination. It doesn't matter if someone is taller than you or bigger than you or weighs more than you. You just try to put yourself in a position to get rebounds or make plays to help your team. That's what it comes down to. We don't care about teams being taller than us or I guess, quote unquote, bigger than us. Every last one of our guys plays bigger than what their height is, bigger than what their weight is. As a team we don't feel like it's a disadvantage whoever we're going against. Is that a question for me or for them? It doesn't change me. I mean, I don't know. I mean, if he's on the court or he's off the court, we have to still be aggressive. We have to continue to do our play, play our game. I think he got it going in the third. He made some big shots in the third quarter, gave them the lead. His fourth foul on D Wade, we kind of got the momentum from there. But he's a great player. He's going to make shots. But for us, we have to be aggressive no matter if he's on the floor or not. I wish it was that easy. You know, that's a great team we're going against, and defensively they have some very active players, so they kind of bring the double team sometimes when I'm in the post or if I'm in the perimeter they kind of put two on the ball. I just try to take what the defense gives me, try to get into the paint. If I can't do it with the ball, just try to be active on the weak side or cutting or getting offensive rebounds or getting put backs that way, just try to do a little bit of everything where I'm not just isolating on the post or on the elbow. You know, it's a good mixture of what I have right now, and my teammates do a good job of finding me when I don't have the ball. Well, it's absolutely true. We talk about it all the time. We understand that it's been a great teacher for us, just the experience. We don't take things for granted. We understand that we accept each challenge as its own, and we know Game 4 is going to be a different game. No matter what happened in Game 1, Game 2, Game 3, Game 4 is its own, and we will approach it like that. We understand that there's going to be a team that's going to come in and try to get the home court advantage back once again, try to win on our floor. But if we do what we need to do defensively, we make them make tough shots, we rebound, and we don't turn the ball over, we give ourselves a good chance to win Game 4. Looking forward to it |
| It's a big time team win. We needed everyone's effort, and everyone came up and made a play. You know, from the starters to Rio's spectacular game, to Norris, as well. We was down in that first quarter, Norris came in and gave us a spark, hit a couple threes, got into the lane, got a lay up and made some plays to kind of help us get into a rhythm. You know, it's a big time team win, and we needed every point, we needed every rebound and everything that everyone had to get it. I'm feeling a lot better. I'm feeling good. We'll see how I feel tomorrow, too. I mean, of course it's there to think about, but I'm not taking our preparation for Game 5 for granted. We're going to prepare the same way we've been preparing all series, and if we play Miami Heat basketball, we give ourselves a good chance to win. Yeah, yeah, I have. What did it feel like? I mean, I don't know. I mean, you have to play sports and get a cramp before to understand the feeling. It's basically like your body just shuts down, your legs shut down on you, there's nothing really you can do about it. I mean, the ball was swung to me, and the shot clock was going down. I just wanted to step up and try to make a play. You know, and I was able to drain that three and give us a lift. I was just trying to make a play. If I was out on the floor, I wanted to try to make a play with the limited mobility I had at that time, and I was happy I was able to come through. Well, for us we're a complete team. A lot of people don't understand that about our team, and they always just focus on myself or D Wade and CB. But everyone's effort, all the hard work everyone puts into it makes us a complete team. We need that performance from everyone. You know, we understand it, myself and D Wade and CB get a lot of the press, but without all the sacrifices and all the commitments from the other guys, we wouldn't be in this position. It was very frustrating because I'm a competitor, and I want to be out there to help my team. But like I said, it's a team game, and that's why we have those other guys out there that's going to make plays, even if I'm not available or someone else is not available. That's what it's been for us all season and all Playoffs. When someone goes down for any reason, guys step up. I did want to come out. Like I said, I sat on the bench, got rehydrated as much as I could while we had a long time out, and sat through a few plays and I was able to go back into the game. Like I said, I'm happy I was able to make a play, make a big shot in a big game, and my teammates were able to close it from there. This is the second time we've seen a performance like that from a great point guard. The first one was Rajon Rondo when he had that spectacular game against us. I think that was Game 2, if I'm not mistaken, of last series. I mean, so many great point guards in this league today, Rondo and Westbrook and Derrick Rose and Chris Paul, these guys can do wonderful things, and Westbrook gave it his all, shot the ball extremely well, and he came out from the gate. I think they hit their first three or four shots. He was in attack mode, and you get a couple lay ups, his jumper started falling. He gave them an opportunity to win this game. And at the same time it just shows that we can still win those games. If someone has a spectacular game against us, we're still able to find a way to win. But he had a hell of a game. He had a big time game. You know, tomorrow we're going to prepare for Game 5. We've got to prepare like we've prepared all series and all season. You know, Coach Spo and the coaching staff has given us a great game plan. There's some things they can change, that we can correct. Like I said, if we come out with the mindset that we've come out with during the Playoffs, we're going to give ourselves a good chance to win. That's all we can ask for. I think Sefolosha is a very active defender. He's wiry, he's strong down in the post at times, but he has quick hands, he has long arms, so you can't play with the ball around him. But I enjoy the match up. I enjoy whoever they put on me, and I just try to thrive and make plays for our team. No, I didn't fight him. I caught the cramps the one time, and tried to get some liquids in me, get rehydrated and went back in, and it happened again at that point. I knew I probably wasn't going to be able to finish the game. I didn't fight them. I didn't fight anything at that point. I just put the faith in my teammates, which I understand. I've got a lot of faith in them, and I love them for the way they played tonight. Between now and Game 5, just try to rehydrate. I lost a lot tonight, but I will be ready. I'll be ready for Game 5, and hopefully I can stay hydrated where it doesn't happen again. Well, I knew I wasn't injured. I just knew I had cramps. I've had it before. Your muscles basically just lock up on you, so I tried to walk, but they wasn't letting me move. So our trainer, Jay, and Juwan came out and assisted me to the bench. I wanted to walk to the bench, but my legs wouldn't allow me. But I've been there before. I've had cramps before, like I said, and it's not a pleasant feeling. But I'm happy that we've got a great training staff, a great organization, and they helped me get back on my feet. I was able to walk up here and talk to you guys. |
| It's everything and more. You know, I dreamed about this opportunity and this moment for a long time, including last night, including today. You know, my dream has become a reality now, and it's the best feeling I ever had. Absolutely, you said it perfect. The fact that I have a family, a fiancÃ©e, two kids, supporting cast, supporting family, allows me it took me to go all the way to the top and then hit rock bottom basically to realize what I needed to do as a professional athlete and as a person. You know, I'm just happy that I was able to be put back in this position. I trusted my instincts, I trusted my habits that I built over the years, and I just got back to just being myself, and I didn't care too much about what anyone said about me. I just kind of made my own path, but did it the right way, and I'm happy I was able to do it the right way and do it for myself and not for anyone else. I mean, I heard it a lot. Last year I let it affect me. I told you guys over and over and over, I was playing to prove people wrong last year, and people would say I was selfish, and that got to me. That got to me a lot because I know that this is a team game. I know the coaches that I had when I was younger always preached about team. There's no "I" in team, and to win a championship, no matter on which level, you have to do it as a team. A lot of people were saying I was a selfish person and a selfish player, it got to me. All last year I tried to prove people wrong, prove you guys wrong, and it wasn't me. At the end of the day, I was basically fighting against myself. The best thing that happened to me last year was us losing The Finals, you know, and me playing the way I played, it was the best thing to ever happen to me in my career because basically I got back to the basics. It humbled me. I knew what it was going to have to take, and I was going to have to change as a basketball player, and I was going to have to change as a person to get what I wanted. You know, it happened just one year later. It was a journey for myself. I don't want to compare it to any other player, but it was definitely a journey. Everything that went along with me being a high school prodigy when I was 16 and on the cover of Sports Illustrated, to being drafted and having to be the face of a franchise, everything that came with it, I had to deal with and I had to learn through it. No one had went through that journey, so I had to learn on my own. All the ups and downs, everything that came along with it, I had to basically figure it out on my own. You know, I'm happy now that eight years later, nine years later since I've been drafted that I can finally say that I'm a champion, and I did it the right way. I didn't shortcut anything. You know, I put a lot of hard work and dedication in it, and hard work pays off. It's a great moment for myself. It was the hardest thing I've ever done as a basketball player, since I picked up a basketball when I was nine years old. It's the hardest thing I ever done. It's not easy at all. You just put a lot of hard work into it, and hopefully one day you hope that it pays off for you. You know, this was a testament to that. I gave it my all, and it paid off for me tonight. I think Kevin Durant is a hell of a player, one of the best players that we have in this league, hands down. I basically told him I was proud of him, everything he achieved this year. You know, he's going to use this experience, like I used it, as motivation. Hopefully I don't continue to have to run into him because he's that great. He's one of the best, on and off the court. In the summertime we worked out together. I envisioned it, but I didn't know it was going to happen, but to see a few months later that we was going to meet each other in The Finals, it was a great moment for myself and for him. But as far as your second question, I don't know. That's for you guys to write, to say if I'm the best player in the league or the No.1 player in the league. All I know is I'm a champion, and that's all that matters. I mean, right here I'm sitting here as a member of the Miami Heat. The hard work and dedication that we put in these last two years to get to this point, I mean, it was unbelievable. I wanted to become a champion someday. I didn't know exactly when it would happen, but I put in a lot of hard work. For me, I'm happy. I'm very excited. I'm very happy right now to be a champion. Nobody can take that away from me. Well, first of all, I think it's a great team. Like I said before, we're the two best teams in The Finals. They create some unbelievable matchup problems with their attack, Russ and KD and James, and they have Ibaka the shotblocker, the phenomenal presence of Perkins and the list goes on. Collison is a big time player, as well. So they're going to be a team to be reckoned with for a lot of years because they're young, and they're going to use this experience as motivation. You know, this is not the last time we'll see the Oklahoma City. I wouldn't be surprised this won't be the last time we see them in The Finals. The biggest thing I learned is that you can't control what people say about you, what people think about you. You just have to be true to yourself and true to the people that surround you and your loved ones. You know, like I said, I put a lot of hard work into this. I took one week I took, I think, one and a half, maybe two weeks off after we lost the NBA Finals, and I just got in the gym and I got back to the basics. It just shows when you're committed and you give everything to the game, the game pays off and it gives back to you. I mean, condensed schedule, 66 games, 82 games, shoot, we could have played one regular season game. Hey, man, I'm NBA champion, and it don't matter. Love you guys. |
| Well, our play didn't change at all. We went into the timeout, we had two different calls, and me and Spo looked at each other, and he asked me which one I felt comfortable doing. I had enough time where I could get to the basket and make a play. I don't know if I was surprised or not. I really wasn't worried if Hibbert was in the game at all or if he was in. I was worried about trying to get a bucket for our team. I knew I had enough time to get to the rim. Two plus seconds is plenty of time. I only need one dribble to get to the rim. And the set that we ran, the space that I had, you know, CB first having the first trigger, going to the rim for a lob, and Ray slipping to the corner, a thread and then I was able to be the option at that point and get to the rim. Shane definitely gave me a great pass. All I had to do was just, you know I peeked over my left shoulder. I seen Paul George was a little out of place. So I just took off. I knew I had enough time to do either I could either get to the rim or I could get one dribble in and get up a jumper or a shot. So I seen him leaning a little bit. Just a quick second. I just took off. Yeah, for me it's just flow of the game. I take what the defense gives me. I was able to turn the corner a few times and either get a look up at the shot or at the rim or find my bigs cutting and finishing some plays. The contribution that we got from Bird tonight was unbelievable. Without his effort we don't win this game. Just his energy and his effort once again. For me it's just the flow of the game. I don't really predetermine what I'm going to do. I just read and react. The best thing about it, the coaching staff and my teammates put me in position to be successful, and I try to take advantage of it. We wish we could take two wins, but we only get one. That's what it's all about. No matter if you win by one or if you win by 30 or whatever the case may be. You just want to win. We have to be better Friday if we want to win again. We'll come here to prepare tomorrow and see the ways that we can do that. Well, I mean, like I said, my teammates put me in a position. Coach Spo drove a good play to put me in position to be successful. It's my job to go out there and make it happen. I mean, I made a lay up. It's not like I made something half court. I made a lay up. I've been doing that since I was eight years old. I understand the circumstances a little bit. It happened to have been in the Eastern Conference Finals. When you practice something over and over and over, and you just it's just second nature to you. I also know, hey, we protect home court. This is Game 1. That's what it's about. It's very important. When we go against guys that are taller than us, a little bit bigger than us, our front court and our back court have to help out with the rebounding. I got to go out and if I have to average ten rebounds in this series or whatever the case may be, I have to be out there for my bigs. My bigs are fighting with Hibbert and fighting with David West all game long. When some of those long rebounds come off, myself and D Wade and Norris have to be able to clean the glass to help our bigs out. So just trying to contribute the best way I can when I'm out on the floor. I mean, I don't know. We don't any of us know that? D Wade was not there either, because he fouled out. I mean, you can't say what would have been different. Ten guys out on the floor, and I was able to get the lane against George Hill in the first one, and I was able to get the lane on Paul George in the second one. You know, I was on attack when Hibbert was in the game, I was on attack when Hibbert wasn't in the game. That's not for us to worry about. Once I got the ball I was the only option. I was the only option at that point. Especially with only being 2 plus seconds. As unselfish as a player I am, I cannot no way try to make a pass at that point. Like I said, I'm blessed to be in that position. My teammates put me in a great position each and every night. My coaching staff. And I just try to come through for them. We covered it the best way we could. George, going through my mind now, Paul George entered the ball to David West and he got the hand off. So UD and D Wade switched. D Wade ended up on David West and I was on George Hill. Me and D Wade switched. He got a DHL pass from David West, and he launched one. He launched one from a couple of feet behind the three point line. I was able to get a little strip on it, but he hit a big shot. Tough shot. So we still had an opportunity to win the game with 0.7. We just weren't able to get a good look at the end of regulation. I mean, after it happened, I landed on the elbow, and it would have happened when I decided not to wear my elbow sleeve. I shot the two free throws. My fingers were still tingling a little bit. But it kind of wore off. There's concern for our starting point guard. Any time one of our players go down, especially in the postseason, where every game and every possession counts and we need everyone out there, there's a little concern. But I think our training staff is amazing. Rio is a tough guy. So we'll see what happens. Hopefully he's available by Friday. He should be. We don't know. If not Norris will step up, and I know Mike Miller is looking for the opportunity to probably be back on the floor. You know, call in the righty. |
| I think it was a little bit of everything. I made a conscious effort to sit down in the post tonight, try to put pressure on the defense. Spo and the coaching staff wanted me to be down there tonight, and my teammates allowed me to do that. It was a little bit of everything. We wish we can not come off losses, but it happens. It happens in the playoffs. That's what playoff basketball is all about. But we're a team who just bounces back from diversity. We love the fact that you know they took the home court away from us, and now let's see what we are made of. I think we know what we're made of as well. This is a great group of guys that always loved, I think, the pressure moments of being, I guess, 1 1, a team taking our home court away. And we have to go on the road to win. Well, I mean, I seen I had a one on one match up. They didn't come down in the post all game, so I just tried to take advantage of it. My teammates gave me space. I just tried to sit in the post, not get the ball in the wing as much tonight. Tried to anchor myself down on the block and go to work. I was able to do that. He's always the key. He's the heartbeat of our team, first of all. He's the captain, one of the captains of our team. There's no one in our roster that plays that goes out there and we don't have the utmost confidence in their ability. For him to come through tonight and do what he was able to do offensively from the start, Rio stepping it up in the third, also Shane and Ray contributing, Bird giving his usual. We needed everyone's effort tonight, and it allowed us to get a big win on the road. Well, we have to get stops, first of all. The 34 30 first quarter was something both teams are not accustomed to doing, being defensive minded teams. But we had to get stops, we had to rebound and then we had to execute. We went from a 34 point quarter to a 36 point quarter. It just showed the ball movement that we had. And also not turning the ball over; we had five turnovers for the whole game, and that's big time. Especially on the road. We're a team who doesn't turn the ball over a lot, but when you have under 10, you're going to give yourself an unbelievable chance to win. To have five turnovers on the road in a tough building was big time for our team tonight. We just wanted to keep putting the pressure on them. We scored 70 points in the first half, and we knew they were going to make a run. That's a really good team. We knew they were going to make a run. They did. They cut the lead to seven in the third. Right after that I think Rio got an and one to put us back up 10. We wanted to try to continue to put the pressure on them, continue to execute offensively, not turn the ball over, get stops defensively. And we could see their body language start to change a little bit. That's when we just keep going. Just keep going and not play the score, not play the lead. Just play the game. Understand every possession matters, every possession counts. At the end of the game we see what happens. We were able to continue to do that and come out with a well needed win. I do everything with my left. I just shoot the ball with my right. I'm weird. His knee is fine. We don't need to talk about the knee. In the lineup, he good. |
| Juwan's voice in our locker room on the floor is as big as anyone. As big as Spo, as big as mine, UD, D Wade. That's why we brought him back because he's an instrumental part of our team. He got us on at halftime, letting us know how we weren't connected as a team, we weren't playing as a team. We were wasting an opportunity. At the beginning of the third, I just tried to reiterate that in my own words, and get on the guys and just let them know we can't just win with talent. We are playing a great team. Luckily we were only down four at halftime, at the half. We had to play with a little more sense of urgency, well, a lot more sense of urgency in the second half, if we wanted to win that game. Yeah, I kind of just went back to my Cleveland days at that point and just said, hey, let's try to make more plays and be more of a scoring threat as well, and just try to figure out a way that I can I don't know, just see if the guys would just follow me, and just lead them the best way I could. I was just in attack mode in the third quarter, look for my shot. And luckily I was able to make some. Well, I mean D Wade is not a liar, so... If he said it, it happened. I have a big voice in our locker room. I have a big voice on this team. I sensed what was going on with our team, you know, in the first half. And before we took the floor in the third quarter, I just gave them a little piece of my mind and a piece of my voice, and we was able to respond. Yeah. As a competitor you love challenges, and Lance is one of those guys who likes to talk some. And I'm for it, too. I really don't start it, but if it gets started, then I love to do it. It's cool. I think it's great. It shows a competitive spirit between two individuals, between two teams to go out there and just try to figure out ways to help their team win. But I'm all for it if it's there. We just had no sense of urgency. We were just waiting for the game to change instead of going to get it. Instead of going to make plays and make things happen and make changes, we were waiting for things to happen. We made a great run to actually tie it at 40 40, but they went on on a 4 0 run to end the half. There was a few plays in the first half that were just like, didn't make any sense to us. Didn't make any sense to me and to some of the guys, like a couple of plays we know we're capable of making that we just wasn't making. And it had nothing to do with X's and O's. It was about a sense of urgency. I think we all sensed that, we all felt that. I am glad we were able to turn it around. Yeah, I have. I talked to him before the game today. I talked to him after shoot around this morning. Letting him know where he can be aggressive, where he can make plays not only for himself but for our teammates in certain situations. Most of his possessions are coming off 1 3 pick and roll with me and him. I just tell him just to use me. My man is sometimes kind of in between of trying to help on the point guard and not help as much off of me. So that gives Rio a lot of creases. Rio has done a great job of using me as a screen or to get in the paint, either make plays for himself or for teammates. I just seen how we were playing in the first half. Like I said, we were in wait mode in the first half instead of going and getting it. Just waiting for things to happen. I took it upon myself to stop waiting and just go. Just try to figure out a way to go and get it. I don't know, I just stepped outside the box a little bit and UD was amazing. I mean with his ability to shoot the ball as well and finish around the rim. As one of the leaders on the team, I just tried to do whatever it takes to try help those guys to try to follow me and lead them to the right place. No, I don't think so. I think UD is, like I said, he's our heartbeat. Any time there's a confrontation, if he's on the floor, he goes to protect. We're not going to let anybody talk down on our point guard. He's one of the smallest guys on our team. UD was there to protect him. I was just trying to take advantage of what I seen after that point. I don't think the confrontation had anything to do with it. I think the emotions of being in a Game 5 with the series tied 2 2 on our home floor and being able to make plays had everything. That's where the emotion came from. I'm blessed I was able to make a few plays. That's what I came here for. That's what I came here for, is to be able to compete for a championship each and every year. We are one step away from doing it once again. But it's not a promise. It's not promised at all. I made a tough decision, obviously. I think we all know the story. I'm not going to harp on that. I envisioned something that was bigger as far as a team. Sacrificed a lot for me individually, what I had going on in the summer of 2010 because I wanted to do something special with a team. And we got an opportunity as a team once again for the third year straight to make a trip to the NBA Finals. But we have to try to go out on the road in a hostile environment and take it. |
