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| It was. You play the game and you haven't seen it, and you're like, man, that was an ugly game. Then you look at the tape and you're like, maybe it wasn't that bad. But that game, it really was that bad, you know what I'm saying, for us. We executed, and my performance taking care of the ball and trying to set the table, it was pretty bad. But we came out with the win, and that's all really that matters. Well, I think my angles was just bad on it, my decisions wasn't fast enough on it. They were long. They've got a lot of long guys, and it was good. It worked; it was effective. Well, that's really not me. I've had a lot of games where I've taken less than ten shots, you know what I'm saying, but when I do do that, we've got at least three guys rolling. Last night we only had one guy, Rip, who pretty much carried us. You probably won't see that too often. He told me, settle down, relax, make the play, don't worry about it. We're there for one another like that, especially when one of us is struggling, the other one is always there to have his back. That's why we're such a great tandem. No, they usually showed real hard, but they never really trapped it hard. No matter what pick-and-roll we was running, it was high side, low, it didn't matter, they were just trying to take me away. I really don't blame them. But it won't be that effective anymore, I know that. Good teams win ugly games, man. Just find a way. You've just got to find a way sometimes, and that's exactly what we did yesterday. I thought our second half was pretty good, considering how bad the first half was. It was pretty good. We came out, turned the tide once again in the second half. Once we finally took the lead, we never looked back. Yeah, we planned on him being a lot more aggressive, and because he wasn't, a lot of the things that we planned on doing or talked about, we didn't even have to go to them as far as defending him. So I'm sure we'll have the opportunity the next game. He's going to be very aggressive, they're talking about having him shoot free throws and all of that. I'm sure he'll find a way to get on that free-throw line the next game. It doesn't really matter, we've just got to play. I thought it was a great play. I thought it was a great play. It was horrible defense by us, but it was a great play. It's been an ugly game, and you've got one of your best three-point shooters wide open. He just had six or seven in the last game. So I thought it was an excellent play. I think everybody just -- they want him to be the man so bad and want him to shoot every single time, and that's just unfair. The kid made a great, great play. If they would have made that shot, then they would have been talking about how wonderful the play was. I'm just glad they missed it. I think a lot of that is going to be on me, like the pick-and-rolls and the trap, you know what I'm saying, getting some early throw-backs, trying to get them going, just on pick-and-rolls and stuff like that. They played behind in the post, throw it in, let them go a little bit. We'll find out. They'll be fine. Yeah, that was. That was exciting. We scored, they scored, one big play after another. Both teams, really. That was a lot of fun. I'm just glad we came out on top. It did, it did. Obviously we don't shoot for games in the 70s, but it's like that sometimes, you know what I'm saying? That's the one thing I love about our team is we can love the games in the 70s and 80s and we can win in the 100s. We're versatile that way. You've just got to stay aggressive. I don't think so. I don't think so. I think we'll see a better effort probably on both sides, both teams. I think it's going to be a battle. |
| Well, we had a couple things in mind. Didn't end up having to use them because we had it going in the fourth quarter. A couple guys had it going, so we really didn't have to use it. We just kind of got away from it. Second half started to get a little more aggressive, not waiting for the plays to happen, just kind of bringing it on myself, getting a little more energy, and I was able to turn the tide a little bit personally, and as a team we started to step it up and play a little better, a little faster, a little more aggressive. Well, I would just speak for our team, I think we're playing great defensively and limiting those guys and trying to do what we have to do. Offensively we haven't played good in either game. In either game we haven't played good. You know, we look to try to turn that around, but try to keep our defense the same. One thing about our team is we can win both ways. We can win in the 80s, we can win in the 105 to 110 range. That's just how versatile we are. We're used to games like this where our defense has to carry us. We've done it for years. I thought we did good. We knew he was going to be more aggressive attacking the basket and we did that. We had guys helping and guys in position to be there and help. He still did a good job. He still had 19 points, had a chance to go up one late in the game, and Rip I thought made a great defensive play on him. I thought our defense was great. Well, our offense has just not been very good, and of course when you're at home, when your offense is good, it's a lot of energy in the building, you know, you can kind of feed off of that. Our offense hasn't been good, so we have not given our fans a lot to cheer about in these two games with the exception of our defense. So at halftime we come in down 12, mad, angry, but knowing what the problem is, and we made a couple adjustments, and like I said, stepped it up and was a little more aggressive. We was able to get back into the game. No, they're definitely doing some different things defensively. I mean, first and foremost, they are trapping on pick and rolls with me. They pretty much said, we're going to take him out of it, take him away from it. Second, when Rip is coming down they're soft trapping him, as well. Yeah, I think they're doing some really good things to us defensively, and for us to try to make some adjustments to. Sheed, man, he just never ceases to amaze me. When he's focused and he's trying to take a game over, there's nobody that can stop him. He scores in so many different ways, he's a great defender, he doesn't get a lot of press for the way that he defends guys, and his help defense, his man defense. He's a well-rounded player. He lives for moments like that. He lives for the playoffs and tight-game situations as a few of us on the team do. Well, it's not nothing that he really says, it's how the game is going, how the refs are calling it. When he feels like he's getting a tough whistle, he's more inspired and he's more motivated. We don't like to see him get them call bad calls on him, but when they do do that it works in our advantage because when he feels like everybody is against him, he's ready to rock and roll. That's what you seen tonight. They can't surprise us really at the end of games. They go to LeBron. I can't blame them. He's an unbelievable player. We've just got to stay locked in. Like I said, at the end of Game 1, we weren't as locked in as we should have been, giving Donyell an open look. Tonight, same situation, unbelievable, same situation; Rip plays great defense on him, makes him take a tough shot, he misses it. Ball's in the air, we're trying to rebound and we finally get the rebound and secure the game. Yeah, that was a little bit earlier. It wasn't like the second situation, but I kind of knew once he got in there, and Rasheed is just so long that Sasha was in the corner, so I was kind of cheating to him, and he was going to have to make a tough, tough shot. |
| 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. |
| I am what I am. I don't know how else to explain it. I've been the same way all my life, and it is what it is. But if you've got some endorsements out there that you can throw my way, I'll take them (laughter). I think he should retire so I can catch up with him. That's my personal opinion. You know, what he brings to the table year in and year out, it's something you can't measure. His experience, his timeliness, and of course we understand the way he hits big shots. But he's one of those guys you can put in the game and you're just never worried about what he's going to do because you know he's going to do the right thing. Of course it shows in the championships that he's won and the different teams you've done it with, and the right situations he continues to put himself in. What he does for us is immeasurable. I cannot relate to him in any way, honestly. I was in a much different situation. I was on a veteran squad and I was more of a piece of the puzzle. I think he's a much bigger piece of this puzzle. They're asking him to do a lot more. I don't know what our age difference was, but I'm going to imagine I think I was a little older than him. But I had guys like Avery and Dave and Sean and Mario. These were veteran guys that had been around the league. The ability to kind of lean on him and follow them through it is I think a bit of a different situation than LeBron has. Absolutely. It's absolutely impressive. I don't think I deny the fact that it's impressive what he's done thus far to get here. What the team was from a couple years back, and then to pick him and to put the right pieces around him, I think a lot of credit to Danny and Mike and the rest of the Cavs organization for putting that together. But of course, again, he's a big part of that and a big part of that turnaround in getting to this point. He'll prepare them well. I think him and Coach Egan and we've got a couple of other guys that were there that have been around our system and been with us for a couple years. But the beauty of the NBA Finals is there are not too many secrets. I think you go in and you face a team, there are not too many things you're going to sneak people with. You have to execute your stuff, you have to bring the effort, you have to