| I mean, obviously we're a much better team when we have everyone clicking at the same time. That's obvious. And we've had more games where everyone was clicking than not so. It just happened that this series guys were just not in the rhythm, not feeling like themselves. Hey, you save it to the last game, and it allows us to advance, then I'm okay with that. Absolutely. The first play of the game I called a play for D Wade. Even though he didn't shoot the ball, he got a good touch in the paint. Just to make him feel like he was a part of the offense, make him feel in a good rhythm. I called a couple of sets for him early in the game, just to get a feel for it. And it showed throughout the whole game that he was in the rhythm. He started to make lay ups, he started to attack, he started to make his free throws. So it was big time. This is what it's all about. I dreamed about opportunities like this as a kid to have a Game 7, no matter at home or on the road. And that game allows you to advance to The Finals. I have had multiple dreams about it. To see a dream become a reality, I'm just very blessed. Our team is blessed. And we're just happy that we are able to represent the Eastern Conference in The Finals. I guess that's what it is. That's the notion that high caliber players need to step up and play at the highest level in Game 7s. I've been blessed to do to be pretty good in Game 7s in my career. Well, I'm not going to take this win for granted. I'm definitely going to savor this win tonight. This league is so hard to win in. It's so hard to advance, that you can't take these moments for granted. So tonight I'm definitely going to savor this for my friends and my family. And deciding what we do as a team tomorrow, I'll start to get back into the books and get back into the film on a team that's very good, very disciplined, well coached. They've got a bunch of Hall of Famers. So I look forward to the challenge, but I'm not quite there yet mentally, because I'm not going to take it for granted what we were able to accomplish tonight. We came in with the mindset just stay at the task at hand. We can't worry about the reward. We can't worry about trying to advance. We just have to worry about every possession. For the first time I believe in this series probably in Game 3 as well we just focused on every possession. Try to get stops. Try not to turn the ball over. Get shots. And play Miami Heat defense. Create havoc. And I thought we did a great job of that tonight. First of all, I think our team is more experienced, first of all. My Cleveland team, we were very young, and we went up against a very experienced team, well coached team. And they took advantage of everything that we did. I think for this team, this is our third year advancing to The Finals. So we're very experienced as well. We're not young, we're not inexperienced. We understand the opportunity that we have. And I'm a much better player. I'm 20, 40, 50 times better than I was in the '07 Finals, very young, and you know. So, yeah, we're all better. Well, I mean, any little pressure I could take off D Wade I wanted to do that, especially in tonight's game. I told him we kind of talked about it this morning, about the match ups coming out. I told him I would take Paul George. I want to allow him to focus on his offense, not have to worry about stopping Paul George every possession and allow him to get out in transition, allow him to get out in transition, allow him to make a couple of cuts and get to the line. I think that was huge for him. No. Ever since I lost The Finals to Dallas, my mind frame changed that off season. I just wanted to get back to playing the game that I love and have fun and play it at a high level and just I'll take this opportunity and this unbelievable game that we have for granted. So my mindset has been the same since we lost to Dallas. I'm looking forward to it. What's more relieving? I mean, I don't know. As a team this is what we had as a goal, that's to get back to The Finals. But we didn't cut any corners throughout the process, throughout the whole season. This is an opportunity for us again to be able to win another championship. So I don't have a relief at all of anything right now because I have a lot of work to still do. But it's a great thing to be in this position. Yes, we were just aggressive. We were very aggressive. I was very aggressive. That's how you control tempo. You control tempo by getting to the free throw line. One thing it allows us to do, it allows us to set our half court defense. When we get to the free throw line, we shot 86% from the free throw line. We got there 38 times. We know that we're very good in the half court. And the games that Indiana won, they put a lot of pressure on us in transition. And tonight we only gave them five points in transition. We only gave them 12 second chance points and only 28 points in the paint. It was a by product of us getting to the free throw line and allowing us to get our defense set. I think the zone and the comfort level I'm in right now happened because Dallas beat us. Dallas beat us in The Finals two years ago or three years ago, whenever it was. I just went back to the basics. I went back home, I went back to Ohio. I worked out with my high school coach. I went back to my high school gym, and just put myself in the mindset of what made me fall in love with the game. And it's because I had a lot of fun with it. Every night I stepped on the basketball court, I wanted to have fun. I wanted to represent myself and my family and friends at the highest level. But at the end of the day, it is just a basketball game. There are so many things in life that happens that you can just put the game you can put life in perspective. Like I said the other day with the little girl that passed away, "live like Bella," that we had on our shoes. A little girl that passed away here in South Florida. Once again that just put the game of basketball, it's just a game; it put life in perspective. I'm happy I'm able to play this game at the highest level. I love to compete. I love to represent what basketball stands for. But I don't put too much added pressure on myself, because I know it's just a game. |
| Just wanted to, I guess, make an impact some way. Offensively it was a struggle for me; couldn't make a shot, missed lay ups. Some things I'm accustomed to making. So I just wanted to make some plays and try to help our team. And I was able to protect the rim on that one. Basically I told myself, you'll end up on Sports Center where you're going to get dunked on or you're going to get a block. Luckily I was on the good side of the Top Ten and the Not So Top Ten. I already know what we have here. Like I said, I don't really read into it of what people want more of me or whatever the case may be. I will continue to find my shooters, if they're open. And I will continue to try to put pressure on the defense. If I draw two, I'll find my shooters. I have confidence they're going to knock them down. They did that tonight. Ray, Mike Miller, Rio made big plays after big plays for us. Yeah. Absolutely. I was, I guess, the last line of defense. I just pride myself on that side of the floor, honestly. It didn't matter to me. I was going to try to protect the rim the best way I could. Like I said, I was fortunate enough that I was able to make a big play for us. We were able to go down the other end and I think Ray hit a three after that, I believe. Just being on both sides of the floor, being able to make an impact is what it's all about. Rio, he has to play big for us in multiple facets. I think that especially defensively he's guarding arguably the best point guard in the league. But I think he also has to make Tony work on the defensive end. He can't be passive. He has to attack the paint. He has to shoot his shots when he has them. We started to get a little flow, and I started to see him start to play really well, especially coming off pick and rolls. We ran a lot of pick and rolls between the two of us, and I told him to keep attacking and let's try to push this lead up and go for the kill. And we were able to do that. I don't know. Whatever conclusion you want. It's a 1 1 series. That's the only conclusion I know. We look forward to Game 3. What I do know is sharing the ball is contagious, and it allows everyone to feel involved in the offense. For me personally, I know I attract a lot of attention. This team has been set up the right way where when I do attract attention, we have guys that can make plays. Tonight was another case of that. They packed the paint on me. I seen two bodies, unless I was in transition when I missed a couple of bunnies. But when I felt like my shooters just need a little bit of room. Mike showed that, Ray showed that and Rio showed that tonight. Now offensively if I'm not in the rhythm, you need to make a couple of plays to make an impact. That's what you're on the floor for. You need to do it on both sides of the floor, however you can do it. I think what helped me was the late third quarter pocket pass from Rio, I was able to get a lay up. Then I came out in the fourth, I was able to make an elbow jumper. And then I made some plays defensively to try to help. I made some defensive rebounds. I was able to get the block on Tiago, and then my shooters finished some shots I was able to get them in transition. You know, that's just part of my game. When I'm not scoring or I'm not as efficient offensively where I feel like I'm missing some shots, I just figure out ways that I can still help the team, even if it's not scoring as much. Well, honestly for me, when I was struggling offensively, my teammates continue to keep it in range. And we even had a lead at one point. Especially late in the second quarter when we made that run and I was struggling a little bit. So I think Rio more than anybody kept us aggressive, him getting into the paint, him getting those and ones and making a couple of threes. It allowed me to sit back and wait for my time. We want him on the floor. As teammates, we want him on the floor. We know what he brings. He's a 6'7", 6'8" two guard/small forward that can shoot the ball from anywhere and can rebound at a high clip. With the lineup we had in the late third to the fourth, me, Rio, Ray, Bird and Mike it spreads the floor. It spreads the floor for our attackers. When Mike gets the ball our shooters got the fluorescent light on our team. They're not even allowed to pass. When Ray and Mike get the ball, they have to shoot it. No matter how close the defenders are, they have to shoot it. When you have that leeway and that confidence, you just have to let it go. I mean, it's key. The Big Three I guess on both sides. You know, you can kind of rely on them at all times. But I think the supporting cast is really why both teams are here. They've been making an impact all year long, and they feel like their supporting cast is better. We feel like our supporting cast is better. It's who goes out and do it each and every night to help seal wins. I really don't it doesn't matter. Two best teams in the NBA at this point. Both teams have won and can win on each other's floor. So it's not a biggie. No. I got a floor burn in Game 1. Instead of the band aid, I wrapped it so the band aid won't fall off. I am okay. Don't worry about me |
| I mean, it was on our shoulders, obviously. We had to figure out to will a game for us, to play at the highest level. When all three of us are clicking at the same time, we're a very tough team to beat. Well, he's a competitor, and every time he's down, he responds. For him to go out there and play the way he played tonight, it was amazing. 32, 6 boards, 4 assists, 6 steals. The 6 steals let me know he's very active both offensively and defensively. He went back in his bag today. He was Flash tonight. We needed every bit of it. Yeah, he's hurting. Of course he's hurting. He's been playing with a bum knee all year. He's hurting, but he's not making no excuses about it. A performance like tonight will make you feel better. We had a game plan, and we played well. We played well offensively and defensively, and we needed it. We needed everybody, contributions tonight from the starters to the bench. We stuck with the game plan, even as they were making their run in the second quarter and some of the runs they made in the third. Well, I needed a break a few minutes, for sure. I gave it everything I had. I was just playing as hard as I could until the tank was empty. And that's how it's going to have to be for the rest of this series. I was just trying to keep my foot on the gas, me personally, and just play till, like I said, until the tank was empty. That's why we have guys that can come in, when guys get tired, just keep the momentum going. I just came into the game confident. Before I even made a shot I came into the game confident. I knew what my mindset was going to be. I didn't worry about last game. Last game was history. And I just worried in the present. I'm blessed and happy I was able to make a contribution to our win tonight. That's exactly right. You said it perfectly. We can't wait until our back is against the wall every time to respond. We have to build some momentum. And we can use tonight as momentum, but we still have work to do. We still got to get better. There was some stretches tonight where we didn't play well. And if we understand and if we own it, we come in with a mindset on Sunday that we are desperate once again, and our back is against the wall. So it's going to be a challenge for us, and we have to be ready for that. I'm blessed to have, I guess, a next day. I never went to college, so I never had to worry about if you lose the first one, then it's like I don't have another opportunity. And it's not saying I'm taking the game for granted, I just know there's a tomorrow. And I can't worry about what happened yesterday. And that's what I've been able to do. As bad as I played in Game 3, I put all the pressure on me to say I can't afford to play like that and hope for us to win. Not at this level. So I was able to forget about it. It hurt. I watched the film. It hurt watching it. I didn't like the way I was playing. But I just came in with a whole new clean slate tonight, and like I said, I was blessed to be able to make a few plays to help us win. He's a big time player. Against big time players you just try to make it tough on them. That's what we've been trying to do. We've been trying to get high hands on his pick and rolls. He's a great passer. When he raises for his threes, we try to get contests. When he drives the lane, we try to get a body in front of him and contest him at the rim. Sometimes you're lucky, and sometimes you're in the right position. So it's been a little bit of both. The 25 shots let me know that he was aggressive, every shot that he took. He wasn't passive. He came off, they went under, he shot his jumper. In transition he attacked the rim. He continued to attack throughout the game. And no matter how great you are, no matter what your rÃ©sumÃ© is, to have a game like this, it let's you know that you're still one bad you know the next two words. I can't say, my kids may be watching. That dude was amazing. Like I said, he was '06 Flash tonight. And we needed every bit of him. Thanks, guys. |
| We just played with a lot of energy. We defended at a higher level and allowed us to get back into the game. I don't even remember the play much. I was just focused on the job, the task at hand, and just trying to be aggressive, just trying to figure out ways I could help the team get back into the game. And you know, I guess the headband was the least of my worries at that point. It was by far the best game I've ever been a part of. The ups and downs, the roller coaster, the emotions, good and bad throughout the whole game. To be a part of something like this is something you would never be able to recreate once you're done playing the game. And I'm blessed to be a part of something like this. And I'm happy about the way we dug down and was able to get a win. It didn't look like we could muster up at some point in the game. Yeah, I noticed it. It kind of did the same to all of us. There's a few guys in the locker room that talked about it. We seen the championship board already out there, the yellow tape. And you know, that's why you play the game, to the final buzzer. And that's what we did tonight. We gave it everything that we had and more. And to come out with a win like that, it makes it even more greater, when you're able to, I guess, just will everything that you have as individuals for a team and have a game like this. If it's not me taking the shot, I have no problem with Ray take that shot, man. He's got ice water in his veins. Ray can like I said, Ray can be 0 for 99 in a game and if he get an open look late in the game, it's going down. That's just the confidence he have in himself. It's the preparation that he prepares for every game. It's the confidence that we have in him. We seen it before. We seen it before. We're happy to have him on our side. And this is the reason why we wanted him in games like this. I mean, fatigue is a part of the game. You've got two teams that's fighting for an NBA championship. Not only are they going all the way taking the tank all the way down to E, they're also using their reserve tank. But I don't think fatigue played a part in the game. I think both teams had a will to win. We just made one more play at the end of the day. I did a lot. I called him, texted him. I just knew what he could bring to our team. Just like you said, I've been on the other end of seeing him get them feet down, putting them stupid two fingers after he make the shot. Not so stupid anymore now that he's my teammate; I love it. He's big time. He's big time. We love we're so happy to have him, man. He creates so much for our team. And to have someone as dangerous as that on our roster, man, it means so much. Well, I mean, it wasn't too much of a broken play. We ran a great set. I came over, got a great look. CB made some unbelievable plays tonight. He got the offensive rebound. Hit Ray, and once Ray got them feet down, I seen it in the air and I was like "It's going in. It got a chance. It's going in." And he drained it. Just gave us another life. I think luck plays a part, of course. But at the end of the day, we're out there busting our tails to make to put ourself in a position to have a little luck. But at the end of the day we have a Game 7 on our floor to win the NBA championship. So I really don't care how the hell we done played so far. . We could have played the worst six games of our lives, but we got a Game 7 on our floor. So Thursday is for all the marbles. I was struggling shooting the ball. We were struggling. And they took a commanding 12 point lead to start the fourth. After we came out before we entered the ball, I basically just told myself, give it all I got. If we go down losing, I'm going to go down with no bullets. I'm going all out. I can be satisfied with the results. That's exactly what I did. I just tried to play both sides of the floor on a high intense level until I had no more left in the tank. Looked at Spo a few times. Told him I need a timeout, so I can get a rest. And just go back on the floor and try to make plays happen. Just try to do whatever it takes for our team to win, man. And that's what it's about. I just think the emotions. The emotions, the ups and downs, us being up, us being down. I think more than anything just our mental toughness. Our mental toughness to make it almost look like the game was out of our hands, and to come through victorious. And to be a part of something like this, like I said, once you're done playing this game, you would never be able to recreate a feeling like I had, we had, the fans had, you guys had, people at home. Never be able to recreate that. I'm just blessed I could be a part of such an unbelievable moment. I thought we did a better job in quarter one today of coming out with a sense of urgency. I think Tim Duncan, he was amazing in the first quarter. They made some tough shots. But we still had a two point lead. It was the second quarter that really killed us. We got outscored by eight in that quarter. And in the third quarter we got outscored by four. If we come out at the end of the day, it's the last game of the season. It's the last game of the season. You have to muster up all the energy that you might have. It's not about X's and O's at this point. They know what we're running. We know what they're running. We know their personnel. They know our personnel. It's about getting stops defensively, staying in it mentally, not turning the ball over, and making a few shots. The best team will be crowned Thursday night |
| It feels great. This team is amazing. And the vision that I had when I decided to come here is all coming true. Through adversity, through everything we've been through, we've been able to persevere and to win back to back championships. It's an unbelievable feeling. I'm happy to be part of such a first class organization. Yeah, I am. . You said it. I mean, two and a half games I watched film, and my mind started to work and I said, okay, this is how they're going to play me for the whole series. I looked at all my regular season stats, all my playoff stats, and I was one of the best mid range shooters in the game. I shot a career high from the three point line. I just told myself why don't abandon what you've done all year. Don't abandon now because they're going under. Don't force the paint. If it's there, take it. If not, take the jumper. And I think the last I did a good job in Game 4. Didn't make as many shots I would like to from the outside in Game 5, but I kept on getting into the rhythm of it. Just saying everything you've worked on, the repetition, the practices, the off season training, no matter how big the stakes are, no matter what's on the line, just go with it. And I was able to do that. I hope so. I hope so. I mean, this is what it's all about. I came here to win championships and to be able to go back to back. Two championships in three years so far. It's the ultimate. I don't want to think about next year right now, what our possibilities are next year. Got to take full advantage of this one. It's an unbelievable moment for our team. I mean, I said before the series that I was a better player than I was last time I faced the Spurs. Didn't look that way the first couple of games. But I stuck with it. Through all that adversity and throughout, I guess, the rhythm that I was in at that point, I just kept going. Just trusted all the work that I put into my game. And to be able to come through for your teammates, for me, I think you know more than anybody how much I care about my teammates and hate letting my teammates down. To be able to come through for my teammates in the biggest moment on the biggest stage makes me more satisfied than anything in the world. The saying "hard work pays off" is a true testament of what happened tonight. I know I'm not the only one that works hard. Give a lot of credit, first of all I forgot to state that at the beginning to the San Antonio Spurs. First class organization. First class players. But to be able to put in the work that I've put in since I got out of the cave, like you said, after that Dallas series and for it to pay off like this, it's the ultimate. It makes you want to work even harder. I guarantee myself I'll take more than two and a half weeks off this offseason. I need it. I have a basketball camp in Las Vegas. The top 100 high school kids from July 5th to the 9th. Hopefully I don't see many of you guys. I don't mind seeing you guys, by the way. I probably will touch a basketball to mess around a little bit. But I don't know, I haven't set my goals yet for my offseason training. I will, but not right now. Please don't ask me about my offseason training right now. Just pressure. Trying to keep a body on him at all times. I think more than anything, having guys back in transition. I think we all know, if you watch the NBA over the last ten years, Tony Parker is always in the top I don't know five, ten at points in the paint. It comes from early transition buckets and also comes from halfcourt sets when guys are just not alert. So our number one key with Tony Parker was when the ball went up, made or misses, we had to get three guys back. The guy that was guarding him, the big and another guy to see bodies, because if it's one on one with Tony Parker, he's going to make you pay. He's going to make you pay. And the simple fact that we just keyed in on our details defensively, it helped us out a lot. Last year when I was sitting up here, with my first championship, I said it was the toughest thing I had ever done. This year I'll tell last year he's absolutely wrong. This was the toughest championship right here, between the two. I mean, everything that we've been throughout this postseason, especially in these Finals, to be down we were down every odd game. We were down 1 0. We tied it. We were able to take a lead, but then we were down. We were down we were scratching for our lives in Game 6 down five with 28 seconds to go. To be able to win that game and force a Game 7 is a true testament of our, I guess, perseverance. And us being able to handle adversity throughout everything. It meant a lot for us to be able to do that and force a Game 7 and being able to close out at home. Right. He was big time tonight. He didn't wait. He had I think five or six one on one iso situations, jumpers. He was in attack mode all night. He had 10 rebounds. He had 23 points. He had two blocked shots. I think one of the most important plays of the game, that he didn't even make, was his attack at the rim when he tried to dunk on Tim Duncan, and Tim Duncan got a piece of it. It just showed at that point you knew that this was the D Wade that we've all wanted to see. What can you say? He's a three time champion, gold medalist, Finals MVP. He's one of the greatest two guards, one of the greatest players the NBA has ever seen. He continues to add to his rÃ©sumÃ©. I mean, I have a few goals. My goal, one of my first goals is to continue to inspire the youth to want to play this game of basketball or to be better at whatever they do. I mean, I love kids. Hopefully tonight I was able to inspire a lot. Inspire millions to no matter what they've gone through in their lives at that point in time, they can always overcome it. That's the first thing. Second thing for me is to continue to lead my teammates. Every single day in practice, every single day in film sessions, I know the grass isn't always green and there's going to be trials and tribulations. But hopefully I can continue to be the leader for my teammates. And then lastly, I want to be, if not the greatest, one of the greatest to ever play this game. And I will continue to work for that, and continue to put on this uniform and be the best I can be every night. I need to rest my body. I do. As much as I love working out and as much as I love getting better, at this point I think the smartest thing to do is to rest my body. Give my body a break. I think that's the smartest thing. I got a wedding coming up with my beautiful fiancÃ©e. And it will be an unbelievable wedding now that we've won, instead of losing. I might have called it off if we lost . So now it's going to be one of the best weddings ever. I'm going to sign off with that. And I will see you guys when I see you guys. And please continue to motivate me. I need you guys |
| I mean, I just play the game. However the game presents itself, I just try to take advantage of it. I needed to do something in the fourth. I did a great job in the third quarter of attacking and getting my guys some open looks. I hit Cole for two threes, hit C.B. for a three, but I needed to make a few buckets as well to help us in the fourth quarter, and I was able to come through for us. Just tried to keep a body on him. Very good player. Our bigs took a challenge on him all night. Just try to run him off the shot. When he drove, just tried to keep a chest in front of him. Made him take contested shots over the top. Offensively, we just tried to attack him as well. Put him in some pick and rolls. He got a couple of early quick fouls. So that maybe got him out of rhythm, too. But our bigs did a great job on him. We got back to play Miami Heat basketball. We flew around, covered for one another. Even when we made mistakes, we still covered for one another. We allowed them in Game 1 to dictate what our defense did, and that's not us. They had us on our heels the whole game, and that's not how we play basketball. Every time we lose, we always that's the first thing that we can see. Defensively today, we came out with an aggressive mindset. Even if we made mistakes, guys had to cover for one another, and I think we did that for 48 minutes. Yeah, absolutely. Norris is I mean, he's all about defense. He's all about team. Whatever it takes to win. I believe that he'll be a good matchup on Stephenson, even though Stephenson is a bigger guy. He's going to get some shots over him. He's going to make some plays, but I think Norris can lock in on him. And it allowed D Wade to shift to Paul George and allowed me to shift to George Hill. So that versatility that we have on our wings at that point, it helps a lot. But for me as a leader, I just try to give confidence to guys, and I was confident enough for Norris to take on that challenge. Lance had it going, and at the same time, Norris got it going on the other end offensively too, making two threes in a clutch situation. I think the three days are going to allow us to prepare for Game 3. Even though we won, we're going to break down the film as if we lost and see ways we can get better even with some of the mistakes that we made. I think the best thing about tonight, even though we made mistakes, we were flying around, and we were playing the type of basketball that we wanted to play. When we do that, we give ourself a great chance to win, and we can live with the results. So with these three days, we're not comfortable, and we're not satisfied at all. We came here. We got Game 2, but Game 3 is a new game, and we're going to start preparing for that tomorrow and get ready for it on Saturday. We have no idea we're doing that until we hear it after the game, which is our plan. We believe it doesn't matter whoever has the ball in each other's hand, we're going to make the right play not only for ourselves but for our team. Tonight was one of those nights once again, where we were making plays, finding guys, and finding each other, finding a good rhythm with the ball in our hands. We don't know we're doing those things, but we just try to make plays and do whatever it takes to help our team win. It was a huge momentum play. We did a great job on that possession. Hibbert got the ball, and our big did a great job of pressuring him, and he took a couple dribbles and then stopped, and everybody just locked in on their individual man. D Wade kept the Paul from Paul George getting it. Norris kept it from Lance. C.B. kept it from David West, and I was trying to do the same thing to George Hill. When George Hill got the ball, I just tried to lock in on him. I was able to get a steal. Usually, D Wade don't even chase me down. He knows if it's a one on one matchup with me, most of the time I'm going to score. I was glad that he did. I missed the layup, and he was able to tip dunk it. Huge momentum play in the fourth quarter when we needed it the most. |
| I'm fine. Probably just got a little dehydrated tonight. It's been four days since we played. Just playing as hard as we could tonight. I try to prevent that from happening, but it happened. D Wade came in and closed the quarter out. I wasn't going to leave until I saw what he was going to do. He drained and put us up ten, and I was all right. He definitely did that by putting the right personnel on the floor. Obviously, we started the game with mental turnovers, mental breakdowns, mostly coming from us offensively. He pushed the right buttons, bringing in Norris, giving Rashard a nod, Bird came in with his energy every night he plays. Those guys off the bench, man, they did it for us tonight. They got the game ball for sure. Well, for us, we have to play our type of basketball. We have to be disruptive. We have to speed up the team that we're going against, and we have to fly around defensively. When we lay back, we're just everything that we've built, it just doesn't work. We just lay back and allow teams to come down and set up their offense or whatever the case may be, even offensively, when we're just passing the ball around and being very passive. We're an attack team. When we get into our game, so many things happen for us, and we're even able to cover up for some of the mistakes we make both offensively and defensively. Ray creates so much for our team, just his ability just to move without the ball, to shoot the ball. He shifts the defense by himself, and it's a great I mean, it's great that we have that. No matter who's on him, him coming off pin downs, he's one of the few on our team that can do that, that can create two on the ball, and he's always in constant motion. He's got it going, man, and we just want to continue to find him. I was able to find him for the majority of the shots that he had tonight in the fourth quarter, and when you got a hot hand, you just keep going to it. We have a lot of confidence versus our opponent, but we don't want to keep digging holes. We hate the way we played to start the game. We can't play that type of basketball. We've got to come out and play like we're down 15 to start the game because they can't bite us in the butt if we don't prepare that way. But we're a confidence group. We don't panic. We just work the game. Obviously, the start of the game, it wasn't the type of basketball that we're accustomed to playing. We turned the ball over way too much, and myself and a couple other guys had a few turnovers. But we just got into our game. We kept going, getting into our game. We started putting pressure on them defensively, offensively, and we were able to get back into the game at the end of the second quarter. Norris, he's great. He's great for our team. He's a change of pace from we have our starting point guard in Rio, and when we go to Norris, he changes the tempo. That's when you need with guys off the bench, you need energy guys. We have a few of them, but Norris, he's great. He's been in this is his third year. He's still young, but he's been in all the pressure situations, obviously, so he's able to come in and be confident. As the leaders of the team, we try to give him confidence. Defensively, though, it's his mark. He makes his mark defensively. He makes us all step up our game defensively as well, and then offensively, whatever he gives us is always extra credit for us. He attacks the rim, gets himself looks, gets our great guys looks, and it's great to have him. Not surprised. They've done it for two years. Two years straight, he's guarded Ray when we went small. So not surprised at all. |
| Chris Bosh. We got off to that fast start because Chris Bosh came out and got it going early. No, I don't need any motivation. I'm motivated enough to try to get back The Finals. That's motivating enough, and being one of the leaders of this team, I have to do my job. I have to do my part to help us win. That's what it's all about. I got a smirk out of it. We did only have five turnovers, seven steals, and 20 points off their turnovers. That has nothing to do with the free throw line. The fact that it makes it a lot easier for Spo when you have true professionals, guys that can sit out for one month, two months, two weeks, and get the nod, and they're ready to go right then and there. That makes it a lot easier on our coaching staff to have the locker room and the group of guys we have. That's why Spo and Riles and those guys went out and got this team. It wasn't just about the game of basketball. It's about what they bring to the locker room as well. To insert U.D. back into the starting lineup and then take him out and insert Rashard. Or when D Wade went down and Toney Douglas came in or J.J. came in in the Charlotte series. It's whatever. G.O.'s number could still get called. B's number could still get called. Those guys are ready. That's the type of locker room we have. It makes it a lot easier for Coach when you have that type of luxury. I took care of it. Don't worry about it. I got you It's going to take a better game than we had tonight. It's that simple. You have to get better every game. Their back is against the wall, but we have to go in with that mindset that our back is against the wall, too. We don't want to come back with a Game 6. We love our fans, obviously. We love being in Miami, but we want to try to close it out. But we're going to have to work for it. It's not going to be easy, not against this team. It's the No.1 team in the Eastern Conference, and they're there for a reason. So we look forward to the challenge. The first play of the game was ran for him, and he opened it up with a jumper. Second play, D Wade drove the ball, kicked it to him in the corner, and he hit a three. From that point on, he just got it going. He had 10 points in the first quarter. Should have had 12; he missed two free throws. I haven't seen that from him in a while, but he just got it going. We rode him that whole first quarter, and it gave us the 27 19 lead. For us, we just want to play great basketball. We don't really get involved in whatever that we can't control. What we can control is how we approach the game from an offensive and defensive standpoint, and that's with aggression. That's how we approach the game. At the end of the game, whatever the end results is, we can be satisfied with that if we brought our game. Everything else doesn't matter. When you get between the lines of the court, 94 feet, and you got to get in between, and you got to play it. That's all we try to worry about. We can't worry about nothing else. It was to get Chris going. We needed it from him. C.B. had been struggling offensively the last few games, and we needed that. We needed it from him. So Spo called it, and I was able to D Wade was able to make the pass. I was able to slice over the top to release pressure from him, make Hibbert back up into the lane, and that got him his first shot. That was the game plan for us. We've been talking about it the last couple of days, how are we going to get C.B. going? It worked out for us tonight. All time, yeah. |
| Just to piggy back off what D Wade said, we don't take this moment for granted. We're going to celebrate tonight because it just doesn't happen every year. We've been fortunate enough to be a part of this four straight times, and you just can't take these moments for granted. It hasn't really hit us that much yet because I think we're in it. I think it will once we're done and we're able to look back at what we were able to accomplish as players, as a franchise. I think that's when it will really hit us. We definitely don't take it for granted to be in this position. I mean, I don't know. I would say it had to be at the end of the first quarter we started to get a good groove, started to get a good groove, and we were down 9 2 to start the game. From that point on, they only scored four points. It's crazy. They scored four points from that point on. We just locked in and got a good groove. I think it started with Bird coming into the game. His rebounding, his effort that he gave us when he came into the game gave us six defensive rebounds, gave us three buckets from drives from Norris and guys, and his dunk and his layup, I think that's what picked us up. And then Rashard was, obviously, the key to everything. His ability to stretch the floor, shoot the ball, and play the way he played tonight. Once those guys got it going, I think we all fed off of it. I always believe, a really good friend of mine told me that the best teacher in life is experience. When you go through so many things, you're able to learn from it. You're able to know how to go about it. Next time you face those trials and tribulations or whatever the case may come, and you're better prepared for it. So being around a group of guys like this, me being in positions that I've been in the past where I've failed, but I was never defeated. That was, for me, to be able to come back from failure and continue to come back and mentally be able to stay strong, it defines who you are as a man more than anything. Not at all. Not at all. I felt like I told the guys before the Eastern Conference or whatever, before the season even before the playoffs started, that this was going to be our path. It's different. We're going to have to win on the road. We're going to have to start on somebody else's floor in order to be able to represent the Eastern Conference in The Finals. The guys, we all responded. We all took that challenge. Obviously, we had the first two rounds on our floor, but we knew, if Indiana took care of business, we had to start on their floor, and we just had that mindset. We had that mindset, if we want to ultimately represent the Eastern Conference in The Finals, we had to win on the road, and we were able to accomplish that. Not for me? I wasn't here? No, I wasn't? I don't get a rematch? I believe, if we ever got to a point where our whole team was able to be available for Spo and for all of us, that we could compete with anybody. Never concerned about that. Obviously, going through the week and week and week and grinding months of a regular season, it was a toll on all of us. But I felt like down the stretch, if we could get healthy, we could get everyone in uniform and have our full strength, it didn't matter what seed we were. I felt like we can represent the Eastern Conference again The Finals if we had the health, and we were able to accomplish that. I don't know. I have no idea how I restrained. I don't know. I guess I just understand what the bigger picture is. It was uncalled for, for sure. That was I don't know. I'm at a loss of words with that, but it was uncalled for, and I was able to move on from it. I let him know how I felt. I felt it could have been the fact that it was Lance that hit Norris, it was a little bit you could have your own assumption of what it is. If it was C.J. Watson hitting Norris, we'd have said he went for the ball. The fact that it was Lance, we can say he went for his face. So wrong place at the wrong time or at the right time for Lance, in his case. Appreciate it. Me and D Wade grew up watching the great Chicago Bulls team and the great Michael Jordan and the rest of those guys. Any time I hear my name or our team in the same breath with legends and great teams and franchises, it's so humbling, man. It's like I really don't know. Just two kids from the inner cities, respective cities where they're from. We never thought we'd get to this point. So to be able to play the game that we love at a high level for one another, for our teammates, it's the ultimate. When you hear the comparisons, you respect it, you're humbled by it, and you just feel like while you're in the moment hopefully, while you're playing the game, that you can make an impact enough to where you move on and people will start comparing you to ones that's in the game at the present time. So it's very, very humbling. Not so well. We were down 9 2. Obviously, we didn't do our part. But we knew our fans were going to come out. It's a Friday night in Miami. We have an opportunity to close out, and our fans have been amazing thus far. We just want to try to do our part. Obviously, the first couple minutes wasn't the start that we wanted, but we were able to get back into the game, and we just fed off the energy from our fans, fed off the energy from one another, and just kept it going. He got it. |
| It was rewarding in that it was a huge play to help us win. I just seen it develop the whole time, and I wanted to try to put some pressure towards the rim, and I caught Tim Duncan peeking at me a little bit. And I was able to find C.B. in the corner in one of his favorite spots on the floor and he knocked it down. That's not our concern. All we worry about is what we can control and that's just how we play the game, how we approach the game both physically and mentally. And we live with the results. Just play the game, try to play the game the right way. However the flow of the game is going, I just try to impose my will in some kind of way, either scoring or rebounding or assisting or defending. Put myself and my teammates in a position to succeed, and I was happy in the fact that I was able to make some plays to help us get the victory tonight. Didn't affect me at all. I've been going with the longer tights throughout the playoffs; decided to go with the shorter ones today. I don't know, I was watching Game 2 of our Finals appearance versus OKC in 2012, and I didn't have long tights on in that game, so that's why I didn't wear them tonight. Just a little crazy on my part. For me once I get into a good groove, I feel like everything is going to go in. Obviously it didn't. I made a couple of shots in a row, and then missed the elbow jumpshot over Tim, and they made a run after that. But for me I just try to make plays out there on the floor, and like I continue to say, put myself and my teammates in a position to succeed and live with the results after that. I just continued to attack. I had a slow start, but all my misses was in the paint. My first miss was a shot over Tim and Tiago; I missed it. I missed a spinning layup in the lane. I missed a banker over Tony Parker. I just got off to a slow start. Then I drove the lane and got my foot tangled up a little bit and threw up a wild shot I started 1 for 5. I was confident in where I was getting on the floor and I had to stick with it. For me, at that point in the game, yeah, I was tired. I got two offensive rebounds. Was able to go back up with them. Put some pressure on their defense. So Spo was very, very consistent and great with his adjustments today as far as the personnel, in and out guys, in and out. And when I asked to come out, he took me out and I was able to go back in. You know, I didn't really try to think about it too much. One thing I did do differently this morning, I took an 8 a.m. yoga class at our resort that we stayed at outside. Me, and three other people and also a little kid but he didn't want no parts of it. So that's probably the only thing that I did differently today. Nah, it started to rain a little bit this morning, actually. About 8:35 it started to rain. Well, I mean, mentally I didn't want to even think about it too much. What happened on Thursday was Thursday. My whole focus was how was it going to help this team even the series up and just try to make some plays. It wasn't an adjustment. In the first half, you know, I got into the paint, made some shots, got some rebounds, put pressure on their defense. In the second half they backed up off me and I shot it. It was that easy for me in the sense of don't overthink it. They give me space, I shoot it. They get up on me, I try to drive and make plays for me and my teammates. They're going to make adjustments going into Game 3, and I have to do it as well. But I don't want to cloud my mind too much with what they're doing defensively. I want their defense to react to what I'm doing. I've heard it all. I've heard it all. I just stay with my plan. Our training staff and our medical team, we do a great job of just doing what we usually do. We didn't want to complicate things. I think the two and a half bags after a game of IV helped me out a lot. Like I said, I didn't try to think about it too much tonight. I thought it was a tough call to start it off, with Rio getting the flagrant one. I thought it was an inadvertent elbow. I didn't think it was intentional. So Tony missed two and Tim went up and missed two as well. Just wanted to capitalize off their mistakes and just try to put some pressure on their defense. We got some great looks, we made 'em tonight. And the biggest thing for us, we got stops as well when we needed it. That helped us win this game. I've got a great supporting cast around me that allows me to vent at times. Try not to hold it in. I also understand at this point in my life what's important and what's not important and what's important is my teammates, what's important is my two kids at home, my wife, my family and my friends. That's what I can control and that's what's important to me. Obviously the game of basketball has brought me so much, and I love to play this game at a high level. And without this game, I wouldn't be who I am today. But I also know what's important. Everything else kind of just fall by the wayside. You have to. It's very difficult at times, very challenging, but for me, I'm here and I know who I'm playing for and what I'm playing for and what I stand for, not only as a basketball player but as man and as a role model. I know what I stand for. To be able to put an NBA uniform on every single night with my name on the back, knowing where I come from, let's me know that I've done something special. I just try to give back to the game as much as I can while I'm here. Rashard has been huge for us ever since he's been inserted into our starting lineup, from the Indiana series. He's been in this position before. He's been to the Finals with Orlando Magic. He's been in huge playoff games, and his experience and ability to knock down shots helps us out a lot. It spreads the floor for us, and every time he catches the ball, we tell him just to shoot it. Don't think about nothing else besides shooting the ball, and we live with his results. I think that's a key going into any game. When a team lives in the paint, it puts so much pressure on your defense and it allows paint points obviously. But when guys get into the paint it shrinks the defense, and they get to kick out for their threes, which they did a couple times tonight. Danny Green had one, Tony hit one, Patty Mills had a couple. We got to do a better job of shrinking the floor and not allowing them to get in the paint. They will, they will get into the paint some, but as much as we can limit the penetration, it will help us out a lot. Offensively we want to share the ball and not turn the ball over. We're a team that shoots the ball extremely high from the field, very efficient offensively. We get ourselves in trouble when we turn the ball over. It doesn't allow us to set our defense. We're a really good half court defense, we're a solid pick and roll defense. And when we're solid offensively, we don't turn the ball over, we're going to get an opportunity to make something happen. Not at all. If you're on the floor at that point in time, you can make a play. You can make a shot, a steal, a rebound. You can do whatever it takes to help us win. For me, when the ball is in my hands, I'm going to make the right play. To have that trust from my teammates, they know when I got the ball, I'm going to make the right play. Doesn't mean it's going to go in. Doesn't mean it's going to result in a win, but they believe in my ability to do that. You know, C.B. had just missed one, got a great look, but if I draw two and his man leave him again, I went right back to him and he knocked it down. I got a lot of confidence in my teammates and they got a lot of confidence in me and we live with the results no matter what happens. |