be able to play well for all that we can bring to the table and all that he can bring to the table about the opposing teams. It's about going out there and actually doing it. Again, I can't answer that one. I've found it works for me and it's something I've stuck with. As I said, it makes shots easier for me, and as long as it works, I stick with it. I can't answer the question why nobody else uses it. Well, I think having another big guy in the backcourt in the NBA, having someone that you can count on, is a really big deal. You don't see that in too many places where you can look across and have two big guys that can play at the same level. And in saying that, I think you've got to give a lot of credit to the other guys that were on that team, also, along with Dave, Sean and Avery and Mario. As I said, of course, those guys along with Dave were the ones that kind of put that team together, kind of kept -- made it easier for me to play the game and not be so stressed about it. I'm expecting a lot of changes, a lot of different things. I'm guessing that Mike won't throw a steady diet of anything at me. I'll have some opportunities to play a little bit of one-on-one basketball, I'll see a lot of double teams, I'll see double teams come from different areas. I've got to imagine that he's got a bunch of things that he'll throw at me and not just -- try to change it up so I don't know what's coming. It was an evolution, and just as I was brought into the situation with those guys, same thing with me. I was given the opportunity to have an influx of kind of young guys with Manu and Tony and Bruce being here for a couple years, and it's our responsibility to kind of bring them along. I hate to say responsibility now because those guys have been through this situation and they've got the experience just like we do. So we're just at a good point with a good mix of guys, young, old, guys who have been through it. It's just a good mix right now. I don't know how else to answer that. The fly under the radar question. It doesn't matter to us. It doesn't matter. It's great, it's wonderful for the NBA, it's wonderful for NBA fans. I think there's a lot of hype behind these Finals, and that's great for us, too. We're not worried about who gets the hype or what gets the hype, we're about winning four games and worrying about it then. All in all I thought we did a pretty decent job. Fourth quarter we gave up a little more than we should have. I thought they did a good job of dissecting it big towards the end there. But all in all I thought we contained very well. We did a pretty good job on LeBron, not giving him the lanes that he's used to. We won the game, we held them to 76 points. That's right where we need to be. Honestly that's not something I was looking for. We were just trying to stick with the game plan and doing the same stuff. Honestly I didn't know he was 0-for-7. I knew we were doing a pretty good job on him, but I didn't know his numbers. He's so good at finding guys with his size, we just needed to keep hands in there. Like I said, we got a couple hands on balls, which helped our defense a whole lot. Well, you have to. You've got to in this league. Stars carry teams, and our coaches do a great job of putting a game plan together, and if we're able to stick to it, we do a pretty good job of containing people. It helps a little bit to have somebody like Bruce. That's definitely not something you look past. He's guarded every position throughout these playoffs, and he's done a great job with it. So a lot of credit to him. But all in all, our team defense tonight was really good, and I think that's what's going to be the key for us. It takes five guys understanding what we're doing, understanding a game plan and sticking with it. Even with the repicks and the reposts and everything else, it might be a different guy in the play, but we've been sticking to what we do. I think that's a lot of credit to our coaching staff getting us prepared at that point, and five guys on the floor, whoever it may be, getting it done. Five of them played great tonight. Francisco stepped up and played really well for us, got us some stops, some rebounds, scored a couple points. We just get play from different people. I think guys continue to step up, guys that aren't usually there continue to step up for us. I was surprised the first two shots I made that I got to the rim, yeah, absolutely. They adjusted their defense and I don't think I got as easy a look for the rest of the game. But to start the game, to come out of the gates and have two baskets like that helped me tremendously. Tony gets to the rim all the time, and there's no knocking anyone, the Cavs or anyone else. But with his quickness, his ability to finish in the lane, he gets in there almost at will. People make adjustments and he's got to make adjustments, too. I have no doubt they'll try to prevent that as much as possible and really pack that lane in. But night in and night out, he does it against just about anybody. It's night and day. I honestly didn't know what to expect with him coming in here. I knew he was incredibly young, I knew he had some quickness to him. I had no idea he'd become the player he is right now. Now he's, for lack of a better term, been through hell and back. He's been through every situation, every level of competition possible, and he's as much of that as anybody else at 25, 26 or 24, I don't know. Oh, I think we both -- he actually didn't see the play. He threw the ball and bumped into Varejao, went down on the ground, and when he got up, he was walking by me, and he kind of looked at me, and he was like, "Did you make that?" He's like, "You missed?" I'm like, "Yeah, sorry about that." But nothing more than that. I did see that, and we gave up 27 points in that fourth quarter, a couple more than we want to in a situation like that. We kind of let them back into the game a little bit. I think they only got it to nine or something like that, but striking distance at least. They got a couple easy things. Of course LeBron hit those two threes in a row, which were great shots, but they got a lay-up or two and they got a wide-open shot or two. Those are just things we've got to clean up. I think they started to figure some stuff out, and so it's just about getting back that focus that we had in those first three quarters. I don't know that we specifically need to change much of anything, but we just need to make some adjustments and make sure that we're not giving those easy shots up in the beginning of the game this next one. A little bit of loss of focus. They're smart basketball players, they're a smart team. It took them that long to figure out what we were doing, and maybe they have. I figure it's a little bit of lost focus, maybe they figured some stuff out. And the whole Finals, the series, every series is about a little bit of adjustments, and they'll make some adjustments and we'll have to do the same. What does he do better than anyone? He gets it in the lane and gets to the basket. He gets shots right up to the rim. They have arguments all the time about who's the fastest in the NBA, and I don't know if he's the fastest, but he will get around just about anybody and he'll get in that lane. For his size, he has just a great ability to make shots over people, and I think also his ability to stop on a dime, to shoot a floater or go right to the basket. It's so hard for a defender to stop and stay in front of that with all those options. So if it's one thing, I think it's just finishing at the basket, getting there and finishing. I think the team played well yesterday. I thought we played well yesterday. But those guys are going to make adjustments. Doing what we did last night is a promise those guys are going to be better defensively. They're going to change their game plan so Tony can't get in the lane as easily. And in years past it's been just that; teams have come out, we've played a good Game 1, Tony has played a good Game 1, myself, and they've made adjustments and things have changed a little bit. I think he's more adept now to being aware of those adjustments and being able to adjust on the fly. So that's something we're going to have to do anyway; we're going to have to be ready for what they're going to bring to us. They're not going to allow us to get to the basket as easily as we did. They're not going to allow us to get some of the shots that we did. They're going to make their adjustments and we're going to have to make ours. That never happened, so I'm happy about that and I'm happy that Tony is playing. Let's just leave it at that. |