| At the end of the day, we're all a brotherhood. NBA is a brotherhood, and you never want anyone to get injured, even in combat. So that's what went through my mind. Obviously, I love competing versus anybody who loves to compete as well. He's one of those guys that was competing throughout the night, throughout the postseason. I'm not sure the severity of the injury right now. But I hope he has a recovery, whatever it is. You just don't want nobody to get hurt like that. I've been fortunate enough to play with some shooters to help spread the floor for myself and what I do best, and that's being in attack mode. To be able to play with one of the all time greats in Ray Allen, and also play with Mike Miller and Shane Battier and James Jones still, and then you get a guy like J.R. Smith, who's able just to shoot the ball and have the extreme confidence that every time they let it go, that it's going in. I've been blessed to play with guys like that. When you have guys like that, you have to utilize them while they're on the floor. Coach drew up a play, and we just try to run it to perfection. He drew up a play, and Double T came up and set a screen and roll. I was able to get to the middle of the floor. The ability, the way we were shooting the three ball tonight, kind of kept those last two defenders at bay, and I was able just to turn the lane and make a big play for our team at that time. Get him here, and I'll take care of it. Yeah, I got him. You get him here, I got him. Yeah, I got him . We have a great coaching staff, first of all, that gives us a game plan. We kind of, throughout these six days, we've kind of been balancing ways we can try to not stop what they do, but just try to limit some of their touches, limit some of Kyle Korver's touches and some of their other three point shooters. We're the number one defensive team in the playoffs, and it has a lot to do with when we go out, as a coaching staff, they give us the game plan. And for us as players, we go out and execute it. For us to win ultimately, we have to defend. Tonight we shot 44 percent from the field, but we defended. We gave ourselves a chance. When you defend at a high level, you give yourself a chance to win every night. Me and J.R.'s history go back long before he came into the NBA. Before he came into the NBA, he came to my hometown, and we worked out multiple days, multiple times. For me, as a leader of a team, you always just want to try to give someone an opportunity. With the talent this guy presents, I knew the man he was, and I didn't really care about what everybody else thought about him. Obviously, our front office, they have the last say so, and for me, they have the last say so, but when they made it and said they were going to do it, I was definitely all for it. I felt like, for me, we were getting a great piece, not only on the floor, but off the floor, as well, because I'd known him before he even got to this point. To answer your second question, to be able just to make plays to help your team win is all that matters for me. We have a guy like this that was shooting the ball extremely well, who broke the game open, but also the contributions from Delly off the bench again, and the two bigs, both of them having double doubles. That was big time. Like you said, in the third quarter, I went to contest DeMarre Carroll's three point attempt, and the cameraman, I guess his foot was out further than it should be, but I stepped on his foot and turned my ankle. I'm happy that it didn't cost me the rest of the game. I was able to go out there and make a few plays. I think, to answer your second question, we can't worry about how many points we're up or how many points we're down; we have to continue to play our game. It starts with me. I take all the responsibility for it. In fourth quarter, I played way too much isolation basketball, one on one basketball, a lot of defenses set, and I was letting the clock run down way too much. I just had to take the shot or I was giving it to my guys late in the shot clock, and they couldn't do nothing with it besides shoot it or turn the ball over. So I will do a better job. I'll probably watch the game over again tonight, as I try to get my body ready for Game 2. So it starts with me. It's tough, and I know it sucks for him. This is the moment he's been waiting for. This is the biggest stage. Physically, he's not capable of doing what we all know he's capable of doing, and it's starting to, I guess hopefully, it doesn't continue or hopefully it doesn't get into his mind. For me, that's my role at that point, to let him know when he's on the floor, no matter what he's going through, we need him to be aggressive, as aggressive as he can be with the injury, and not worry about things that he cannot control; only worry about the things that he can control. Like I said, that will be my job to help him understand, no matter what he's going through physically, never let it creep into his mind where it affect him mentally. We started to get kind of a rhythm of what they wanted to do, but we also just put pressure not only at the point of attack, but when the ball was moved from side to side. Like I said, our coaching staff gives us a game plan, and it's up to us to execute it. They're going to make shots. They're one of the, if not the best with Golden State, best offenses we have in our league. We just try to make it tough on them. I kind of sense it. I sense it during the game a little bit, and it's tough sometimes with our main ball handler not being on the floor, and that's in Kyrie. That's something that I'm not happy with, something I'm not really comfortable with doing. I can do it, but I don't like to play that much isolation basketball late in the game. I'd much rather get the ball moving from side to side and get a good look after that. So like I said, I'll be more conscious about that in Game 2, if that opportunity presents itself, where at least I can get the ball moving to start and then maybe at the back side, or like the third option I can get it back at the end. At least we got the defense moving instead of them just watching me pound the ball for 24 seconds. That's not good basketball. |
| I've just seen every coverage that defenses can offer me, and I always try to be a triple threat on the floor, being able to score, to rebound, to pass, whatever the case may be, however the game presents itself. Just get my confidence I give my teammates the utmost confidence that when I throw them the ball, to shoot with confidence. I just try to put it exactly where they need it to be, where all they've got to do is catch and shoot or catch and drive and make things happen. So it's something I learned when I was a youngster, understanding how important a pass is and how important it is giving your teammates confidence. When you have guys like the guy next to me and Delly and J.R. and the rest of the guys on down the line, I'm able to do what I love to do best. Well, for us, offensive rebounding is part of our game. Three point shooting is a part of our game as well. We get 30 looks at the three point line, and we had 11 offensive rebounds that converted into 13 second chance points. That's all a part of our game, it's part of our DNA. When we do that, we're very successful. I'm able to make adjustments throughout the game, just knowing how the defense read and react. Obviously, when you've got guys like here, who shot the ball extremely well tonight, the defense starts to go further and further away from the paint, and I'm able to see creases. When they react to me, I'm going to find my guys. I'm going to know exactly where they're going to be every single time I drive. That's just a repetition we have through our practices and watching the film and knowing where your guys are going to be, and they have outlets, and they make themselves presentable, and I just try to put the ball right where it needs to be. I'm able to gauge the game and watch the game and able to replay it back in my mind and understand what I can do to help us win. That's how the game presented itself. When I was attacking, I was seeing guys open. When they were bringing two to me, I was seeing guys open. Like I said, I have the most confidence, the most confidence in my teammates to make shots and make plays. For me, that's my job is to put energy behind that ball when I'm finding them. All they need to do is catch and shoot or catch and drive or make a play, and the game presented that tonight. I was able to be aggressive at times getting to the rim, and then there was times where they brought two and three guys towards me, and I was able to find my guys, and they knocked them down. Why that is, for me, more than scoring, you always get the excitement of two guys being able to benefit from a pass. If I score the ball, if I'm in an iso situation where I score the ball, it's just me, and I've always been accustomed to team basketball. When I'm able to put pressure on the defense and then make a pass to a teammate and he's able to knock it down, I've always got the excitement of that more than anything. But I have a gift, and that's why I'm able to keep defenses off guard because, you know, they say, okay, we're going to make him score or make him pass. They really can't make me do what I don't want to do. I go out, and I play the game the right way. And whatever that moment, that possession presents itself, I try to do what's best for our team at that very moment. We've gotten smarter. We've ramped up our communication to a level that, at times throughout the season, I didn't know we could get to, and we're flying around, and we're just helping one another in time of need. It starts with this guy, first of all. Look at those all defensive teams, and obviously he has a small window with us, but he will be on the all defensive team in this league very soon. It starts with him, his approach. I love the defensive side. You have a guy like Dellavedova, who he takes a challenge and Double T protecting the rim. Mozzy as well in the starting lineup tonight. And everyone else, everyone takes it seriously. We understand that ultimately, if we want to win long term, we have to defend. It's going to give us the best possible chance to win because the ball don't go through the rim all the time, and you have to be able to get stops. We've been able to do that thus far in our 4, 10, 12 games in the postseason. It's a total 360 from our last series. We were terrible in the third quarter versus the Bulls. We understood, if we want to be really good, we have to come out with a little bit more sense of urgency. We have to play more pedal to the metal in the third quarter. Defensively, we've been locked in. When the ball is entered, either if it's their possession or it's our possession, we've just been very, very in tune with the game plan, and that's allowed us to get some leads in the third quarter and push the game out of reach. How do I want to answer this question? We're the No.1 defensive team in the postseason for a reason. Obviously, it's a great offensive team that we're playing against. You can't stop a great offensive team. You just try to make it tough on them. That's all we're trying to do. We're just trying to make it tough on them every night contest all their jump shots, be in tune with the game plan, keep a body on a guy like Korver, who can break open a game by himself. And that's all. That's all we can do. They're going to make shots, which they did tonight. They still made some shots. There were some possessions where we thought we could have been a little bit more in tune, but we just try to make it tough on them. That's all we can ask, and our coaching staff gives us the game plan, and it's up to us to go out and execute it, and that's what we've been doing so far in these first two games. It's next man up. Guys are just taking the challenge. It means everything to me to be able to share this podium with multiple teammates. On every given night, Delly and Shump and J.R. and Ky and Tristan. It could be James Jones next. It could be anybody. It means a lot. It means that, first of all, what they do, they do it very well. I got teammates that they don't try to outdo what they can do. They do what they do at a high level, and for me, I just try to lead them. Lead them the best way I can, and they go out and work for me, and I try to do the same for them. Well, we learned from Game 1. In Game 1 we had a big lead, and we started to play the clock, and that was my fault. I took that straight to the head. I knew, if I got that opportunity again, I wouldn't let that happen again. So we happen to have the same thing happen today, and we just kept our foot on the gas. We had early shots in the shot clock, we took them. If not, we executed, and we were able to continue our roll and continue to defend as well. That was very important. |
| I gave it everything I had tonight. My teammates did. Played our tail off, and to be able to win the game like this, with so many ups and downs and so many lead changes, it's a huge win for our team. I was struggling earlier. I missed a lot of shots that I know I'm capable of making, obviously. Missed a lot of layups. Missed a couple threes, and my teammates kept me afloat. I think I was 0 for 9 at the end of the first quarter, but it was 21 24 at the end of the first quarter. We were in the game because of my teammates. They picked me up, and I just tried to do some other things while we were struggling offensively as far as shooting. For me, offense, as far as scoring, doesn't define my game. I've always wanted to be a triple threat in this league, being able to rebound and to assist and also to score. So when I wasn't scoring and those guys were picking me up, I was able to do other things to help us go. Every game is different as far as the Game 5 in Detroit. Compared to this game, it's so much different. It was a 2 2 series at that point being in Detroit. Tonight is a 2 0 series being back home. This is much different, but the win feels great. How am I feeling? I've been better. It will be around the clock treatment, as usual, to get my mind, get my body ready for Tuesday. Well, we needed it tonight. We gave ourselves 19 offensive rebounds, extra possessions when we weren't shooting the ball well. For me, we played a lot of small ball tonight. But even when we're big, I just try to help our bigs out, try to help rebound. It's good offense for us when I'm able to rebound, able to push the break. Just being in that mindset that I tried to get every rebound possible that was in my lane. One or two I could have got, like you said, but just being in the mix and just helping us get extra possessions. No, it's probably, it's the same thing. I play to exhaustion. I play hard and I give my teammates, and I give myself as much as I can give. Sometimes the body just kind of shuts down at times, and that's what happened tonight at one point. Even in the overtime, I asked to come out, but I had a second thought, and there was no way I can go I wouldn't have felt right about the situation, win, lose, or draw, if I'd have went to the bench and not being out there for my teammates. So it was mind over matter at that point. What does that mean? Well, you just play the game the right way. At this point, you try to do whatever it takes to win. You don't want to hurt nobody. No one, I think, in our league goes around trying to hurt people, but you don't take the aggressive nature out of the game. I think in the case of ever since you were a kid, the ball on the floor, the first man to the floor usually gets the ball. There's no difference between what Delly did to Kyle Korver last game and 18 guys diving on the floor late in the game tonight. It was like six or seven guys diving on the floor for that loose ball. Delly was on the floor. J.J. was on the floor. Mike Scott was on the floor. Shump was on the floor. J.R. was on the floor. Just no one got hurt. There's no difference between me boxing out or Al Horford boxing me out and Delly boxing someone out. That is a fundamental box out. That's all it is. And we all know that. We don't never want to play with the integrity of the game and try to get people hurt. That's not what it's about because we all want brotherhood at the end of the day, NBA family. But I play to win the game, and you play aggressively. That's what it's about. I need to shoot more from the corner . No other three has been good to me, basically, is what you're saying. Which side of the credit? The I'm not shooting so well credit or I mean he does, for sure. We work every day, just trying to get the ball up there and not think about it too much. First of all, the offensive rebound by Double T was huge. I seen in his mind that he wanted to go back up for that shot, and I yelled his name probably as loud as I could yell it because I wanted another opportunity. I just seen Paul Millsap running a little out of control, just gave him a pump fake, and I just stick to my routine. Things that I worked on all year long, make or miss, and I would be satisfied with the result. Well, not a few years ago. A few is probably like three or four. I was still going to The Finals at that point. Probably 23, 24, 25 maybe. I think just because I've had experience. It's not about the younger LeBron or anything like that. I've been able to have experience over the years that's helped me to get to this point. I really don't my game is so much better than it was when I was younger, and I just try to everything that I've worked on over the course of years and the mental side of the game, I just try to incorporate that on the floor, no matter if I'm making shots or missing shots or whatever the case may be. I got it. That's not really our concern. Obviously, I'm a little bit off about it because this is my guy, this is my teammate, and this is a guy that goes out and works his tail off every single night, and people are trying to give him a bad rap. He doesn't deserve it, and I don't like it. But I'm not going to get involved in anything that's outside of basketball. That's not my place. What I care about is how we prepare every single night, how we prepare in the film session, which we will have another one tomorrow, and how we go about trying to win a basketball game. That's going to get 99.9 percent of my mental. But I will protect my guys for sure. Just got to do we defend. Our coaching staff will give us a game plan, and it's up to us to go out and execute it. We had a lot of mistakes tonight. We did some things well, but we had a lot of mistakes tonight that we can clean up on. If we come in with our defensive mindset, as we've had the whole playoffs so far, we give ourselves a chance to advance. If not, then there will be a Game 5. It's current, so I would say yeah. I don't remember how I felt two years ago in a certain situation, but I'm playing through a lot. It doesn't matter. I don't want any sympathy. There's no rest for the weary. If I'm putting on a uniform and I'm on the floor, I have to make things happen for our team. It's that simple. I'm not the only guy that's limping. I'm not the only guy that's cramping. I'm not the only guy that's hurting. There's a lot of guys out there that's playing as well, and I'm one of them as well. So I've got to go out and help our team win, no matter where I'm at. Those three guys, obviously, J.R. and Shump, to answer the first part of your question, they were huge tonight. J.R. gives us a double double, and no one talks about it. Gives us 17 and 10. And obviously, what Shump does, he rebounds, he defends whoever you need him to defend, and he gives us 15 points tonight as well. And the guy next to me, he's been thrown into a situation that he wasn't thrown in all season for the most part, and that's starting, being our starting point guard, with Kyrie being absent the last couple games. And those three guys have answered the call. They've played exceptional basketball. They've defended. They've done everything we need them to do. We need them to do it a little bit more. It's just every game is going to be challenging. As hard as it was to win tonight, Game 4 is going to be just as hard as it was tonight. But those three guys are playing unbelievable basketball. Without them, we wouldn't be sitting here at this point. |