| I don't think there's only one thing. I think every year we go through the situation where we don't start off the greatest and kind of work our way into it. I remember there were times where he pointed to that fact or those guys had more of a drive than we did. I don't believe that was the case. I don't honestly agree with him on that point. But we took some -- it took us some time to really start getting to play the right way, and once we started playing the right way, bang, we're right back in it. I cannot describe the style of play on the court, no. He's all over the place. He does -- he's great for our team because he brings the style of play where you can't really -- you don't know what he's going to do. He makes it up on the fly. He's an aggressive -- incredibly aggressive player. He just finds a way to make things happen. A lot of us play within our system, and he's one of the guys that will step out of that box, will can the whole thing and take it in a different direction. It can be an overwhelming situation with the attention, with how close you are to being that final team. It can be a lot of pressure, and being here for the first time, having a young team as they do, having a young leader as they do, that doesn't help. They have very few vets that have been to this level, and you don't want to give them a lot of credit, but it really does help when you have people that have been there and have been through the situation and can kind of flow with it a little bit more. As these games continue on, I can imagine those guys will get more and more comfortable and find out that it's still basketball and you're still out there. Once you get out on that court it's the same old game and they'll get a little more comfortable. Hopefully we can continue to play that to our advantage with our experience, but those guys are going to get comfortable and we're going to have to really bring our A games and understand that they're going to be playing their best at the right time. We've looked at some stuff, and we have to imagine they're going to make some changes. We anticipate a couple things, but there's no way to really tell. You have to anticipate some stuff and be able to counter it in game instead of waiting for a whole other game and letting it slip by. Our coaching staff is great at that. They're great at seeing things that happen, seeing things that could hurt us coming up and trying to give us a little bit of advance on it. We've done just that, and hopefully we can go into this game and do the same job in executing our game plan as we did in the first game. For whatever reason it's what the Spurs have been labeled as. For whatever reason, we're just kind of looked by in that respect. Honestly, I think Pop likes it that way. He's in it every step of the way. I believe he's as good as anyone ever, but it doesn't matter to him. He's about that challenge every year, about putting a team back together every year, about getting guys to play the right way, and whatever recognition comes with that down the line, it'll come in time. He'll deal without any extra needed attention. I can't answer that question. I don't know. I don't know why a small market would matter. Whether you win or lose games or win championships, I don't know why that would matter. I think some guys were nervous, absolutely, thinking that with our sporadic play that was going to happen to give us a little bit of a boost, and I think that was specifically what we needed. We needed him to come in there, and that's the change that he decided, that there weren't going to be any changes. I think that's the news that we got, and I think it helped. I think it pulled guys together, I think it got guys comfortable knowing that something was going to happen. They were here to play and this is who we had to o it with. I think it helped guys step up. There have been very few dynasties. I don't know that we can consider ourselves a dynasty, but that's me on the inside looking out. Dynasties are the things that the Lakers of the 80s and the Celtics, those are who you consider dynasties, teams that have done it for many, many, many years. Hopefully we can look back in a couple years and be considered something like that. But as of now, I can't imagine that we would be considered alongside those guys. Winning is our goal. What that equals in the long run, you can define it however you want to. Winning is our goal. Life would have been a lot different. It was probably a lot closer decision than people even think or even know, but it's worked out the right way, to say the least, and I can't even go through all the factors that went into making the final decision to come back here. But just the organization and the people and the situation, and as I said, obviously it worked out the right way. As I said, it was the people and the organization here at the Spurs that I was used to, and not only the players. Of course David was here, and that was great, and I had a couple other guys here that I loved being around. But even beyond that, the staff, the coaches, guys I was comfortable with, guys I enjoyed being around is probably what swayed it in the end. |
| I'd like to hope we had something to do with it. Like you said, they just didn't shoot the ball well. I thought they got some pretty decent looks. They hit some shots down the stretch there. We were up eight, ten points and they started making some shots. So the first stretch they started making some shots. Defensively I thought we were pretty solid. There weren't a whole lot of free throws on our end. There weren't a whole lot of easy looks on our end. But we kind of stuck with it. And the same with them, we made everything tough for them. We figured they were going to do something to change something. Gibson had been playing 30 something odd minutes anyway, so we've seen enough of him that we didn't have to make much of an adjustment. We didn't change a whole lot of what we did. We understood the kind of shooter that he was, and outside of that, we stuck with our same game plan. Brucey was unbelievable tonight. He did everything for us. He sat down and defended for 44 minutes out there. He made some big shots for us, rebounded the ball, just an unbelievable effort on his part. You can't say enough about him. He'll get it done, and it doesn't matter if he gets one shot or eight shots. He's going to be in the same place at the same time. He's going to do the same thing. That's what defines our team, what he does. I think he's doing a little bit of both. I think he's starting with the approach that he's going to make the right pass, he's going to make the right play. I think they count on him enough that in crunch time he feels like he has to make plays. But whether it be the starting play of the game or at crunch time, we're doing the same thing. I think we changed one time towards the end there where we went at him on a double-team and they hit a three, and then we kind of went back. Everything else was the same, so we're going to make him make decisions, make him make shots over the top of us, and for a while there, as I said before, he did a good job of penetrating. He got a couple of great back doors, but we're going to make it as tough as possible for him. I think he's trying. I think he's definitely trying. We're a pretty good defensive team. We're not bad (laughter). We can stay in front of people and we can challenge shots, and we do pretty good with sticking with our game plan. It's worked so far, and we're not going to change a whole lot. Whether he tries to impose his will or not, we're going to be standing in front of him. You know, in my experience the Game 3 is usually the toughest game possible, and Game 4 brings a whole other challenge. It's a little bit of desperation, it's a little bit of laying it all on the line, and it's about really sustaining, because if you can sustain with people early on, they make runs, they use their energy, the crowd is behind them, and you can sustain over a half or three or four quarters, that's what it's all about. We're going to play that way. We're going to come out knowing that they're going to have their foot on the pedal and be pushing and LeBron is going to try to get to the rack and make plays and carry his team, and guys will be trying to make plays the same way. As I said, we're going to do the same exact thing. We're going to try to stay in the game and give ourselves a chance to win when it's crunch time. Tony has been unbelievable. He's been great. As you said, he's not really a three-point shooter (smiling), and I think the coach has said I had kind of a weird look on my face when he shot that third one. But it went down, and I'm happy about that. You know what, he's so confident right now, he's feeling so good about his jump shot. They've been allowing him to shoot the jump shot, trying to keep him out of the paint, and when you do that, you basically warm somebody up. They're able to step into shots, able to take shots, and I think they've done that for him. That was a huge shot for us to give us a bit of a cushion, and I probably was questioning it on the release, but I was happy with the results (laughter). Sure. As long as we get to four that's all that matters. It's a lot of pressure, especially in this situation with the Finals. But at the same time it's a lot of fun. It's playing on the biggest stage, it's playing the game that you love to play, and it's playing for the biggest prize. So it's a lot of fun. |
| Best shape I've been in in a long time. I just had some time off in the summer, and with no other responsibilities playing on any other teams, I was just able to kind of concentrate on getting strong, getting in shape. Then did my entire summer workout, like I had done in the past, I was able to get healthy and feel good coming into the season. Absolutely, yeah, of course. Defensively they were a lot better. They were physical. Z did an excellent job on the offensive glass, gave them a lot of second shots. But I thought we also did a pretty good job on the defensive end. I think it was just a better energy game for them, a better effort game for them more than anything else. No. No. We've got people that we consider shooters of the three and we're trying to get them off the three. We consider some people that we'll live with their jump shot, just like any other player on any other team. They are on my team Oh, absolutely, I'm very happy for Fin. Hopefully we can get this done. Obviously it's not won until it's won, but every year that we've won we've had some guys on the team that have been around the league, have been journeymen, have done it year after year and just unable to kind of get to this level, get this opportunity. My first year, Jerome Kersey was -- it was Tony Massenburg, a lot of different guys, Kevin Willis along the way. So every year you're really proud to have a person like that, a guy like that. Now it's Jacque and it's nice to have those guys in this situation, to be able to win a championship after being in this league for so many years and playing the game the right way for so many years, such good guys. It means a lot more to just add one and win one for them. Playoffs are always more physical, and they have been. We've played some very physical teams. The game changes in the playoffs. It takes a little while to get used to it. You get hit for a couple games and you get pushed around for a couple games, you're thinking, hey, these have got to be fouls, and then you realize I'm in the playoffs. It's not going to be officiated the same. People are going to get away with more. Once you turn the corner and come to that realization, that players are more physical and they are going to get the players to kind of decide what happens, it's a great atmosphere to play in. Veering away from what? Yeah, you have times, and it takes an entire season. It takes those 82 games to get things moving in the right direction. At the beginning of the year one of the points coach makes is we want to be better for more of those 48 minutes and do thing the right way for more of those 48 minutes than anyone else. It's progressive. At the beginning of the year we might have been doing it for a quarter or maybe for a half. Being in these playoffs we might have been doing it for three quarters and giving a quarter away, and I think we're doing it for more of those 48 minutes right now than we've done it all year long. As I say, we're kind of a step ahead of ourselves. We've got to get this one done, and of course we're focusing on that. It was an honor to even be thought of as that even coming into this season. To have won three championships and to have had the opportunity to have done that is an unbelievable thing. Coming into the league as a player, nothing is promised. You don't know what road your seasons in the NBA will bring. To have won three already, I feel blessed by that, and to have a team that has the ability to challenge for a playoff run, a playoff championship year in and year out, that's all you can ask for. He's put in a system and he's stuck with it. It's a lot of fun to play for someone that knows exactly what they want, and he's done just that. He changes a little bit every year. He tweaks some stuff every year, but the basis of what he does and the basis of what he coaches is the same. He preaches defense, of course. Over the years we've changed our offense bit by bit to use what's worked in years past. But all in all, you walk in every year and you understand what he's going to ask from you, what he's going to need from you and what players he's going to put around myself and the rest of the guys to be able to have a good team. And to have that is outstanding. That's an impossible question to ask. I don't know. They're headed in the right direction. I think Mike has them on the right track. He has them playing the right way. Of course they use a lot of our stuff. They play the way we play, and they have LeBron, they have a couple other guys who are going to be very good for a lot of years here. All I can say is they're moving in the right direction. I don't know if you can compare them to anyone. I think they're a bit of a different team. I hate to just keep saying LeBron, because LeBron is a different player than anything we've ever had, but it's a bit different but they're going in the right direction. I can't say it's night and day. I said this at the beginning of the series. This is the toughest road that we've had to a Finals. The three teams that we've played, obviously you could -- no disrespect to any of the first round, second round or third round teams, but you could have put them in any order but we could have played them in that round and had the same kind of tough series, tough opponent. Denver was unbelievable with the two scorers they had and the physicality they have; Phoenix, of course; Utah did one heck of a job and you know what they're going to bring to the table. And we made it through all three of those teams. I'd say we were prepared for just about anything. With the teams that we played, we were prepared for anyone. I've got to admit, this one is sweeter. The road that we took to get here, it was as tough as we ever had it. Guys persevered, had great performances from 1 to 12. It was great. All around it was great, probably the best one. Absolutely. That boy over there took my other trophy so I'm going to keep this one at my house. He carried the team, and I'm just happy he was on my team. It was our team defense. It was Bruce Bowen sitting down on him for 40-some odd minutes every night. It was our guys understanding that he wasn't able to do it himself. But I think it just starts with Bruce. I've got to give a lot of credit to Bruce. He did an awesome job of standing in front of that guy and making life tough for him. We understood as a group that we were going to have to do our part. They fought, they hit the offensive glass, they did everything they could, but we sustained. They made runs, we never panicked. I think it just shows a lot of the experience, the poise that we've built over the years, and I think we just outlasted them. We devise our own game game plan. We don't rely on anyone else. It's all us (laughter). You learn from everything. I think our coaches are the best in the business at watching game film, and we see these guys two times a year. Honestly we probably would have been more comfortable playing Detroit because we had played them more times before. We play Cleveland twice a year, and it's spread out and this year was so early in the year. We were different teams. We had to watch a lot of film, we had to figure out their tendencies, we had to figure out our game plan walking into this gym before we actually even had played these guys and know what they were about. Our coaching staff, give them a whole lot of credit at getting us prepared, getting us ready to play these guys. You know, it was a tough close-out. Guys like Mike Fin is what it's all about, to win a championship, to see how much he appreciates it, to see Jacque Vaughn and even Robert Horry, to see the looks on their face and the understanding of how special and how tough it is to get here, it makes it all worth it. Not that it's not worth it by itself, but those guys make it epitomize and define what it is about a journey to get here and how hard it is to get here. It made it sweeter, it really did. It would have been -- it would have been sweet either way, but it made it sweeter for them to make a run, for us to answer, for us to keep our composure and to find a way to win, no matter what. Those guys played great in that fourth quarter. They outscored us in the fourth quarter, as they did most of the series. We made plays, we found ways to get it done. I didn't play the greatest, people missed shots, they got offensive rebounds, they made plays. But we found a way to win. That's what this team is all about. No matter what happens we find ways to win. Manu is our X factor. Manu is the guy that when it all breaks down, when it all goes bad, when our offense isn't clicking the right way, he's the guy that makes plays. That's his role. That's his role, and this team is about roles. This team is about people filling their spots when they have to, and that is absolutely his role. He was great tonight in it. It was huge. It was a great time to do it. Our effort was there. They were the team who was being the aggressor on the glass, and they were the ones getting it done on the glass. And we had a stretch there where we got extra possessions. We found a way to get it done. As I was saying with the last question, we made plays and found a way to get it done when it wasn't there. That effort and that perseverance is what defines this team. We find a way to get it done when it's time to get it done. Such a broad question. Coach Pop is -- he's the one that puts us together. He's the guy that makes it run. He's the one that stays on us, no matter how well or how badly we're playing. He finds the right way to approach us. I can say no more than he defines the team. He always has, and as long as he's here, he always will. We're sticklers, I don't know. That's probably bad (laughter). We should appreciate and enjoy the win. To end the season 4-of-15 and 4-of-10 game is disappointing. In this situation it shouldn't be, but I think we're all competitors, and it defines us as competitors. We want to be the best players that we can be in the biggest situations. Honestly, I thought those other guys were great, and I thought I was sub-par. But we got it done, and that's all that matters. That's all that matters. |
| We just kept fighting and I kept telling my teammates the whole game that we got to fight if we want to get back in it. We did, and Rashard hit the big shot at the end. I just felt the whole game that if we played hard in the second half we was going to win. He said it the best. We have been in tough situations the whole playoffs, and we got a lot of guys who can step up and hit big shots. You know, Rashard did it tonight, but we stepped it up on the defensive end, I think, in the second quarter. And in the second half we played tremendous defense. We didn't let them get easy points in the paint as much as they did in the first quarter, second quarter. And we tried to keep LeBron from scoring 50. I think so. I felt that my team wasn't playing as hard as we needed to and just trying to be aggressive, attacking the basket and getting easy points. When we are down, somebody has to step up. And I just tried to be a leader and step up, not only on the offensive end but on the defensive end. He told us at halftime we are all witnesses. That's what he said to us, and it really motivated us when said y'all playing like y'all witnesses. You are watching them dunk. And he has a great way of motivating all of us. And that right there, you know, brought some fire out of us. And we came out in the second half, tried to do a better job on him. He still made a lot of shots. But we stepped it up on the defensive end, and the guys who came off the bench, they hit some big shots and also played great defense. Yeah, I've done it before a couple times. But I didn't even know what happened. I just heard the crowd say, oooh. I thought it was a regular dunk. Then I turned around and the whole thing was I tried to break the goal. So it was a