| My emotions, it's very emotional to be back in this city. When I made my decision to come back here, I knew what I wanted to do, but I knew it wasn't going to be easy. It's going to take a lot of hard work and a lot of dedication, and it's going to be the toughest task for me to try to get this team back to The Finals. I've had to step up my leadership. I had to be very patient, which I'm not very patient. I'm not a very patient guy, but I knew I had to work on that. To be able to sit at one point during the season and see us at 19 20 and watching my team struggle and me sitting out two weeks, they wanted Coach Blatt fired, saying we needed another point guard, will LeBron and Kyrie be able to play together? So many story lines was just happening at that point in time. For us to be sitting at this point today being able to represent the Eastern Conference in The Finals, this is special. It's very special. Obviously, from the time I decided to come back to now, it's a totally different team. When I decided to come back, we had a No.1 pick, and we drafted Andrew Wiggins. I understood that we were going to have a very, very young team, a very unexperienced team, and it's going to take a lot of patience and a lot of hard work to get to where I wanted to get this team back to. Obviously, things happened throughout the season, throughout the off season, that allowed us to acquire Kevin Love, and as the season started, to acquire J.R. Smith and Timofey Mozgov and Iman Shumpert that brought our team to a place where I felt that we could compete. But I still thought we had to be very patient, I had to be very patient, being the leader of the team, but I knew we had the pieces that we can compete. Where this ranks as far as my last four Finals appearances, I mean, it's special just because I think it's today, it's tonight, and to know how far we've come as a group, to know how unexperienced we are as a unit playing together, I think that's special in its own right. No matter what happens from here on out, to see what we've accomplished being a first year team together that's had different changes throughout the course of the season, that's faced so many obstacles throughout the season injuries here, transactions here, lineups here it's something we can be very proud of to this point. I'm a guy who believes in unfinished business, and I understood what these people were going through, the people here not only in Cleveland but in Northeast Ohio and all over the world who love and bleed wine and gold. I also knew there were a couple of guys here that were very special, in Tristan Thompson here to my left and also in Kyrie Irving at the time, that could help me get to a point where I've been before. So to be at this point tonight sitting up here talking to you guys, like I said, it's very emotional and very just something I don't know. Could I foresee this? At the beginning of the season, I couldn't. I couldn't foresee us being in The Finals at the beginning of the season because I just knew that we just had to get better and I just saw how young we were and how young minded we were at that point in time, but I knew I had to lead these guys, and if they just followed my leadership, I knew I could get them to a place where they haven't been before. It's a hard working city, and if you work hard for this city, they work hard for you. They give everything back to you. That's what J.R. Smith to my right, Tristan here to my left, and the rest of the 12 guys in the locker room, we're just trying to work hard for the city, and they give it all back to us, as you saw tonight with 20,000 plus fans. I don't know how many chapters we have in the book as far as this season, but there's at least five. Just from the start of the season to us making the transaction to acquire this guy to my right and then Shump and then Timofey, to us having injuries, to us getting to the postseason, to Kevin Love being out for the postseason, to Kyrie getting banged up and being out for playoff games we have so many different chapters to this season that's defined who we are. But one thing we haven't got caught up in is feeling sorry for ourselves. It doesn't matter. If someone is out, the next man up. If someone is not 100 percent, then as a brother, you pick that guy up. That's what it's about. That's what it's about. That's what teamwork and trying to accomplish a dream is all about, being able to sacrifice yourself and what you can do for the better of the team. That's what's got us to this point. Don't ask me another question until you ask one of these guys a question too, by the way. Don't say, hey, LeBron, I'm from channel don't ask me a question. Ask these guys. Give me a break. But you look good. You fit. My message at halftime I think we were up 17. My message to the guys at halftime was my mission was to get Joe Harris into the game. That's what I told the guys at halftime. I said, our motivation for the second half is to get Joe Harris in the game, and they answered the call. Steal offensive rebounds. That's J.R. for you. I was just looking in the right direction. For myself, I think we all here know how long it's been since a champion has been in this city. I mean, you can try and not focus on it. You can try to say, okay, well, it's not about that. But we all know it. The one thing that we can guarantee as a team, as a group, 15 guys, our coaching staff, people that travel with us on the road, whatever the case may be, that work every day, is we will give our best shot. No matter who comes out of the Western Conference, either Golden State or Houston, we're going to give it our best shot. Our coaching staff will prepare us the best way they can, and I will as a leader have our guys ready for it. Win, lose, or draw, because you can't predict the future, you don't know what's going to happen, we will give our best shot. That's all from myself. That's all I can ask of my teammates. That's all I can ask of the coaches. And I hope everyone here understands that it's not easy. It's not easy to even get to this point. It's so hard just to win an NBA game, and the fact that we've won three playoff series so far, it is very, very difficult, and if you've never been in this situation, you don't know how difficult it is. The only people who can talk about it one of my best quotes or favorite quotes of all time is Theodore Roosevelt. It's called the Man in the Arena. I suggest everyone read it. It's basically about, if you've never sweat or bled or been in an arena and having the dust go up in your face and never battled, you have no idea what it takes to be in the arena. So for me as a leader, all I can do is lead these guys, which I will do. The coaching staff will give us the greatest game plan they can to win against Houston, to win against Golden State, but as far as guarantees, I cannot guarantee anyone. I can't guarantee the championship. That's not what I'm here for. I'm here to lead. But I will guarantee that we will play our asses off. We will, from the first minute to minute 48, or if it's overtime, 53. We will do that. At the end of the day, that's all I can ask for. That's all we can give. But we will be in The Finals, I can guarantee that. |
| Well, our bench was big for us tonight. We needed everything that we got from them. They came in and did an excellent job of contributing offensively and defensively. They were pretty good. Well, it's going to be the same as it has been being out here. Round the clock treatment, get my body, get my mind ready for the game. I get an opportunity to go home. I haven't seen my wife, seen my kids in four or five days. Give them some big hugs, big kisses, and then I'm going to lock back in. So it's the same thing for me. Just letting them understand and telling them about the moment, the moment that we're in, not about the game. I think the game is such a small thing, when you think about the moment and compare it to the moment. We have a chance to be a part of history, but it's the small steps that you take to get to that point. So mentally, physically, just having those guys ready, throwing things in their ears to try to let them understand what this is all about, and they responded very well. No, I think he's unique in his own way. Obviously he's a guy that's been counted out his whole life. Probably people have been telling him he's too small, he's not fast enough, can't shoot it enough, can't handle it good enough, and he's beat the odds so many times. The confidence that we have in him allows him to be confident in himself. He goes out and he just plays his tail off, and when a guy like that does that, he gets great results. Well, he was very calm. Before you get to the free throws, just to follow up on the missed three by J.J., usually when J.J., J.R. and Mike Miller shoot, we don't rebound, because most of the time they make them. So for us, for Delly to be able to crash in and get that and go up there and knock two free throws down, that was huge. Well, I mean, I don't need any extra motivation. I think our guys love it. Our guys love the fact that we've been counted out and come into the series being an underdog. They're pretty much saying that especially after Kyrie got hurt and the series was over. I think our guys are using that as motivation. I use a little bit of it, but I have a lot of motivation already to just be a part of greatness and be a part of this and be a part of this atmosphere. My motivation is to make sure my guys are ready and prepared every night we step on the floor. And I have some other motivation that I won't talk about right now, but I have so many different things to worry about than being an underdog or guys counting us out. It had everything to do with Delly. He just kept a body on Steph. He made Steph work. He was spectacular, man, defensively. We needed everything from him. When Steph shoots the ball, you just automatically think it's going in because he shoots the ball so well. I mean, he stunned me on one in the fourth quarter where he just took an in and out dribble and raised for a three and he nailed it and that wasn't on Delly. He just did a great job. Just trying to make it tough on Steph. That's all you can do. You make it tough on him. You get a contest, and you live with the results, and I think Delly did that. Yeah, that's what it is, it's the grit squad that we have. It's not cute at all. If you're looking for us to play sexy, cute basketball, then that's not us. That's not us right now. Everything is tough. You know, we're going to come in with an aggressive mindset defensively and offensively. And for us to win a Finals game shooting 32 percent from the field, it's just a testament of how gritty we can be. It has to be that for the rest of the series, no matter how many games it takes. It just comes from the work ethic. When the 20,000 plus fans aren't there and you guys aren't there, I mean, you see it because you're probably with me every day and some of your other guys or some of our other beat writers, you guys see how much work I put into my craft every day, before, after practice. When you put that much work in there, you live with the results. For me to be able to go out on the biggest stage and to be able to make plays happen for my teammates is the ultimate feeling for myself. That's why I take my profession, I take my craft very seriously. Well, am I built for it? Well, of course I'm built for it . I mean, it's a maximum of five games left in the NBA season. So I'm ready for whatever. Did you see how I walked in here? I'm feeling it. I'm feeling it right now for sure. That's why I've got one of the best trainers in the world in Mike Mancias who will make sure I'm ready for Game 3. We already have started on my rehab. Already started on my session. I will get rehab on the plane. We've got a five hour flight back home, and we've got all around the clock treatment tomorrow and get ready for Game 3. I'll be ready. I mean, all we can do is go out and play hard. We're undermanned. I mean, we're without two All Stars, and I don't know any other team in this league that would be able to do that, to be able to be without two All Stars on their team and compete the way we compete and be a force. So the guys are taking that very personal. For us mentally we can't allow the one thing we can't allow is what everyone is saying about us affect what we need to do out on the floor, because that's just smoke and mirrors of what everybody else says about us or what they think is going to happen with the series. What truly matters is what we have as a game plan and how we go out and execute it. That's all that matters. Well, the good thing about tonight, I took 34 shots, but I had my 11 assists. Once again, I was knocking on the 40 door again. So they let me score 40 again. That felt pretty I'm happy I'm able to do that in a win. So just to go out I'm not a high volume shooter. I've never been in my career. But things have changed on our team where the shots that Kevin and Kyrie would have has now been placed on myself and the rest of the guys as well. It's what needs to be done to help our team win. Am I going to be in the 30s every game or things of that nature? I'm not sure. I would not like to. But if that's what the case has to be to help us win, then I don't have a choice. It means everything. It means everything to be able to be a part of history and to get this win for this franchise, for our city, for all the Cavs fans all over the world. And if I can leave my fans with something, these fans here are pretty loud, pretty good, really good. I'm looking forward to seeing our fans and I can't wait to see our fans. I've heard our fans pretty loud before. A couple instances my first postseason appearance was really loud, and me coming home against the Knicks at the start of the season was pretty good. But I know we can be much, much louder than any fan base in this league. I know they're getting ready, and I can't wait to see them. |
| No, I just seen them run that set before, and I was telling the coaching staff that I was in tune and I knew it was coming. Well, I mean, I know one thing I'm going to count on Delly as always is how hard he's going to play. He's going to give everything he's got. His body, he's going to throw his body all over the place. And he's going to compete at a high level however many minutes he's out on the floor. Tonight it was 30 1/2 minutes, and for 30 1/2 minutes he gave everything he's got. It was great to have someone like that out on the floor that was willing to sacrifice everything for the better of the team. Well, we said it from the beginning that in order for us to win, we have to defend. My guys do a great job of coming out and defending. Everyone knows their role, and we all play our role to the best of our ability. We don't step outside our box. When you have that type of chemistry out on the floor, it makes everything work. I don't have a reaction. I'm just trying to do whatever it takes to help our team win. If it's high volume shooting, if it's high rebounding, if it's high assists, whatever it takes to help our team win. We're out two All Stars, and we're out a starting center, so I have to pick up some of the shot attempts. I'm not a high volume guy. I don't like to shoot high volume shots, but it's The Finals, and it's whatever it takes. I don't have a comment for Steph. That's not my concern. What my concern is how I come out and play, be aggressive. If it's high volume shooting, I'm living in the paint. I'll shoot 34 shots, but I only took six threes, and one of them was a heave at the end of a shot clock. That lets me know I'm being aggressive. Absolutely. They were unbelievable from the start to the finish. We fed off them, and we just tried to give it all back to them for 48 minutes. As loud as they were, they need to go home now and start soaking up a lot of tea, drinking a lot of tea for the next 36 hours, whatever the case may be, because they need to be just as loud Thursday night. So I need you guys to get those voices right. But they're going to be unbelievable Thursday night as well. Those guys, everyone, they were amazing. I mean, I'm not okay with it. I'm not okay with it, but I'm so outside the box right now. I went seven straight seasons with improving my efficiency. Seven straight into this year, the previous seven seasons, seven straight seasons with improving my efficiency as far as shooting. But this is a different challenge. This is a totally different challenge. I've never played where two All Stars were out. So it's a different challenge for myself, and it's outside the box, but it's not too far. It's not far for me to go grab. I'm just trying to do whatever it takes to help. I know you guys keep hearing me elaborate on whatever it takes, but that's what I'm trying to do. I'm high volume shooting, but it's not like I'm going out there and I'm high volume shooting and I'm not doing anything else. I'm doing everything for our team to help our team win, and that's all that matters. No, I mean, I don't think those guys lacked life. I think they came in and we just tried to put pressure on them like we've done the first three games, the first two games and then tonight. But those guys, they got a rhythm in the fourth quarter. Part of it is because we allowed them to get into a rhythm in the start of the fourth. We had some costly turnovers as well. We let Steph shake three, but some of Steph's threes were some he made in the fourth quarter, were some of the same he missed in Game 2 or earlier in the game tonight. We had some heck of a contest, but he was just he let them go. But for us we've just got to continue to put the pressure on them. Try to keep them below their averages. They're going to make great shots. They're a great team, great players, great coaching staff. We'll just live with the results. It's not satisfying when they end the game with 91. We hold them to 55 points for three quarters and we allowed them to break off with 36. That's not satisfying at all. We've got a lot of film to watch tomorrow. We're a young group, and we have to learn from our mistakes. We had a lot of mistakes in the fourth quarter. I think everybody's going to remember the turnovers we had late. But it started from the beginning. We have to learn from those things. We're a young group, and like I told the guys, it's okay. It's okay. We haven't been in a lot of these situations, if any, with this group. But the best teacher in life is experience. We experienced it tonight. We're going to watch a lot of film tomorrow on ways we can get better, close out games the best way, and we'll be ready for Game 4. I think our relationship continues to grow every day. To have a guy like that who has been around the game of basketball for so many years, he wants the best out of his team. He wants the best for himself as well and his coaching staff and to be able to be the leader of the team. I just try to give it all back to him. My mind is always working throughout the game. Sometimes I'm able to say it verbally, sometimes I'm just thinking the game and hoping the coaching staff and players and the guys and Coach Blatt know whatever I'm doing, it's for the best of the team. And he's allowing me to do that, and I respect that a lot. We just can't afford any more injuries. We just can't, especially from a guard perspective. I just thought about his shoulder. As soon as it happened, I knew exactly which shoulder it was, and I was just hoping for the best. When he came back on the floor with his shoulder wrapped and knowing that he wasn't at a hundred percent, which is his body out there, and still competing, it means everything to the team. It means everything to me. It means everything to him as well. As you can tell, he came back out there. But, yeah, we just can't afford any injuries right now. We're already depleted. A scarier opponent in our league? I mean, we have some very great basketball players in our league, and Steph happens to be one of them. His ability to shoot the ball is probably I've never seen someone that can shoot the ball off the dribble like himself, ever. So he's always keeping you off balance. Every game is different. He caught a rhythm in the fourth quarter tonight and hit some big shots. But for us we just try to continue to make it tough on him. He's a great player. He's a league MVP, and that's all you can ask. Our defense, we held this great team to 40 percent shooting. It's not just about one guy. Even though he's going to get it going, we've just got to make sure we do a good number on the rest of those guys. Well, the regular season can never compare to a playoff game. Just because we play so many games throughout the regular season, and you're going from city to city, players to players, different systems to different systems. You don't have much time to really get into the books and get into the tendencies and things of that nature. In the postseason you're able to kind of not get a rhythm, but know what's going to go on. Because once the playoffs start, not many teams are going to change. You've worked so many months to work a system that that's what you're going to see. For us, for our coaching staff to be able to put us in a position where we feel like this is best for us to win, as the players, we just try to go out and execute it the best way we can by playing hard, competing, making them take tough shots and also attacking them on the other end. The playoffs is definitely a great way to just lock in on a certain team and not worrying about having to fly out and be in another city here or be in another city there or see another opponent the next night. |
| 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. |
| 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. |
| At the end of the day, no matter if you lose by 30 or 1, it's just one win. And you have to be able to have a short mind but also learn from the mistakes that you made the previous game and just try to better yourself in the following game. And that's what we're able to do. We had a great shootaround yesterday. We had a great shootaround this morning. Coach Lue and the coaching staff gave us a great game plan and it was just up to us to go out and execute that, and I think we did that tonight. Don't think it's an issue. You know, it's just something that we wanted to pinpoint and do better. You could say we wanted to move the ball better the next game. We want to dribble-drive the next game. Those are not issues. Those are things that we want to be better at in the next game, and I think we did that tonight. Well, it started with the defense just trying to get my hand on Steph's pass, and I was able to get a deflection, and he kind of bumped me a little bit, kind of threw me off a little bit, and I was able to regather from off the floor. I knew we had a break going, and I didn't know exactly which one of my teammates was running the left wing until I got back up off the ground and saw Kyrie. I threw it to Kyrie and I made, I think it was Klay, just shift a little bit, and I knew he was going to throw it up there. And I had to go get it. He threw it, I had to go get it. Well, they're a great team and they have a great starting lineup, and they have great complementary players that come off the bench. It's never about us versus their starting five. It's about the whole 15 group. Our 15 guys versus their 15 guys and who can execute as close to 48 minutes as possible. We did a great job, and I gave the game ball to RJ. Getting the start tonight with Kevin being out, he just came in with so much aggression, so much attention to detail. He was on the glass. He gave us eight rebounds and nine points. But some of the things that he was doing out on the floor did not show up in the boxscore. So we just want to try to play our game. We finally got back to our game tonight, and it started with the floor general to my left. The sharpshooter to my right got it going, and it was just good basketball. It was a good flow, and everyone felt like they were a part of tonight's win. So it was just a collective team win. It wasn't about us versus their starting five. It was just about how everyone can get the job done whoever is on the floor. My teammates got me going. They told me to be aggressive, and that's what I was. Well, I mean, he's like you said, he's a two-way player. Defensively all year long that's what he's been doing. The offense comes very free to him and very easy, but the defensive side is what's making him so great. The contribution that we got from him from the scoring was all predicated on what he did defensively, you know, and he got in great rhythm. He hit some huge shots for us tonight, obviously, but I think it all started on the defensive end where he was much better than he was offensively. Oh, well, when you have the greatest shooter in the world trying to get an easy one or trying to get in rhythm, it's our job to try to keep him out. No matter if it's after the whistle or not. That was just my mindset. Anytime, if you're a great player and you see the ball go in, no matter if it's after the play or during the play, then you start feeling it. Not that you feel good because you know what you're capable of, but it helps. So I didn't want him to see the ball go in, even though he still made some. Well, I mean, I just wanted to play a little bit inside and outside. I started off the game going in the interior and just trying to fan out their defense a little bit. We did a great job of spacing out with RJ, with Ky, and also with Swish, so it gave me a little bit more room to work down in the post. I missed a ton of chippies, but I was loving the space that I was getting and my teammates created for me. So just kind of following the game plan. It's something that we wanted to do tonight and were able to execute it. Coaching staff gave us a game plan and we went out and executed it. No, I didn't change my approach, and I didn't take over this game. Kyrie pretty much took over the game, especially early and late. He closed the game out. He started the game, and I just sprinkled in, you know, my production along the whole game. He took the game over, I guess, from that standpoint. I just try to lead these guys to victory. |