fun thing to watch when I watched the replay. It was. Everybody is counting us out as a team, and we believe if we play Magic basketball for 48 minutes we can beat anybody. And when we run, defend and rebound, we win a lot of games. And if we want to win this series, that's what we have to do every night. I told our guys to pick our heads up. These are the playoffs. Teams will make runs. They will hit a lot of shots. We can't hold our heads down in any series. We got to keep our chins up and fight through any situation. I told the guys at halftime we got to fight. I just asked them, where is the fight at? And Rashard hit the big shot. I knew when I got the foul I was a little upset because I was sitting on the bench. Rashard looked at me and gave me three winks, signalling that he was going to hit a big 3 and he did it. No, not yet. Yeah, we'll see. When Shaq broke the post, they said they couldn't break it no more. I don't think it will break no more. There's nothing to worry about. Craziest question. No onions. I just get the Quarter Pounder with cheese. I will have it tomorrow. It is my pregame meal. It is just one game, and we understand that. Going into tomorrow -- we had a great chance of doing that in Boston after we won the first game. But Boston came out with a lot of energy, so we learned a big lesson from that. I think tomorrow we have to come out like we did in the second half and play great defense. At the end of the game, you play hard, we should be up. It is great. He actually tricked us yesterday. Usually he's . Yesterday he was . For real, Stan? He is just like that. He is a great motivator. Does a great job of keeping guys loose but at the same time motivating us to get the job done. I was really upset. I didn't want to be a witness. He really upset me. I wanted to come out in the second half with be a better effort, and I didn't want to be a witness. We still witnessed 49 points. Crazy. |
| 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. |
| Yeah, well, we can't focus on what other guys are saying. You know, we just got to go out there and play. It is not hard to stay hungry. Right now -- right now we are so close to our goal. The only thing on our mind is reaching that goal we want to accomplish so bad. That's what motivates us, is that goal that everybody wants, which is to win a championship; and we have a great chance of doing it. So we're hungry. We just got to come out and play. We can't focus on what the series is right now. We have to come out and treat it like it is a Game 7. It is do or die. Can't look at it as is it 2-1 and we can have them on the ropes. The talk? Yeah, we want to win a championship. We don't want the championship to be handed to somebody. So we go out every night and show everybody that we believe we can win. I like the commercials. They're funny. They are commercials that are very entertaining. So I love watching them. It is very entertaining. But our job is to go out there and play and not worry about what's on T.V. or in the paper or whatever. We just got to go out there and do that. It is disrespectful when everybody is counting us out trying to win a championship. They can beat the Magic and Denver. They want to see Kobe and LeBron go at it. Well, I just got to get up there and make my free throws. I know they are going to foul me. I just have to be prepared for it and go out there and make them. I don't think it is a tough spot for him. We've been in a lot of different situations. He's played where he started a couple games and I have been out, and he knows how to play. So he can get out there and do the job just as well as everybody else. We have full confidence in him. We know he can get the job done. He's done better. That's what it is going to take to win. Everybody has to be willing to work. So when game time comes, everybody is ready. We are focused. Nobody is talking about the win from last night. Our mind-set is coming in tomorrow and getting another game. There is no rivalry. We go out there and try to win basketball. There are only four teams left. So, you know, everybody is out there fighting. We don't want to go home, neither do they. Everybody wants to play. Anthony can play. We're just happy to see him out there playing. He is not scared of anything, and he is playing 100 percent so I'm happy for him. Soft-spoken? That's my Mickael Pietrus. He is not soft-spoken. He might not talk in front of you guys. It is not challenging. It is frustrating sometimes when you get hit. But I got to try to keep my cool and go to the next play. Getting too close to getting a technical foul, so got to find a way to keep my composure. No comment. No, I don't. I can't get any more. I have to keep my elbows down, my mouth shut. I'm thinking about duct taping my mouth tomorrow before the game. So that might be a good thing. I might have to duct tape my mouth and put some elbow pads on just in case my elbows fly. I will try to keep those down, too. Yes, I can. I can sing in my head. I won't sing to the refs. Carmelo? Carmelo is focusing on winning. I'm pretty sure he is not worried about the commercials. Well, I just tried to stay aggressive. I know I didn't play a lot of minutes, especially in the first half. And I just kept telling myself, stay in the game and get ready for the second half and come out and try to dominate. Free throws? I didn't think about it. I just went up there and tried to shoot, and it was working. It was actually -- I was actually singing a song tonight in my head, and it was working. So I ought to stick with it. It was a song I heard at halftime. It was one of the dance songs. I kept thinking about dancing the whole time and free throws was going in, so I might need to keep up that routine. Is that God? Say it again. Yes, I just really tried to be aggressive on the offensive end and make Big Z and the other bigs move their feet and try to get them in foul trouble. We can't get into it. We just got to go out there and play. When we play our basketball, we can beat anybody on the floor. That's our mentality. We have to play Magic basketball. When we do that, we can't worry about what other people are saying about us. We just go out there and win. I think so. I think so. Before the game, when I came out to warm up, I shot all free throws. Pat said, Are you going to work on your jump hook? I said I will work on my free throws tonight. I felt like I was going to go to the line a lot. I know I missed a couple early. But I tried to keep most of the same shot, and they was falling towards the end of the game. Oh, no, I can't gave you no notes. I was singing in My Dougie song that I heard. It was a dance song. I just felt good out there shooting it. I can't gave you no lines right now. I lost my voice screaming. I'm avoiding it. No, not tonight. No, I'm not going to get into it with any of the refs. My team and the city needs me, so -- I'm going to do a good job of keeping my head composed and trying not to allow things to happen on the floor to get me away from what our goal is, which is to win a championship. I can't allow anything to, you know, stop me mentally from achieving our goal. Pat tells me every day. My teammates tell me. I just got to try to stay focused, like I said. All it takes is one little incident, but I'm going to do my best to stay away from it. All we got to do is come out and play Magic basketball. We run, move the ball, and defend. Like I have been telling you guys, we can beat anybody. And those are going to be the three things, run, move the ball, and play defense. I'm not going to get into it. My job is to go out there and play hard, no matter if I foul out or not. If I give -- if I go out there and play 48 minutes hard and get six fouls and we get the win, that's all that matters. So I can't really concern myself with getting in foul trouble. Just got to go out there and play. In order for us to be the better team, like I have been telling you guys, we have to run. We have to defend and rebound. I think they beat us on the boards tonight. But as a team, we got to do a good job of rebounding and not letting them get more than one shot and try to contain LeBron. It is a tough thing to do, but when we run, nobody can beat us. We have a chance to win, you know? And if we go out there and play, we shouldn't worry about what we see on T.V., the commercials, the write-ups, whatever. Do we find it disrespectful that they're counting us out? Yeah. But there is nothing we can control. What we can control is how hard we play on the court, and that's when we get the job done. It is about effort. The team that wants it the most is going to get the win. We want it. We feel like we have a great chance of winning the championship. We believe. And all we got to do is go out there and play hard for 48 minutes. We know what it takes to win. We just have to be able to go out there and do it. It wasn't tough. I know my teammates have played without me, played with me having foul trouble. So I trust my teammates, and everything is going to work out for us if we just go out there and play. We can't worry so much and I can't worry about getting fouls or sitting on the bench. Just got to play through all that stuff. When you play through it and you fight and at the end of the day, you know, you should come out with a good result. The shot that he made? Was it tough? Yeah, you know. Hedo went down to hit the shot, and we thought Hedo shot it with no time where they didn't have a chance of getting a shot off. We celebrating. Then LeBron come down and hit, seemed like a movie 3. Yeah, you know, it was kind of hurting for us. But there was nothing you can do about it. He hit a tough shot. We had to move on. It was tough on the plane, riding back and just seeing that shot over and over in your head. But we knew we had to come out tonight and give 100 percent. He has been playing hard. He works hard every day in practice and he gets into LeBron to try to force him to take tough shots. In the offensive end, he shoots the ball with confidence, and he is just having fun. With a guy like Mike, you just want to give him the green light sometimes and just let him go to work. He makes big shots sometimes. You saw it. I'm not going to yell at the refs. I was talking to the bench. Instead of talking to the bench, I should have just walked to the sideline. No. I just should have kept my head and walked to the bench. |
| Well, one, I was -- the first time I think I got tired in a while. And I just tried to push myself. He said that I stopped going to the ball on the pick-and-roll, so I just tried to be aggressive toward the end of the game, and it worked. I really didn't know who to screen. Usually they switch the four and five pick-and-roll towards the end of the game. And I think Ben had a head start, so I tried to hit him before he got a chance to close out to Rashard. And then Rashard just hit the shot. I think as a team we want it more than any other year that I have been here. I have been talking about winning a championship since I have been here. But I think this is the first year that everybody is locked in on our goal. We just got to keep fighting, you know? We have an excellent opportunity in front of us, but we got to keep fighting. We can never give up, never think it is going to be easy because we got to work for everything that we get. I think as a team, coaching staff, everybody, we believe that every time we step on the floor, we play our brand of basketball, we can win. Well, first, you know, all I was doing was -- I was playing with emotion. You get in the game and you score a big bucket, you let your emotions take over. I wasn't tonguing Varejao or anything. My thing, it was a tough play. He grabbed me around my neck and made the shot. So hopefully they look at it. Whatever happens, though, I have full confidence in me and my teammates, and we can get the job done. I might have to really use some duct tape. (Smiling). My role? I think my role is to lead by example. I don't have to get in my teammates' face and yell at them and scream at them. That doesn't work with our team. If they see me out there, you know, fighting for every possession, going hard, then they tend to follow. So my role is to lead by example and the rest of my teammates follow. Well, like I said, at the end of regulation, our coach, he came to me and he said that I got to come to the ball. And I think earlier in my career, probably early this season, struggling from the free-throw line, I probably would have shied away from touching the ball towards the end of the game. But I just felt that if I stepped up to the free-throw line I can make it. My teammates found me in great positions to score, and I just tried to put the ball in the basket. Like I said, I have full confidence in my teammates. Every night somebody has to step up and play a major part for us to win games. It is going to be nice where me and Rashard are not making shots, somebody has to step up. Rafer stepped up tonight. He wasn't Dwight Howard. He was the playground legend skip-to-my-Lou. He was getting to the basket. He was finishing. He played with a lot of confidence. When plays like the playground legend, then he is tough to guard. I think it's all mental. At this point of the season, I got to be able to step up there and make the free throws. And my teammates have confidence in throwing me the ball. And so, you know, since they're having confidence in giving me the ball, I got to do something with it at the free-throw line. And it is just about practice. Every day I try to get a good amount of free throws up, and then before the game. When I step up there, just got to shoot it just like I have no care in the world. Just go out there and shoot it. When I do that, they go in. I think it will show how mentally tough we are as a team. We've had to overcome so many obstacles this playoffs. It will show a lot. We really got to be focused going into the next game. Tonight is over with. It is no time to celebrate. We really got to be focused going into Cleveland because it is probably going to be the hardest game of the season, you know, next game. So we really got to be focused. I'm happy with our progress. I'm not satisfied. We done a pretty good job this year, but the only way, I have been telling you all year, we get respect is by winning. We haven't won anything yet. We won a couple games, and that's our mind-set. We won a couple games. So what? We want the respect after winning the championship. That's the only way we are going to get anybody's respect, is by winning. We won a couple games. That's great. It feels good. We're not happy with just winning a couple games in the Eastern Conference Finals. We want to win the whole thing. That's when we will be happy. It is just like us against the world. Playing in a dog house like Cleveland, the whole crowd is against you. You want to go in somebody's home court and quiet the crowd. Nothing feels better than defeating a team on their home floor. It is one of the toughest things to do, especially against Cleveland. They have only lost a couple games at home. It feels good to win on the other team's home court and to do it in a dominate way. |
| 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. |
| Well, first of all, I'm happy that we came out tonight and did what we had to do at home, but it's over with. It's done. I'm happy we won, but we got to move on to the next series, which is the Finals. So I'm happy about tonight. Go home and relax with my family and tomorrow wake up and get ready to go back to work. I believe in my team, first of all. I believe that we come out every night and play our brand of basketball. We can beat up. I have been telling you guys that all year. If we run, defend and, you know, rebound, we can win a lot of games. And everybody since I have been here, has always written us off. We work every day. We put the work in the gym to become a better team. We're not -- we're not at our best yet. But, you know, I'm happy with our progress. Yes, sir. I sent out a text message when I woke up yesterday to the whole team, and I just told them that, you know, when they wake up today, think about dominating. When they come to shoot-around, think about dominate. When they get to the gym for the game, think about dominate. And we started out the day great. We had a great shoot-around. Everybody was into it. Everybody was focused. And, you know, we came out tonight with the same mentality and we got a good win. Very happy with our progress. We still got a lot of work to do. It feels good to win, but we want to win a championship. That's the ultimate goal. So tonight was a big stepping stone for us as a team from what we were able to accomplish last year. But when we wake up tomorrow, we got to get ready to go back to work. Like I have been telling you guys, if we run, defend and rebound, we can beat anybody. We are at our best when we are running and we are having fun. So, you know, that's the mentality that we have to take into the next series. I've always been known as somebody who has never been serious or always playing around. But I take the game of basketball very seriously. Every time I step on the floor, I may have a smile on my face, but my main job, my main goal is to go out there and fight for my team. And I can do that with a smile on my face. For us as a team, we understand how everybody has talked about us for the past couple of years. But we understand that, you know, we get out on the floor, if we do what we do best, we can beat anybody. It's tough to not listen to the things that people have said about us. But that only fuels us. It pushes us to become a better team and to become, I would say, you know -- we became closer. With all the stuff that goes around us, what people say, we continue to get closer. Me and Coach have gotten a lot closer. It only helps us get better. Rafer came in right away knowing he is not Jameer Nelson and he didn't try to be Jameer. He came in doing what he do best. He pushed the pace, take the shots when he's open and just facilitate to the offense. He has done a great job of that since he has been here. And he is also a great motivator. He keeps us going out there on the floor and off the floor. He's silly just like all of us. He fits in with our team very well. Just happy he's here. I think it's great. I can remember, you know, coming to the games and nobody is in the stands until we play, like, a Kobe or LeBron. And now the stands are always filled up. I think we started to bring back some magic in Orlando, and that's one of the goals that I set out to do when I first got here. I felt that we were a laughing stock around the league. Everybody played the Magic, they thought about Disney World. So I just wanted to change that. We as a team wanted to change that. Me and Jameer, we sat and we talked about this a lot, and we put on ourselves to get better every day in the gym, work on the little things to get better because we want not only the respect of the NBA but we want our fans in Orlando to believe in us. We work extremely hard every day. We might have days where, just like anybody elsewhere, we mess up, we make mistakes. It is a bad day. But we wake up the next day with the mentality of getting better. Oh, I gave him five, you know. I knew he was trying to foul me. I knew he wasn't trying to hurt me or anything. So I was just letting him know that it is all love. I knew he was just trying to foul me. It wasn't no bad blood or nothing. My effort, I would say a B. And my teammates, an A plus. There was moments where we didn't play as hard as we need to. But for the most part, we came out with the mind-set of we run, really lock in on defense and try to rebound, we were going to have a great chance of winning the game. But going into the Finals is going to be a lot tougher. We really have to work on going hard for 48 minutes. If we go hard for 48 minutes at the end of the Finals, we should have a ring. We should have a trophy. Yeah, he's always been the same guy. He wants nothing but the best out of all of us. He pushes us to the limits. Me and Stan have had our ups and downs, but for the most part, he's always, you know, always did a great job of motivating me and my teammates. He is a great motivator. Even when he is yelling and screaming, throughout all that, he finds a way to put in just an ounce of something to get us fired up. He has been doing that since I've been here. He has been one of the best coaches I've ever said. Like I said, we had our ups and downs. I told him when he first got here, he was going to have a soldier in me and I was always going to go to battle for him. I appreciate everything he's done for us. Can change from possession to possession. we knew they would do the little things. Focus, rebounding. The second-chance shots. We did a good job of holding them to about 40%. We gave them 31 second-chance points. They shot 43, almost 44%. We can take losing. That's a part of the game. But losing that way is not the way . You have the guy has the backup they have with Taj Gibson and Noah helping them out. We just go on. We had a difficult time moving the ball. If you don't get the rebounds, it's going to be a long night. They did a good job of moving the ball, rebounding |