| I think from a mental standpoint it wasn't about anybody that was on the floor. We just had a mindset that we wanted to come in here and just try to extend our period and have another opportunity to fight for another day. And that was our main concern, and we were able to do that. Our coaching staff gave us a great game plan, and as one of the leaders of the team, we just went out and executed. You've got a guy like this who is very special, it's probably one of the greatest performances I've ever seen live. To put on the show that he did, you just go out and follow the keys and play winning basketball, and we did that tonight. I think the main thing is that we were able to give ourselves another chance. Going into Boston, being down 3-2, you know, we understood that, hey, listen, the season is over if we don't go out and try to take care of business. Being a big part of our success, I had to come out and do some things to help us win that ballgame, and tonight was just another example of that. Understood the magnitude of this game. I knew how great of a team we were playing, but I just had to come out and just -- I know my teammates trust me, I trust them, and that was the result of it. At this point, it's whatever it takes. Obviously making shots and things of that nature are something that you sometimes really can't control. Sometimes the ball go in; sometimes it don't. How hard you play, how locked in you are on the keys to get a victory, what the coaching staff put out for us. But he was -- obviously this guy was special, and we rode him to the victory line. Just calm. Just calm for 48 minutes. Obviously he played 40 minutes, but even in the 8 minutes that he was sitting down, he was just calm. Timely bucket after bucket that led our team. The fourth quarter, I mean, he hit timely shot after shot after shot when those guys were trying to get back into the game. Defensively he was phenomenal as well, guarding Steph and guarding the rest of those guys, whoever he was matched up on. They tried to post him a few times with Harrison Barnes, and he just made it tough on him. Got his hand on the ball a couple times on the post. He was just locked in on both sides of the floor. So that's what I saw, and that's why I said what I said. Well, it's the only time. I mean, obviously it's do or die for us. Coach Lue said he wanted the ball in my hands a little bit more. I finally did a great job of not turning the ball over and got to my spots, got my teammates involved. Just tried to put us in position to be successful. Obviously it's not always a bed of roses on the court for 48 minutes, but you just try to go out there and trust your keys. That's something I'm very comfortable with, and I've been comfortable with before in the past. Coach wanted to make that adjustment, and I was able to take advantage of it when I had the ball in my hands. I mean, I guess when you're done with a game of basketball and big moments like tonight and moments throughout your career you wish you could get back. No matter how loud you turn the stereo system up in your house, you'll never be able to get it back. You just don't take these moments for granted, no matter if you're at home or on the road. That would classify as date I think it was then. I think it was like as soon as I was coming back to the team, I think we clicked right away. First of all, I'm not on social media right now, so I don't even know what Speights said, and I really don't think that even matters . You guys make me laugh. I swear, you guys do. My only motivation is my teammates and my coaching staff, especially being in this building. It's just us, us versus the Warriors. They have an unbelievable fan base. So many other things that we have to be challenged about. So my only motivation is how can I be there for my teammates and my coaching staff. That's it. I mean, at the end of the day, nothing else really matters. Well, I pride myself on not holding the ball as much. I did that early in my career, and I wasn't very successful. So I understand how to play efficient basketball. Also, when a guy has it going like Kyrie had it going, I'm able to find cracks and move without the ball and get it with the live dribble and things of that nature. And all our teammates do a great job of keeping the space, keeping it available for me to cut through the lane and things of that nature. Just try to be an outlet, an outlet when Kyrie doesn't feel like he has a great look and just try to put pressure on their defense. |
| I give a lot of credit to my teammates and my coaching staff to put me in position to be successful. I mean, without the ball moving, without the screens being set, without the coaching staff putting out the game plans for us offensively then, what I've been able to do, it doesn't happen. So those guys definitely get the credit. Well, I mean, we know we can't turn the ball over versus this team. They make you pay anytime you make a mistake, and for us to only have 12 turnovers today for 16 points is definitely key to our success. You can't turn the ball over versus anyone in our league, but especially in The Finals versus the defending champions. You can't do it because they'll make you pay. So we did a great job of not turning the ball over, including myself, and I just try to put myself in position, put my teammates in position to be successful. Well, I mean, we just focus on the next game, focus on the next minute, and we focus on the game plan that we had to master up to try to even get to the next play. And it wasn't even trying to get to a Game 7. We were like, okay, well, once we went to Game 5, we went out there and being down 3-1, we were like, okay, well, we've got to go home anyway, so let's go home and play in front of our fans, and we were able to do that. And tonight, these guys were, I mean, unbelievable. Once again, Double T's energy and activity, his level, his rebounding, obviously giving us extra possessions, but his defensive rebounding from the beginning was at an all-time high level for himself, even though as great as he is, he was spectacular tonight. And Kyrie's just a floor general. He does what he does. It's no surprise what he does. And we put ourselves in position to be able to be in a Game 7. I'll take it. It don't matter to me . Like I told you guys the other day, it's two of the greatest words in the world, and that's "Game 7", so I'll play it anywhere. No, I'm actually not really thinking about it too much right now. I'm ready to start my treatment session, get home, getting something to eat, lay down, get ready for the flight tomorrow. I'm very just chill right now, actually. I'm just out there playing, just reading, reacting. My teammates, like I said, have put me in position to be successful either when I have the ball or don't have the ball, they give me the ball wherever I would like it. Setting great screens and trying to put pressure on their defense. I've been fortunate enough to see the ball go through the hoop the last couple of games. So, you know, I feel pretty good. They deserved it. They deserved it. We knew what we were going to get out of them, and now it was up to us to go out and give it back to them, and I think we held up our end of the bargain. We knew what we were going to get out of those guys, all 20,000-plus. They were phenomenal from the time we ran out on the floor. So they deserved tonight, and it was special to be out there for them. Nope, I don't. I just play. I know what I put into the game. I know how true I am to the game. I know how true I am to these fans. So, no, I don't let it get to me. Oh, I mean, obviously, at the end of the day for me I think -- I don't really get involved in that. I try to be the best player I can be for this team every night, lead these guys out. I mean, I actually had a competitive shooting game with my kids last night. You know, we were shooting baskets last night between myself and my two boys, which ended up not going so well for me at times. You know, those guys have home-court advantage over me. But at the end of the day my whole mindset is how I can put myself in position to help these guys be successful and I could be successful as well. I don't really get caught up in what everybody else talks about. I think you should know me by now. I see what you're trying to do, though. Well, when you're prepared and you're well-prepared, then you have a lot of confidence going into a game. I was a freshman at St. Mary, we were well prepared. We had a great high school coach in Keith Dambrot, who is now the head coach at Akron U, who prepared us throughout the whole Playoffs, and then when we got to the state championships. So we were prepared. So we went out and just let it happen. Let it play, and let it play out. Now at this point in my life, sitting here today, we're well prepared with T Lue and our coaching staff. They prepare us, and it's up to us to go out and play, so we play with a lot of confidence and understanding that it's not -- there's nothing on the court that will blindside us because we're just a prepared bunch. I guess we just take one day at a time. We haven't rushed to get to a Game 5. We didn't rush to get to a Game 6 today. And we won't rush to get to a Game 7 on Sunday. At the end of the day this is going to be it for all of us, including you guys. One more game left, and you guys are going to give it all you've got, we're going to give it all we've got, and the Warriors will do the same, and we'll live with the results. That's how you go about it. Well, Klay went on his own barrage for the last three-and-a-half minutes in the third quarter, and we were up 20 at one point and he kind of went on his own 12-0 run or whatever the case may be, just hitting threes, getting to the lane and just kind of took a little bit of momentum from us. He looked at me and I was like, I just didn't want to come out. I felt like those first couple minutes of the fourth quarter were going to be very important, and I just wanted to be out there for my teammates and try to make some plays happen, and I was fortunate enough to do that. Well, you have to defend, and that's what we've all been talking about since we got together even from last year that in order for us to be ultimately successful, we have to defend, and I mean, if you don't defend versus these guys, you see what happened. I mean, we've all seen it all year for the last couple years. If you don't defend these guys or you make a mistake, they make you pay. So our antennas have to be up throughout the course of a 48-minute game on every possession, because as soon as you make a mistake, they get a three here, they get a slip to the rim here. They get offensive rebound and everyone's in the paint and they seek out to the perimeter for extra threes. So our antennas just have to be up, and I think it's been there, not every game, not as well as we'd all like, but the last few games our antennas have been razor sharp. Well, I think all my coaches throughout my career have had a meaningful part of my career. Everyone's been different in their own ways of how they philosophize the game and things of that nature, but I could talk in the present right now. I think me and Coach Lue just kind of, we connect that's something that's bigger than basketball, our upbringing. Being from a single-parent household, being from an inner-city community, being a statistic that you weren't supposed to make it out and there's no way you're going to make it out. You're going to be another one of those African-American kids, and we both made it out from tough situations growing up, and people just saying there's no way you can do it. So before we even met each other, you have a sense of that type of feeling. Then I came into the league and I'm a huge basketball fan, obviously, and I watched The Finals when he was with the Lakers and seen the spark that he gave that team when Phil Jackson gave him the nod. And I think everybody's just so caught up in the shot that AI made when he stepped over him, but people don't realize the impact that he made on that team, and the guy that just accepted his role. He's able to win a championship. So our relationship has just grown over the years, and just being a competitor, going against him and then seeing him as a coach, going against him again when he was in Boston and things of that nature and with the Clippers, and then when I came back and he was the assistant coach, continues to grow. I think it's like anything, when you're around someone every single day, I guess it's like a marriage or a girlfriend. You're around her every single day, they get better and better and better if it's genuine, and that's what it is here with myself and T Lue. 103 consecutive games, correct? I mean that's phenomenal. It's a testament to his professionalism as a young guy, him keeping his body not only in shape but understanding that it's more than just playing basketball. Kid takes care of his body every single day, he's been durable for this franchise even before I even came back. It's a great feeling when you can walk into a building and know that that guy's going to be in uniform. No matter what's going on, no matter what's happening, you know that guy's going to be in uniform and he's going to give it everything he's got. It's been great, and 103 on Sunday, and hopefully out of all those games he's played, we want that one to be the best one he's played. So look forward to it, and I'm done. |
| Absolutely. Just knowing what our city has been through, northeast Ohio has been through, as far as our sports and everything for the last 50-plus years. You could look back to the Earnest Byner fumble, Elway going 99 yards, to Jose Mesa not being able to close out in the bottom of the ninth to the Cavs went to The Finals -- I was on that team -- in 2007, us getting swept, and then last year us losing 4-2. And so many more stories. And our fans, they ride or die, no matter what's been going on, no matter the Browns, the Indians, the Cavs and so on, and all other sports teams. They continue to support us. And for us to be able to end this, end this drought, our fans deserve it. They deserve it. And it was for them. Well, I mean, yeah, David, you've been harping on it a lot the last couple weeks. But for me, I'm true to the game, and I know what I bring to the table. I came back for a reason. I came back to bring a championship to our city. I knew what I was capable of doing. I knew what I learned in the last couple years that I was gone, and I knew if I had to -- when I came back, I knew I had the right ingredients and the right blueprint to help this franchise get back to a place that we've never been. That's what it was all about. Right now it's just excitement. It's not even relief. It's just excitement for us as a team, as a franchise, as a city, as a community. To be able to continue to build up our city, to continue to be an inspiration to our city, it means everything. I'm happy to be a part of it. For me, when I came up here after we lost Game 4 at home, I said, hey, listen, we've got to take one possession, one game at a time. We're going to Golden State, so we've got to fly home anyways, so why not have another game? And I believed in that. And my guys believe in me as their leader every single day. I preach to them every single day. I'm their leader, and they allow me to lead those guys every single night. I was just true to that. I believed, and nobody else believed besides the other 14 guys and our coaching staff and our fans. So it's just going out and executing and putting things together and making plays, and we were able to do that. Just zeroing in on what needs to be done to help us win. Obviously I put the effort into it, but just thinking about the game, thinking about the plays, understanding that they're going to make a run. They're a great team. Understanding that we're going to make some mistakes, but it's how we come back from it and how we move on to the next possession. Then also just living in the moment. I told my guys before the game: Listen, there is a game to be played, but there's not many guys, there's not many teams that get an opportunity to be in the NBA Finals in a Game 7. There's just not. And this is my second one, and I'm able to say that I've been victorious twice in Game 7. I just told the guys: Don't take this for granted. Don't take it for granted. Let's go out. Our coaching staff gave us a great plan; let's go execute it. A little bit of everything. I think all the emotions, everything. Obviously I know what J.R.'s been through in his career. People counting him out and saying he's this, he's that, not understanding -- you can't have that. That's not yours. That's for Daddy. Just understand what J.R.'s been through and people just saying that there's no way he can be a winner. When our GM came to us last year and said, hey, we've got a deal to get Timofey Mozgov and get Iman Shumpert, and the Knicks are going to throw in J.R., I was like, what? They're going to throw in J.R. into the deal? And I was like, okay, I've got him. I got him. And J.R. turned himself into not only a huge boost to our team, but he turned himself into a two-way player, both sides of the floor. And I think those emotions came out of J.R. at the end of those games. Those emotions came out of me, just leading 14 guys and understanding, like I said, what our city's been through over the last 50-plus years since Jim Brown. Then also people just counting me out. Throughout my 13-year career, I've done nothing but be true to the game, give everything I've got to the game, put my heart, my blood, sweat, tears into the game, and people still want to doubt what I'm capable of doing. So that was a little icing on the cake for myself to just let me know that everything I've done, it results in this. They say hard work pays off, and that's what happened tonight. Well, I mean, at the end of the day you're down 3-1, and we've got to come here. We've got to come here and win. We had to win in this building anyways. I mean, we only get three games at home. So even if we sweep the home series in a seven-game series, we've got to win here anyway. So Game 5 was a great opportunity for us to try to seize that, and we came up with a great game plan. Our coaching staff gave us a great game plan, and we were able to send the game back home down 3-2. And we know our fans. Our fans give us everything, and we were able to give it back to them. Once we get to a Game 7, I'll take my chances versus anybody, versus any team. You give me one game, you give me 48 minutes, I'll take my chances. Once we got to a Game 7, I was just confident. I knew what I was capable of doing. I knew my guys would allow me to lead them throughout the 48 minutes, and they did that. What's going through my mind is I'm ready to get back to Cleveland. I can't wait to get off that plane and hold that trophy up and see all our fans at the terminal, IX Jet Center, and I know they're going to be ready. So I can't wait to give the emotion back to them. I'm looking forward to it. That's all. That don't matter. That's yesterday's newspaper. I don't think anybody's reading yesterday's newspaper. They'll be reading tomorrow that I'm coming home. I'm coming home with what I said I was going to do. Oh, my goodness. It's going to be probably one of the biggest parties -- I'm sorry, one of? It's going to be the biggest party that Cleveland has ever seen ever. So if you guys still have a little money left over in your budget, you guys better make a trip to Cleveland and get a little piece of it. I don't know. I don't know. I can sit up here and say -- I don't know if it was "The Godfather," I don't know if it was "Couples Retreat" that I watched, I don't know if it was "Ocean's 11, 12, and 13," I don't know if it was the "Revenge of the Nerds" that I watched. I really don't know. But I was just so like, listen, you've put everything into the game. The game always gives back to people that's true to the game. I've watched it. I know the history of the game, and I was just calm. I was calm. I was focused. I was locked in. I don't know. I wish I could tell you exactly what happened, but I had to be calm in order for my 14 guys to allow me to lead them and for those guys to play the way they played. I mean, I can't do it by myself, so that was my mindset. I was confident. I was calm. You've got to stay low. Like Jay-Z said, you've got to stay low and keep firing, and that's exactly what I did. I tell you one-on-one. I tell you one-on-one |
| It's too hard to say. Just trying to make plays for myself, make plays for my teammates, keep the defense off balance throughout the course of a 48-minute game. The coaching staff and my teammates do a great job of putting me in a position to succeed, and I just try to come through for them every night. Tonight was another one of those games where I made a couple plays to help us get a win. But it was definitely our two bigs that set the tone. Kev [Love] and Double T [Tristan Thompson], they were phenomenal. I don't think it's no momentum. I pretty much know how many guys I'm going to see throughout the course of a game. I know the guy that's going to start on me. I know the guy that's going to shift off onto me if a sub happens or if they go small or if they go big. For me, the only thing on my mind is how we can execute the best way we can and get a bucket in this possession, either if I can get myself a shot or if I can drive, get my shooters a shot, or if I can get a double-team in the paint or get to the free throw line. It's not an individual matchup for me, no matter who's in front of me. My mind is always racing on how I can make this the best possession at that particular time. Well, for me I saw that in Kev this morning. I knew what type of game he was going to have. I mean, he came through for us. We want the mentality of Kevin from Minnesota, but his usage rate don't have to be as high as Minnesota. Obviously we all know that he was a featured guy pretty much every possession going down the floor, and here that's changed a little bit because we have other guys. But his mentality needs to stay the same as Minnesota, and I think as he continues to get even more comfortable and comfortable -- tonight was one of those instances where every time he got the ball, it was a small guarding him or somebody was in the post, he was aggressive. He grabbed every rebound for the most part with him and Tristan in the paint, and he was very aggressive with his shot. He also got to the free throw line 10 times -- well, nine. So definitely that mentality from Minnesota is what we all love. We put in a lot of work. We put in a lot of work. Coach gave us a couple days off after we closed the series in Toronto, but after that we've been on the practice court or in the weight room training as if we were playing. There's no way you can substitute a game. We all know that. But the work that we put in this week, we just tried to be as up to speed as possible when the game did come. Tonight was just another opportunity for us to implement our scheme. Our coaching staff gave us a great game plan, and it was up to us to go out and execute it. Well, I think it's the mindset that you have to have when you go on the road for a Game 1. You can't start the game off lax or shooting a bunch of jump shots. That's my mindset. We've got guys that can shoot the heck out of a ball, and obviously Kev showed that tonight. But for myself, I have to be in attack mode and just put the pressure on the defense and see what happens. I was able to do that and kind of just set the tone early on what we needed to do. Once I started to see the defense start to crack in, then I started to find my shooters. I don't even think we played that great tonight. We definitely didn't shoot the ball as well as we're capable of shooting. I know Kyle had three or four very, very good looks that he missed when we had a good stretch. But I think the energy and the effort and the mindset was where it needed to be starting on the road, especially in the Eastern Conference Finals. |
| No, I didn't see it. And what are you going to do about it at the end of the day? My only job is to try to be the MVP for this team every night, put my teammates, put our franchise in position to be successful and ultimately compete for a championship. For me, I know what I bring to the table. This league knows what I bring to the table. That's for you guys to write about. It's not for me to be concerned about. We just want to try to get better. I also told you we had another level. You looked at me crazy when I told you that. I believe we've got another level as well. As well as we played tonight, there were still some things we could have done better. We had a few bad turnovers offensively that we could do better. We had a couple miscues defensively where we gave up some open looks. We can get better. That's the positive for our ballclub. There's no complacency with us right now. There shouldn't be. It's the postseason. But we like where we're headed and the direction we're headed right now. Well, that's a huge compliment, but there's no such thing for us. We don't have a perfect roster. We don't have a perfect team. But we can make up for mistakes, and we can make up for maybe some deficiencies that we may have because we communicate, we fly around and we sacrifice for one another. That could put us as close to perfection as possible, which you can't ever get to. But our communication level, our sacrifice, what we give to each other every night kind of covers that, kind of covers some of the faults that we may have. And with the faults that we do have, we try to get better and better at it so we can be as great as we can be every single night. I don't know. I'm a guy who lives in the moment. Our team is in a great groove, and I'm happy to be a part of that groove. At the end of the day, we want to try to put ourselves in position to win every game. That's the goal. Can you do that? Sometimes you come out with an L, but it's how you learn from those experiences that's going to help you out the next time. We are in a good groove as a team, and we want to try to continue that going home. No, I don't really pay attention to those things, to be honest. I only pay attention to what's going on with our guys and how we can put a lot of pressure on the opposing team, from IT to the rest of those guys. Obviously we didn't see him in the second half. Marcus Smart started the second half, but that was not our concern going into the second half. Our concern was not get complacent. Don't do what we did in Game 1 in the third quarter here, where we gave up I think 36 or something points in that quarter. Don't allow them to get into a good groove. It's not my concern. Well, they're going to make another adjustment, and we have to be ready for that going into Game 3. We're going to watch film tomorrow and see ways we can be better. We do have some great perimeter defenders that take the challenge, but we also have great third-line defense as well with our front line, which communicates pick-and-roll coverages or pin-down coverages or whatever coverages and allow the guards to get up into the ball or do what they need to do to be successful versus their guards. Absolutely. We have a veteran ballclub. We're one of the oldest teams in the league, so we all push each other. We're here for one reason. When you sign up to be here, we're here to compete. We're here to sacrifice for one another. And if you're in garbage time or if you're in in crunch time, you need to be a professional. RJ [Richard Jefferson] has done that. Champ [James Jones] has done that. Channing [Frye] is doing that. You see guys playing one round, a huge piece for one round, but then the next round certain things change. Guys just continue to stay ready. Guys continue to stay professional. It's great to be in a locker room like that. |
| Nothing. Same thing I've been saying since I got here. I've been saying he's a special kid. He's a special talent. As the stakes get higher and higher, his game gets higher and higher, but it was nothing surprising for me. But he rose to the occasion, and he put the team on his back, and we definitely needed that effort from him. Like he said, he's been just kind of dictating the game and being a playmaker and things of that nature throughout the Playoffs or even throughout this series so far, but tonight, he showed why he's one of the best point guards in the league, and he commanded us to be better, especially in the second half. Just trying to be aggressive. Obviously I couldn't be as aggressive as in the first half because of the foul trouble, so if I'm on the floor I've got to be aggressive and try to make plays, help our team be successful and read the defense. I was able to still be aggressive and find two of our shooters for two threes, found Kev, found Swish [JR Smith], so it was just trying to read the game, the game in between the game, and it worked well for us. Yeah, my rhythm for the most part is broken when you -- I can't remember the last -- I don't think I've ever had four fouls in a game before in the first half, so my rhythm is kind of broken and you've got to figure out ways you can still help the team, and my teammates said be aggressive, be you. You got us to this point and continue to do that, so I just tried to find ways to get into the lane, get into transition, when they backed off shoot the jumper and felt very comfortable with it, so I was able to get back into a rhythm very fast. At the end of the day, you play the game that's in front of you. We didn't take care of business in Game 3, they played well. Tonight they played well again, but we was able to play well, especially in the second half, and we defended. If we defend, then we're going to always give ourselves a good chance to win. We look forward to the next game. It's a difficult challenge because our preparation going into the series was going against a team with Isaiah, so now they're playing a lot differently now, so we're trying to figure out exactly what they're running and things of that nature, so it's been very difficult on us without IT on the floor, but now this is two games that we've been able to see them and we're going to get a better understanding. We should be a lot better in Game 5. Yeah, like I say, we game planned -- because their series went to [Game] 7 we game planned for both teams, and they're a different team when IT is -- I won't say a different team, they run different things just because of IT being a huge piece of the puzzle for them offensively. So they had to kind of reshape, and that's the beauty of having Brad Stevens as your coach. You're able to reshape what you do offensively and still be in a good rhythm. It's been challenging for us to kind of -- plays out of time-out, kind of been killing us on ATOs and keeping us off balance, but in the second half we kind of got a little bit of rhythm, and think we'll be better in Game 5. No, I mean, listen, they're well-coached, and they've got guys that's always kind of been counted out throughout their career, so they play with a lot of pride. And then you add the green on their back and this is history, this is a franchise that you kind of no matter who's out on the floor, you have to play for that franchise and play with pride. You know, they're giving us everything that they have, and we're expecting it, and we want the challenge. It's the postseason. At the end of the day, you just want to win the game. It doesn't matter who you're going against or how you get the job done, you're just trying to figure it out, and I think we did that. Yeah, I mean, when you look at some of the greatest rebounders in our game, guys who create extra possessions, you've got to figure out a way to try to take him out, and not take him out like in a bad way, but how do you keep him off the glass, and they're doing a really good job the last couple games of putting two or three bodies on him. But when you do that, you allow our other frontcourt player who's been a monster rebounder his whole career to come up and do the thing that he did tonight, and we needed that. We needed the 17 rebounds from Kev, and it was huge for our team. have. I have. I think I missed one in Boston before. I've missed a couple drunks in my career. I think I've made more than I've missed though. Percentages are pretty good. (Laughter). When I came into the league or my first seven seasons in the NBA? I mean, the kid is special, and he basically was just waiting for an opportunity to be able to blossom, and I'm just happy and blessed that when I decided to come back that I was able to help him blossom, I guess, because he gets to play in games that he's always been built for. He just never had the opportunity because of the team at that point in time. With me coming back and we're getting Kev and making a trade for J.R. and T-Mo [Timofey Mozgov] and Shump and all the pieces and all the pieces started coming together and Double T [Tristan Thompson] gets better and Delly [Matthew Dellavedova] and all that, and in year 1, even though it wasn't the successful season we would have hoped for, it gave him some experience that he didn't have in his first -- I don't know what he had, four seasons before I got here, that he didn't have. But he was already built for it. His game was built for it, and I'm happy, like I said, to be able to, I guess, sit back with four fouls and see him do what he's always been built to do. He was born for these moments. Well, in order to be successful, you have to defend. You have to defend. And especially versus a team like this who moves the ball, shares the ball, moves bodies, and they're very precise with their offensive sets. You have to defend, and it allows us to get to our best attribute at times and that's to get out on the open floor. I think that allowed us to outscore them by 17 in the third. Well, it's all -- the close-out game is always the hardest, and also you're doing it, and Boston is going to make it even harder. We have to go in with a bunker mentality that we had in Game 1 and Game 2 to go out and do what we do, but we have to defend. We have to execute offensively. We have to have low turnovers, and we have to try to make them miss because some of those guys play a lot better at home. That's just how the game be played. But we'll play the game, and we'll see what happens. |
| Absolutely. It's the first time I've seen him since he didn't return for the second half in Game 2, I believe. Yeah, Game 2. Throughout the series we didn't get an opportunity to actually have that moment. I know I said a few things in the media about the situation he was going through, but I was happy to see him. Just give him a big hug from myself and my family. Just how tough and determined the guy is, and to be able to go through the situation he was going through on a day-to-day basis, still being focused and maintaining his focus for the team -- family is everything, and basketball comes second after family, and to see him perform the way he was performing throughout the playoffs under the circumstances was a treat to watch. A lot more words were said, but that's the gist of it. I don't know. That's a question that none of us can answer in here. They have a great team right now. IT is going to come back healthy. They have the No. 1 pick; we'll see what they do with that. But I can't answer that question and know if we're going to play them in the Eastern Conference Finals next year. I have no idea. I think the first thing for me was seeing the excitement on Kyle [Korver's] and Deron [Williams] face. You've got one guy with 12 years, first Finals appearance, and another guy 14. So that's the first thing I picked. And just to see the excitement around my teammates -- I do it for them, and they give it back to me as well. Well, I don't have a message right now because we need to live in the moment. Like I said, it's been 12 and 14 years for those two guys. So we all need to soak it up. This is a great moment, and this is not promised. We know that. But once we start to lock in on that beast of a matchup that we've got next round, then we'll be very focused and I'll let those guys know what to expect out of a Finals appearance. Well, I love the fact that RJ does that because we have a great partnership, Uninterrupted, and Road Trippin' is doing very well now. So it's a huge plug for my business and our partnership. Thank you, RJ. You're unbelievable. First of all, I wear the number because of Mike. I think I fell in love with the game because of Mike, just seeing what he was able to accomplish. When you're growing up and you're seeing Michael Jordan, it's almost like a god. So I didn't ever believe I could be Mike. I started to focus on myself on other players and other people around my neighborhood because I never thought that you could get to a point where Mike was. So I think that helped shape my game. I think the biggest thing for me sitting here today after breaking the all-time scoring record in playoff history is that I did it just being me. I don't have to score the ball to make an impact in the basketball game. That was my mindset when I started playing the game. I was like, if I'm not scoring the ball, how can I still make an impact on the game? It's carried me all the way to this point now, and it's going to carry me for the rest of my career because scoring is not No. 1 on my agenda. I'm going to be honest, I'm not in the right mind to even talk about Golden State. It's too stressful, and I'm not stressed right now. I'm very happy about our accomplishment. I have no discussion -- Golden State, they've been the best team in our league for the last three years, and then they added an MVP. That's all I can give you right now, because I'm happy and I don't want to be stressed. They cause a lot of stress, and I'll get to that point when we start to prepare for them. I don't -- have I? I'm not a golfer. This guy right here to my left [J.R. Smith] is, though, so he'll tell me what that means when we get on the bus. I think at the end of the day, for my name to come up in the discussion with the greatest basketball player of all time, it's like, wow. Like I said, I did pretty much everything that MJ did when I was a kid. I shot fadeaways before I should have. I wore a leg sleeve on my leg and folded it down so you saw the red part. I wore black and red shoes with white socks. I wore short shorts so you could see my undershorts underneath. I didn't go bald like Mike, but I'm getting there. (Laughter). But it will be post-career, though. That's the only thing I didn't do. But other than that, I did everything Mike did. I even wore a wristband on my forearm. I didn't do the hoop earring, either. That was Mike. But I did everything Mike did, man. I wanted to be Mike, so for my name to come up in any discussion with Michael Jordan or Kareem or all these guys that's paved the ways for Tristan and Kevin [on podium with James] and myself and Swish [J.R. Smith], it's a wow factor. I don't really have anything to say. That's all part of the plan. It's been part of the plan since I really started taking this game serious, to say how can I get the youth to feel like passing the ball is OK, making the extra pass is OK, drawing two defenders and no matter if you win or lose, if you make the right play, it's OK. Because like you said, scoring the ball is so heralded in our sport. I want the fundamentals of the game to be as great as they can be. And if some kid or a group of kids from the West Coast or the East Coast or the Midwest or the South and everything in between all around the world can look at me and say, well, I made the extra pass because LeBron made the extra pass, or I got a chase-down block and I didn't give up on the play because LeBron didn't give up, that would mean the world to me. So we'll see what happens. We'll see what happens. Appreciate it. |
| I think I was -- it was a transition play, and I believe it was Kyle on my right side that was running the wing, and two of their players were back and I was just trying to engage one of them so I could get Kyle a shot in the corner, and they both went to Kyle, I believe, and I got caught in the air. So that's the only thing I could think of. I didn't want to travel, and Draymond was kind of playing Double T, and Double T kind of had his back towards me, so I just threw it off the glass and went and got it. Well, we're going to watch the film when we get to Golden State, and let's see ways we can be better. We didn't play our type of game in Game 1 and Game 2. And if we don't do that, if we play like we played in Game 1 and Game 2 of this series, the series is over. So we have to continue to play how we played at home. We have to be physically -- be physical at the point of attack, we got to continue to move the ball, share the ball. And tonight we had 27 assists, and that's very key. That's part of who we are. We set a lot of records since we kind of assembled this team the last couple years. And that's just part of who we are. We got guys that can stretch the floor, make big shots, and they did it tonight, from Ky, Kevin, and Swish, and everybody else chipped in as well. Well, I didn't hear it, but some of the other guys heard it and told me that that they wanted to celebrate on our floor once again and they wanted to spray champagne in our locker rooms, and I think it came from Draymond, which is okay, that's Dray anyway. But so I just told guys, I didn't stress anything besides just live in the moment. Live in the moment. We have a great opportunity to give ourself another opportunity to keep going. We played well in Game 3, well enough to win, and we just didn't do it. But tonight we came out and we stuck to the game plan our coaching staff put together and we -- this was as close to a 48-minute game we played in the post-season. Even in the first couple first three rounds, this was close as -- to a 48-minute game as we played. It was big for us. Well, I think the last two games we have played Cavaliers basketball. We have been physical, we haven't turned the ball over, and we have shared the ball. In Game 3 we just -- down the stretch we couldn't make any shots, and they did. And that was just -- it's a make-or-miss league at that point. So in the last couple games we have been playing Cavaliers basketball, and it's resulted in us just playing better and us getting this win tonight. No, they got us where they want us. Listen, at the end of the day, we want to just try to put ourself in position to play another game, and we did that tonight and hopefully we can do it Monday night where we can come back here. So our mindset is try to go up there and get one. Which is probably one of the toughest environments we have in this league, along with our building. And so we look forward to the challenge and the matchup. He's just been very special in closeout games. On both sides. Us being able to close out a team trying to close out on us. He's just been built for that moment. I said that over and over again, that he's always been built for the biggest moments, and tonight he showed that once again. It's not surprising. He's just that special. I don't know. I don't like it. It causes too much stress, man. I'm stressed out. Keep doing this every year. But listen, at the end of the day we just got some resilient guys. The Warriors have championship DNA, and we do as well. We're battle tested, they're battle tested. And getting swept is something that you never want to have happen. Especially this point. You get all the way to the Finals, you hate to get swept, lose two games on your home floor. So I think a lot of guys had that in their mind today, and they came out and played like it. I'll be all right on Monday. I'll be all right on Monday. He's a big piece of our puzzle. We all know that. He's been huge for our success the last three years, and they did a -- they have done a great job of putting him in the game plan and neutralizing what he does best, and that's offensive rebound and giving us extra possessions. And it's been very tough on him in this Finals so far. But he didn't get down on himself. He came through when we needed him the most, and that was tonight, getting 10 rebounds and also dishing out five assists. So that was big time. Yeah, I have. I'm not here to tell you guys what I've been talking to him about or what I -- but he knows what I expect out of him. Like I said, tonight we needed him the most, and he was there. No, I didn't have to work into believing it. At the end of the day I had the same game day ritual. And I slept great last night, came to shootaround, got my work in, I went home, took my usual pregame nap, got up, ate my pregame food, came to work. I didn't feel anything, actually, I was just excited about the moment. It is what it is. You come to work and you put in the work and you study the game for myself, and you just do everything to put yourself in a position to succeed. There's no reason to add any more pressure to it. And I'm not saying it was the result of a win, because I've done the same thing for a long time now, but for myself, just being able to just stay even keeled no matter the situation, I think it's good for our ball club. I'm about there. I'm about there. It lets me know that I did what I was supposed to do when I'm emotionally and physically drained at the end of a Finals game. If I'm not, then I didn't do what I was supposed to do. So that would be two games in a row where I felt like that, and now I got to get my mind ready once again. Well, it's quite a long flight going out west, and so we try to get a little bit of sleep. I try to get a little bit of sleep and then I get up and get treatment on the plane. Just give my body as much treatment as I can on the plane and get a couple hours of rest. Obviously it's going to be probably not too -- it won't be a long -- it won't be easy for me to sleep tonight because I'm still going on with the game and things of that nature, my body is not feeling as great, but I'll be fine tomorrow. I stunk in the first Finals. I don't stink anymore. No, I don't see it. So I can't talk to my teammates about it because I don't see it. Unless one of the guys brings it to me, either as a joke or something they want me to see, but I don't -- it don't go -- I don't have notifications on my phone. I don't have none of the apps on my phone right now so I can't even like click on it and accidentally click on it. I don't get involved in that, man. Because I'm like, I know, like I'm like every other mention when I play. And I don't -- I don't like it because people just be talking like -- people talk crazy, man. I'm going to leave it at that. So I know better. At the end of the day the game is supposed to be played physically. Both teams were wanting to put themselves in the record books and put themselves in basketball history. So try to do whatever it takes to win. I think both teams definitely are trying to do that from game to game. No. You can't. First of all, if you take a minute to see what's going on versus this team, they hit you with a 50-point quarter. There's no -- you can't -- we were just playing in the moment. We're just playing good basketball. We were in attack mode, and it results in us having 49. The reason we didn't hit 50 is because I can't shoot a free throw. So, but I'll be better in Game 5. |
| 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 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. |
| We just tried to follow the game plan. Try not to foul and put teams on the free throw line because those are easy points and we just trust our game plan. We trust our, what we've been doing all throughout the course of this whole year. We have a lot of length out there with myself, AD, Dwight, KCP and Danny at the start of that third quarter, and we were able to get some deflections, get some turnovers and get out and do what we do best on the break.You know, just having that type of size and that athleticism helps tremendously. Well, yeah, we knew the first quarter definitely wasn't Laker basketball, Laker defense. We just had some break downs. We had some break downs, took a quarter for us to kind of figure it out. Not saying that we fully figured them out because it's too early in the series to say that but started to get a better feel and rhythm defensively and started to get some stops in the second quarter and build that lead up going into halftime. Pissed me off. That's my true answer. It pissed me off because out of 101 votes, I got 16 first-place votes. That's what pissed me off more than anything. You know, not saying that the winner wasn't deserving of the MVP. But that pissed me off. And I finished second a lot in my career, either from a championship, and now four times as an MVP. You know, like I said, I never came into this league to be MVP or to be a champion. I've always just wanted to get better and better every single day, and those things will take care of itself. But some things is just out of my hand and some things you can't control. But it pissed me off. No. I don't know. I'm not going to sit up here and talk about what the criteria should be or what it is. It's changed over the years since I've gotten into the league, I know that. You know, it's just changed. It's changed a lot. You know, sometimes it's the best player on the best team. Sometimes it's the guy with the best season statistically. Sometimes -- it's changed over the course -- over the course of my career. I mean, you don't know. You don't know. But you know, Giannis had a hell of a season, I can definitely say that. I mean, I'm fine. Don't get it twisted. I'm going back to my room. I'm perfectly fine. We're 1-0 in the Western Conference Finals. I'm absolutely fine. So don't -- like I was pissed off at the reaction earlier when I saw it. I'm absolutely great now. I'm going back to my room, drink some wine and sleep very well tonight. Let's not get it twisted. I'm great. It's just the voting scale is a little weird to me sometimes. I mean, it you take 2012. If you just stick with me -- or 2012-13, I had a chance to be Defensive Player of the Year and also MVP in the same season. And that year [Marc] Gasol was [voted] Defensive Player of the Year, but he made Second Team All-Defense, okay. So that doesn't make sense. It's like being MVP of the league but you make Second Team All-NBA. That's when I really started to look at things kind of like differently. I was like, how does that even make any sense. It's like being Rookie of the Year but you make Second Team All-Rookie. And then I looked at the Most Improved this year, and rightfully so Brandon Ingram was amazing and I thought he should have won it. But did you see the vote that Devonte' Graham got? He averaged four points last year compared to 17 and a half. If that's not improving, what is? And it's a weird thing sometimes that you just have -- I don't know how much we are really watching the game of basketball or are we just in the narration mode, the narrative. I don't even remember. I don't remember, actually. I don't know. I don't remember. I don't remember to be completely honest. It would be hard for me to answer that question. |