| That's the biggest thing we worry about, it's our defense. They got great players on their team. You have to make sure they don't get any open shots, contest all their shots, make sure they don't get to the lane. We did a good job making sure they're seeing bodies when they went to the lane. We were just hustling. They're a great team. We made sure that we tried to get out to their shooters. Tonight it just went our way. Yes. It was me. Careless turnovers. You can't do that against this team, where when they get in the open court they're too dangerous. Making sure I take care of the ball. I'm the point guard. I have to do way better. In the second half I think I did a good job making sure that our turnovers were down. It really wasn't me; it was defense. Our defense opened up everything, where when we rebound the ball, we play with a fast pace. Especially when it's a turnover. They were giving me mid-range jumpshots where they were backing up. My teammates trust in me and have a lot of confidence in me when I'm taking those shots. I thought tomorrow, after we look at film, this game is going to be out of our mind. We had too many turnovers in the beginning. There's a lot of things we can change. They're a good team. We have to keep going, keep fighting. But if anything, I think our defense has to be there. We just had to go out there and play with intensity. We knew them guys was going to come out and play aggressive. We tried to attack. We tried to make it hard. They're a great offensive team with great players that's very good in delay isolations and breaking people off -- going off the dribble to the basket. We just made sure that it was tough and Taj, Omer, Luol, everybody was making sure that their man was in front of them and contesting all their shots and lay-ups when they were going to the basket. We're not worried about that. All the off-season stuff, we're not worried about it. We're just trying to go out there and play hard and play with an edge, play with a lot of intensity, knowing the guys are going to bring it every single night. That's what we did tonight. I think it should help us out a lot. But we still have a lot of work to do. We're going into practice just closing down the middle when LeBron and Chris Bosh do pick-and-roll. Chris Bosh getting fouled -- he had too many lay-ups. Getting out to their shooters where they had open looks. We could work on a lot of things about that -- on that game. Everybody. About what, the turnovers? Yes. I tried to talk to them as much as I can. Just by nature I'm quiet, but being in this position, being the point guard, being one of the leaders on this team, you have to talk a little bit more. I tried to let them hear me during the game, in the locker room, wherever we're at. We have to communicate, because defensively if you don't have any communication, especially with the players that you're playing -- we're playing against, like LeBron and D-Wade, it can be a tough night any night. It was huge. Joakim, Omer, Taj, Booze. Just making sure they're getting in there playing physical. They got players like Joel Anthony, a lot of hustle plays. Chris Bosh getting a lot of hustle plays. We made sure we put bodies on them. And Joakim finishing lay-ups, dunking. Booze doing the same thing and Taj and Omer coming in and giving us energy every night. That's what we need every night from them. Three turnovers I think in the first quarter. Then I think we got ten total. I think one in the second half. It was tough. You just learn from it, look at the film after practice with coach. Just going through everything. I see the mistakes. It shouldn't happen anymore. Play aggressive and attack more. If anything, go quicker, probably, in transition. Get the ball up the floor quick so they can't go against our set defense. That's the way we've been all season. We're not satisfied. Every time we feel good about ourselves, something knocks us down. We're trying to keep things going, making sure everybody stays positive, stay right and stay hungry. Definitely. And Coach Thibs, you see how he focuses and prepares for the game, it makes you want to do the same. Stay in the office after the game. Not have a life. Not right now. I have to sacrifice a lot of things. We get used to it now. I swear. Sometimes you are talking and -- you get used to it. You have to live with it. They have great players. LeBron and D-Wade and Chris Bosh, they are great players. We just tried to make it tough. That's the only thing we did. Last night we made sure we closed down the lane, stopped them from penetrating, and shoot jumpshots. We have to come out and play with that edge every game. Just totally play with that edge. It gives you so much confidence, especially with this team. It feels great when we are swarming the ball, everybody is communicating, we're getting rebounds, hustle plays, things like that. The fans are into it. They know we're playing hard. It gives us an edge. It makes my job easy, especially when everybody is knocking down shots and playing with that confidence. If anything, our defense starts everything. Just making sure we play hard and we just got to stick together. There's going to be times where it's going to be tough. But we have to make sure we're all on the same page. You never know. I think we'll have a good shot of winning the next game if we come out and play with the edge like we did, play with a lot of intensity. We have to be ready with the ball. Next game they are definitely going to go out there and play hard. Everybody crashing. They are going to make sure they put bodies on people. We have to try hard. We've been doing this the whole season. I think we rebound the ball pretty well. So guys on our team, we just try hard to go out there and be together, have Joakim and Booze on the rebounding side. |
| 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. |
| We talked about it in our timeout. First of all, what a huge swing that was. I had a three. We go up three with 24 seconds to go. You figure we guard the three-point line, make them drive, and I don't really know what happened. We got to look at it. Chalmers was so wide open. Bangs the three. That was a big emotional play for us. Down the stretch, we talked about it, they had a foul to give. I actually drove a little earlier than I would have, knowing they had a foul to give, and made a move, and the foul never came. So I was able to get to the basket and lay it in. That was a big play. And then they didn't have a timeout left, so we had to scramble back, and Wade had to throw one up. So definitely a huge comeback for us. And we never gave up. So that was big. I'm not going to share that with the media. I'm sure there was a little cussing involved. Yeah, like I said, if you're down 15, you make an amazing run like that, and you're up three, you can't give up a wide-open three. It just can't happen. So we got to go back and look at stuff like that. Still proud of the team. Still proud of the team, how they battled, to be down 15 against a great team like that, and we kept plugging. Our defense finally got some big stops, and we rebounded the ball tonight, which we didn't in Game 1 finally. And that really opened up our offense there. I thought their defense was suffocating there throughout three quarters. We turned the ball over, made mistakes left and right. Couldn't really make shots. And then down the stretch, what helped us was our defense. It got us in the running game. It got us moving the ball a little better. Jet finally had some good looks. I had some good looks. And that really ignited our comeback. Well, you know, I think in this league you have to play till the end. Especially this is The Finals. You can be down 20. You have to keep plugging. You never know what's going to happen in this league. And we kept on fighting. And we got some lucky bounces there. LeBron went down the middle, had a wide-open lay-up, I thought. Short-armed it a little bit. We were able to get that rebound and go. So you have to be a little lucky, but we kept on plugging. And look, I said it all playoffs long, we're a veteran team. We don't get too high with the highs and too low with the lows. That was definitely a little hole we got ourselves in, but we kept believing, kept playing off each other, and that was big. Tyson has been our MVP defensively all season long. He's covered a lot of ground for us. We did a better job I thought of pick-and-roll coverage today. He really stepped out there, impacted the ball. We were still able to recover back some and scramble. Look, they have two of the best players in the game. So they are going to make you scramble. That's what we did and finally got some rebounds, which we didn't in Game 1. We can't