| Did you see my reaction? No, did you see my reaction after he made it? I tried to chase him down just like every last one of the teammates and staff that we had out there. Special moment for a special player. Happy to be a part of it.It's not about making a shot. It's about having a belief of just taking it, for one, and living with the result. I think right back to our game right before COVID hit. We played Brooklyn at home and he had a similar shot right on that left wing in front of their bench to win the game and he missed it. He was down on himself, but at the end of the day, I told him, if you're open, and I was able to drive that particular game and find him wide open and he just missed it.But it's just the confidence to take the shot. You're not going to make them all, but the belief to just take it and live with the results is what it's all about. Tonight was his moment. Tonight was his moment to find a space, hunt the ball down and one of our top 10 assists leaders, Rondo, found him and he knocked it down. A big-time play.No, it's not about an individual matchup. It's about us trying to execute and him just coming through for us. That's what he did. It wasn't, okay, your turn, my turn. It's about playing the game and trying to find ways to make an impact.Obviously, those two big shots that he had at the end, one was the floater to take the lead. Joker was able to get the tip-in, and he comes back in with the three. Just big-time plays, like I said, for a big-time player.I don't know. That's actually an AD question. Just happy to have him. I know what he brought to the table. I know what he's about. I know his skill set. That's why I wanted him here so badly.That's what this floor right here that we're all on right now is all about. It's the practices; it's the shootarounds. We talk about every single scenario possible: up three; down three; up two; down two; do we have a foul to give, do we not; do we have a timeout, do we not; are we going full-court; half-court; BOB, which is baseline out-of-bounds; SOB, sideline out-of-bounds. You talk about all those things. You want to be a championship club, you have to be able to do that on the fly.So knowing we didn't have a timeout, we were able to get into a situation to a set that we worked on in practice and get right to it. The first option, for me if Do [Rondo] saw me over the top, and if not, AD flashes. And the rest is history.When you are trying to play high-level basketball, you have to have high-level IQ players, and he's one of them. And not only does he have high-level IQ, but he also plays with high energy. We know what we're going to get out of him every night.It's not about him making shots. We know he's going to defend and he's going to play at a level that he's capable of playing at, and we all know that once he checks into the game every single night. We know what to expect out of him. To be honest, when he makes shots, it's extra credit for us. But he puts that work in on his offensive skill set to get better and better. We love everything about him. For sure. I know we're here playing the game, but I'm not losing the fact of what's important, as well. More than a vote, it's about protecting black voters and voter suppression that goes on in our communities. Like you said, change isn't made by sitting on the sidelines. That's one of our slogans and we're very proud of that. Getting the people that want to join us, getting them gear and wearing the T-shirt and wearing the hats and wearing the hoodies, because when they go in their community, that's something that they can continue to enlighten, continue to educate, continue to make people empowered about this movement. We always talk about change in our communities, and now we have an opportunity. We have an opportunity to really create change for the better and we look forward to this opportunity. To be completely honest, man, it was probably one of the greatest moments of my career up until that point. Just knowing the situation, we were about to go down 0-2 and we had home-court advantage. We knew how powerful that Orlando team was, playing against actually my teammate now in Dwight. So for me to be able to hit that shot was a huge moment for me. I was still a young kid at the time, so big-time. The one thing I wish AD had tonight with the shot that he made, I wish we were playing at Staples. We miss our fans so much and I can imagine in -- I probably would have blue the roof off Staples Center, AD hitting that shot with our crowd. I would have loved to have that moment -- I know what it felt like for me when I was able to hit that shot that you mentioned against Orlando, Game 2 of the Eastern Conference Finals at the buzzer. I think just staying even-keeled. That's what it's all about. The playoffs and the postseason, the more you advance into the postseason, the emotions and the adversity, it's going to be a roller coaster at times. No matter if you're up, no matter if you're down, being able to keep your composure and your mindset on the main thing is very important. This is the furthest he's gone in his career up to this point, and. I'm just happy to be here with him to give him any advice and lean on me. To be completely honest, in the second half, I leaned on him, and he brought us home. So I just tried to set the example early on, and we leaned on him, especially in the fourth quarter, and he brought us home. I don't know. I think for me, it's always been about the man in the arena, the quote from Theodore Roosevelt. It's about the guy that's in the arena that's gone through everything -- the blood, the sweat, the tears and, in our situation, the competition. I's about the work that you put in and the belief in yourself. It's not about the doubters or the naysayers or the people who are going to try to talk to you and slander you and bring you down every single day. It's not about them because they have never been in the arena. They don't understand. AD, he knows how special he is and when he doesn't, I'll be the first one to tell him how special he is. He wanted to be here. I'm happy he wanted to be here, because if he didn't, we wouldn't have a moment like tonight. That's what it's all about. You put that pressure on yourself when you don't really care what other people think, because what other people think doesn't really matter because they don't understand. Anybody can talk from outside, but if they got into the ring or they got into the arena, probably 10 times out of 10, they [expletive] their pants. |
| I knew it was winning time, and Jamal had it going. The kid is special. He has an array of shots. Triple threat from the three, mid-range and also in the paint. For me, it's just trusting my defensive keys. Trusting my study of film. Trusting personnel. And living with the results. I told my teammate that I had him and everyone else can kind of stay at bay and stay home. I was able to get a couple stops and we were able to rebound the basketball, which is the most important thing. I think at times we're doing a great job. At certain times, we can do a better job with our spacing, especially on our post-ups. They are doing a little doubling on the post at times, so we've got to get a better outlet for AD when he is posting up and get the ball swung-swung as quickly as possible to get more looks. I thought we did a really good job, more importantly, tonight of not turning the ball over. The thing we talked about in Game 2 and Game 3 is we cannot turn the ball over against this team. We did a great job of that tonight. Not for me. I don't reserve any energy. I'm on the floor, I give it all I got. If I need a break, I ask for a break. Coach has done a good job of getting me out throughout the course of the game. I don't look at it as a reserve tank. I've got pretty good energy when I'm on the floor all the time. It's winning time and I don't have a chance or time to be feeling tired. I'm tired now. That's when I'm tired, when it's zeros on the clock. That's when I'm tired. I'm not tired during the game. It's just about playing to our capability. Coming out with the game plan and executing it for 48 minutes. If we do that, we give ourselves a good chance to win. Dwight was a beast. Gave us opportunities when we missed shots, which as a team, we missed a couple. AD didn't miss any, but as a team, when we missed a couple shots, he was cleaning glass both offensively and defensively. Got us put-backs and was able to control the paint. We know we got smashed in the rebounding category in Game 3, so we wanted to do a better job in that. Dwight brought that physical presence. It was great for our ballclub. Tonight, late game, Do [Rajon Rondo] was running pick-and-rolls. I was able to run a couple. But we just made our free throws. We made our free throws down the stretch, and that's what closes games out. You've got to get your stops defensively, make your free throws when you're fouled. And I thought we did that. See how low his brow is. If his brow is really low, then you know not to talk to him. If it's higher, then he's accepted the fact that you're allowed to come into his office and talk to him. Yesterday his brow was very low in this part and no one talked to him. So we already knew the mindset he was in, and he came out and did it. I think at the end of the day, respect. You just look at the history of America and the disrespect that Black women have gotten for the last 400 years. You can't turn a blind eye to that. When I look at my household and see my daughter, who is five on her way to six, my wife and my mom, rest in peace my grandmother, so many Black women have done so many things for me. Seeing the sacrifices they made, especially my mom when I was growing up. They were disrespected along the way and it's still like that today. In the case of Breonna Taylor's case, it's just shown once again that the walls of the neighbor is more important than her life. So not only did I want to acknowledge all the queens in this world, all the Black queens in this world, but the ones in my life, the personal ones, too. I just kind of had a moment yesterday. I mean, I have a lot of moments, but felt like it was important to let Black women know that you're not alone. No matter the disrespect or what they may feel, don't stop. Because that's exactly what they want you guys to do. They want you guys to stop. They want you guys not to be as powerful as you guys are, not as strong as you guys are, as determined as you guys are. They want you all to be at bay. They want you to accept what's going on. For sure, I won't allow that. When they are feeling down or feeling like there's no journey for them or gateway to be heard or to be seen or be respected or be accepted, my job is to continue to let them know that they are. They are important to everything that goes on, not only in America but in the world. Everything that goes on for 24 hours in day, 365 days a year, 366 in a leap year. That's what it's about. We didn't talk about that. One thing, we wanted to be there for our brother, Do. As much as it's devastating to us, you can only imagine it happening in your backyard. Do being from Louisville, we knew how tough it had to be on his family and the locals there. No, we didn't discuss that one bit. But can't say that we were surprised at the verdict. None of us are surprised at it. That's what's more devastating, that none of us were surprised at what the outcome was. Do has been in a lot of playoff games. He's won a championship. He's played at the highest level, and he's someone that we can trust. In the postseason, every possession is so important. When you can have guys that have been in the moments and can understand and also be able to make adjustments on the fly, and know that you can count on them down the stretch, it just makes the team and you individually feel so much more confident in the outcome. Do has been, ever since he got back from injury and we saw this playoff run, he's been exceptional. Thank you. Reminded me. I think the best thing is that we have been together. We're able to see what's going on and be able to bounce things off one another and to be there for one another. This game is so much bigger than just us getting on the floor and running around and calling out screens and running plays and making mistakes and trying to figure out how we can be better the next time. There's also a big thing called life that's involved in this, too. And to have, like you said, things that happened in Kenosha, and the Breonna Taylor case and so many other things that are going on in America, as we speak and as we move forward, being around people that you can trust and confide in, be able to talk to, bounce things off and not feel that you have to tackle it by yourself, I think that's very important when you have a support system like that. The best thing that you can have is a close-knit group, because we're together more than we are with our families. So having that support is pretty amazing. |
| Yeah, just, one, getting my breath back underneath me after a hard-fought series against one of most well-coached team I've ever played against in the postseason, one of the most respected teams I've played against. Obviously, you guys know how much I love Mike Malone. He's incredible. He's the reason why that team is so damn good. So I was thinking about that. I was also thinking about some of my teammates who this is their first appearance to the Finals. Obviously, AD had a lot on my thought process. This is the reason why I wanted to be a teammate of his and why I brought him here. I wanted him to see things that he had not seen before in this league. To be able to come through for him meant a lot for me personally. Then I started thinking about the next opponent. Boston had a few moments in my head. Miami had a few moments in my head as well. How challenging that's going to be, whoever wins that series. Then I just started thinking about my journey as well. All that was just going through my mind as the confetti was on the floor, was coming down, landing on my shoulder and things of that nature. So hopefully that was a good description. For me personally, the job is not done. But it's great to hit moments throughout the course of a journey and appreciate that. This is all part of the process, but the job is not done for me personally. For us as a franchise, I'm extremely proud to be a part of this franchise getting back to where it belongs, and that's playing for championships and competing for championships and representing the Western Conference in the championships. This is what I came here for. I heard all the conversations and everything that was said about why did I decide to come to L.A -- the reason I came to L.A., it was not about basketball. All those conversations, just naysayers and things of that nature. I understood that, with the season I had last year and my injury, it just gave them more sticks and more wood to throw in the fire to continue to say the things that they would say about me. But it never stopped my journey and never stopped my mindset and never stopped my goals. I'm happy, like I said, and proud of this organization and proud of my teammates and I'm proud of the coaching staff, the front office and our ownership as well at this very moment today. I mean, every time you put on purple and gold, you think about his legacy. You think about him and about what he meant to this franchise for 20-plus years, and what he stood for both on the floor and off the floor. What he demanded out of his teammates and what he demanded out of himself. We have some similarities in that sense. Our games are different, but as far as our mindset and our drive to want to be the best and our drive to not lose -- sometimes you're going to lose games, but that drive to always want to be victorious, it stops you from sleeping. And sometimes you put certain things -- you sacrifice a lot of things. You sacrifice your family at times because you're so driven to be so great that other things fall by the wayside at times. So I understand that. I'm one of the few that can understand the mindset that he played with and the journey from high school to the NBA. It's just a thing that I carry with me, like I said, every time I decide at one point in that locker room before the game when I throw that jersey on. I don't, unfortunately. I wish I did. They happen so fast and my mind is still so locked in on the journey that it's hard for me to take in and appreciate what we just accomplished. Just how I've always been. I always say that when I'm done playing the game, hopefully I look back on it and enjoy it -- and hopefully I will. Hopefully I can, because I don't think I enjoy it enough when I'm in it because I'm so engulfed in the process until the final call. But I'm so damn proud of this team and where we are right now up until this day. I don't know, I've never looked at it that way. I've never said, OK, I want to cast myself as a superstar or whatever the case may be. I just want to travel my own journey, because it is my journey. I've appreciated everything that's happened along the way. I mean, throughout -- the ups, the downs, the ups on the court, the downs on the court, the wins and losses. But I've been able to, I guess as Frank Sinatra would say, I did it my way. At the end of the day and at the end of my career, I just hope that I inspire enough people to want to play the game the right way, and have that respect from all the opponents that I played against, all the teams that I played against and the organizations that I play for. Because at the end of the day, I mean, that's all you have, is your respect. Well, it all depends what game you were talking about. There were a couple games where I was at home. There was one or two games where I was in Cabo and a couple games where I was at a hookah lounge during the Finals last year. That's the truth. I wasn't smoking hookah, but I was there. Absolutely. I wouldn't have went. The game was on in Cabo, the game was on in my house and at the hookah lounge. I watched every single minute of the games until they stopped. I actually watched every single postseason game last year. I think I told David that; I watched every single postseason game. Part of me, I'm just a fan of the game. I love the sport. I love the competitive nature. I love the playoffs. And then, also, of saying like, oh, I wish I was in this moment, what would I have done at that moment? What play would I have made in that moment if I was out there? So yes, I didn't miss a game. I didn't miss one game. Even on vacation, I didn't miss a game. My wife didn't like it, but she'll be OK. I've always had the mindset that in a close-out game for me personally, I'm just as desperate as the team that we are trying to close out. I don't want to play another game. And if we are in a position where we can win that game, that's just my mindset. Does it always go that route? No, because I don't believe I'm undefeated. I'm not undefeated in close-out games. My mindset is that I do not -- if we have played well enough and we are in the fourth quarter and we have a chance to win, I do not want to play another game. I mean, I love the game, but I do not want to play another game. That's always been my mindset. I want to be just as desperate as my opponent, just as desperate as the other team, the player that I'm lined up against, the coaching staff that's on the other side. It's just who I am. It's just a mindset I'm able to link into at that very moment. I guess it was a very, very, very, very long time ago, when I was 27, like a long-ass time ago when I was 27 in this league. I just wanted to put myself kind of in his position. Sometimes what I would be thinking at that age and if I was with someone in the later stage of their career, I just don't want to let them down. And I'm not even talking on the floor, because there's things that sometimes they go in, they don't go in. But as far as, I don't want to say a role model, but someone that holds myself to a higher standard as far as character. I don't want to let them down. And then, it's funny because it's kind of rubbed off on me as well because he doesn't want to let me down. I don't know, you've seen the movie Step Brothers before, right? Well, there it is. Yeah, I'm Will Ferrell, for sure. I get on his nerves a lot, for sure. I go in and mess with his drums and he's not watching -- yeah, that's me. I get on his nerves a lot. I think Alex Caruso is a true definition of when opportunity meets preparation. He's been preparing for this moment for a long time and he just needed opportunity. Luke [Walton] gave him an opportunity last year, and now Coach Vogel and our coaching staff are giving him an opportunity on a bigger stage. He's just taking full advantage of that and just full stride. He's just gotten better and better every single minute he's on the floor. He's still learning. Every game is still a learning experience for him because he's so new to the NBA. He played a lot of his minutes over the course of his early stages in the G League. But first time I saw him, and seeing him in some of our practices, it wasn't the sneaky athleticism. It was the way that he defended and how cerebral he played the game. I gravitate toward players like that right away, because the game, everybody talks about the physical side and how high you can jump and how fast you can run and all those things. But the mental side is what gets you to the next level. You know, I saw that from A.C. and he continues to learn. He's just been great for us. He's been great. He's been unbelievable. I mean, we've faced, it's been a crazy obstacle course for our franchise this whole year. I'm not going to sit here and give all the details, but you guys, everyone can go back and just see from the start of the season all the way up until now what we've gone through as a team. He's been able to manage it the whole time. Bringing in guys, losing guys. He's just always been the anchor, and our coaching staff has been right behind him. I can't say anything more than that. Just happy to be on the floor to kind of be his coach on the floor and just command to my teammates the same message that he's given to me and be an extension of his mind. It's been great. One, I've taken care of my body. I've been available to my teammates. That's one. I sleep. I try to get as much sleep as I can. I think there's no better recovery than sleep. And then I've never cheated the game as well. I've put so much work into my craft, so much work into the game. I think you add on to the fact that I've played with some great teammates and some great coaching staffs, from T-Lue and his coaching staff to Erik Spoelstra and his coaching staff, and now this coaching staff with Frank Vogel. I'm blessed. I'm truly blessed. They have all allowed me to be me. They have allowed me to go out and do the things that I do on the floor. Use my mind, my play and be able to command my teammates the way I do. It's put me in position to be able to, like you said, be in the Finals nine out of 10 years. To answer your second question, everything is different. It's 2020. Nothing feels the same. Everything is different. So the ceremony is different. The one thing I can say, I wish we were in Staples Center tonight with our fans, with our Laker faithful, because they deserve this as much as we do because they went through the last so many years of not being in a postseason run, feeling like their franchise would never get back to this moment. But they continued to stay faithful. It would have been great to celebrate with them tonight. So hopefully we can continue to give them something to smile about in the next round, as well. That's what our mindset is. |
| 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. |
| 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 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." |