turn the ball over against this team. They have two of the most athletic players I've ever seen. If you turn the ball over, it's one or two dribbles there at the rim, laying it in on the other end. So I thought finally there in the last couple of minutes we did a good job of not turning the ball over. And the defense was solid. We forced them into some shots that -- contested shots. And that was big. And rebounded the ball. We're not going to approach the next three. We're going to approach the next one like it's our last. You cannot get a split and get a huge emotional win in Game 2 and then go home and lose Game 3. As far as I'm concerned, the next one is the biggest game of them all. And hopefully our crowd will be rocking. They've been great to us and carried us throughout the playoffs so far. So we're going home to a great building, and hopefully get Game 3. It felt great. Like I said, I thought it wasn't going to bother me before the game, and it didn't. We were able to keep the tape a little lower, so I was able to keep my grip on the ball. Because my palm was open, and my fingertips were open. So I was able to get a good grip on the ball. Still didn't shoot the ball the way I wanted to tonight. Missed some open looks again, like in Game 1. I got to be sharper in Game 3 if we want to have a chance. Finger felt fine, and hopefully it's going to stay that way. You know, as much as '06 is still on mine and Jet's mind, during the game you don't think about anything like that. You're caught in the moment as a player out there. You compete right there. You take every position like it's the last in The Finals. You don't really think about anything else but trying to get this win. Like I said, we got some lucky bounces and we scrambled and that helped us. I didn't even see it that much, to be honest. Probably our other players saw it. I kind of had my head down. Obviously that was a big play to go down 15, so I must admit I didn't even watch it. Well, you kind of chip away one possession at a time. We talked about getting stops. That was the big thing. We scrambled on some pick-and-roll situations, where we forced them out a little bit. Offensively I think we made a couple of big plays in a row. Jet got open on the baseline once. He had a run-out. I had a run-out off kind of a loose ball that we were lucky to get. We had a three-on-one. I laid the ball in to tie it. I actually thought Jason Kidd had a big three on the wing when it was like an eight, nine-point game. They doubled me, I swung it out. He had a great look at three and made a three to cut into the lead more. If you're down 15, every play, every bounce of the ball could be big. We're lucky on a couple and it went our way. I mean, I can't really point one out. I mentioned that LeBron had a clean lane, went to the lane, and missed the lay-up. I thought that was big. I can't remember, I can't recall what the score was at that point. I thought we got really lucky. Obviously he's going to finish those ten out of ten times. That was a lucky bounce. But we had a couple of lucky bounces down the stretch. I feel we're a veteran team, and we've been through a lot already all season long. There were some ups and some downs we had to fight through and stick together. So we have come back before all season long on some deficits where we keep believing, where we stay together as a team, where we don't start pointing fingers. And we are obviously led by Jason Kidd, who obviously has seen everything in this league, who has been through everything. He's always calm out there. He's always pushing the guys in the right positions. He's always making the right plays for us. Well, I think we talked about it in the flow of the game that we just can't turn the ball over every time we mishandle the ball, it's an automatic lay-up against this team. It's one or two dribbles, either Wade or LeBron are at the rim at the other end, so quick and athletic. We talked about it during the flow of the game. Sometimes it just happens. They're so good. They have quick hands. They cover a lot of ground, the perimeter. And so turnovers unfortunately are a part of the game. But down the stretch, we did a good job, kept the ball in our playmaker's hands with Jet and Jason Kidd and did a good job of protecting the ball. Like I said, we got lucky down the stretch. Hopefully we can carry this momentum in Game 3. Which Jason? Yes, we have a kind of love-hate relationship. It is. It is. Because we ride each other a lot. We talk to each other a lot. We argue a lot, even during games, but it's all because we want to win, we want to play together. And I think it was big getting him. When we lost Steve, obviously this franchise was down, to lose a great player like that. But I give Donnie some credit. He brought in Jet, who has been a point guard in this league and a veteran and had a good career there in Atlanta. That was a big move. And for us he's been phenomenal. He's been our closer over the last couple of years. A great clutch player, and he's been our key guy for us the last couple of years. Like I said, we love each other, but we also argue a lot. Well, you know, I think we play to win. We always have. Our goal was to win it all since the last couple of years. We came so close in '06, and ultimately we kept the main core together, and we're just happy to be back on this stage. But Jet to me is a winner. I think he sacrificed for us coming off the bench the last few years where he could be a starter on other teams. That's ultimately what you have to do if you want to win a championship. I think we're a veteran team. We did a good job so far in these playoffs to kind of stay in the moment. We had some big wins, and kind of still recovered and came back and played a great game the next game. I remember the Lakers series we stole Game 1. It was easy to say let's get the split and get out of here. We went for it in Game 2 and stayed in the moment and were able to steal both games. So I think we just can't let up. We're not good enough to just relax. We need to play with an edge at all times in every game. So hopefully tomorrow with the crowd behind us, we're going to have a great game. Just looking at this one game. So we have to win tomorrow. Maybe. Maybe. Yesterday was good to get away a little bit, get a travel day. And today was all about refocusing on the task. We know they're going to throw everything at us. It's going to be a tough game. Maybe it was good to get away a little bit. Especially after an emotional game like that. I don't think either team got a lot of sleep after that one. Must have gotten like two or three hours, most. So it was good to kind of get away, have an extra day, get some sleep last night, and both teams will be ready to play tomorrow. Well, you know, I think they do a great job defensively really swarming me. The first two games I think every time I put the ball on the floor, there were two or three guys around me. They're so athletic. On the perimeter when I kick the ball to the shooter, somehow they're still there. They're still there to run our shooters off to contest the shots. They're really good defensively. On that last move, I spun and I expected actually somebody to be there, and there wasn't. So I was able to get to the left and get to the basket. That was a big play. If there would have been somebody there, I would have had to pass to somebody and hopefully let the weak side make a shot. Like I said, there was a big play. There was nobody there and I was able to take the lane and that was good. I actually thought he played phenomenal the first two games. He's making his three ball throughout the whole playoffs already, he's really shooting the ball well. He got down the lane a couple of times where we feel like we missed some assignments on the pick-and-rolls, and they got some run-out dunks. If you turn the ball over against this team, they're so athletic, it takes one or two steps, they're at the rim at the other end. Wade and LeBron, they're so athletic. Nothing like anything we've seen in the playoffs so far. You have to do a good job not turning the ball over. We turned it over 21 times. That's obviously not what we want to do, and that's not going to set us up to win. The finger is really good. Got to keep it straight. It was throbbing a little bit after the game the other night, but I guess that's normal. And it's going to be okay. Once the adrenaline always starts flowing during the game, I think I'm okay. It doesn't bother me during the game. That's the major thing. Ultimately if you want to go all the way, everybody has to step out of their ways a little bit and do a little more. I think that's something I grew into a little more and more comfortable with talking to the guys now. Obviously at the beginning I had a little language barrier. Over the years I got more comfortable taking the guys to the side and addressing something when I see something. I guess something that comes with experience. Just get it off the sheet. (Laughter). We didn't talk about it yet. He's been phenomenal just taking the challenge on both ends. I think it actually already started in the Oklahoma City series, when he had to guard one of the best scorers and the scoring leader with Durant. He really took the challenge on both ends of the floor. Just he can get up, he's athletic on the perimeter, he's long, he can contest shots. He's a good rebounder. But also on the offense, he's been phenomenal. He's been cutting for us, he's been posting up. He's been getting offensive rebounds, put-backs. So he looks really comfortable right now. He's got a bounce in his step, and it's fun to watch. So he's a competitor, and that's what he does out there against the best of the league. He's ready to play. |
| 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. |
| It wasn't 103, but it was like 101 this morning. I didn't really have a good night's rest, so it was just under the weather a little bit, but just battle it out. I think it didn't look good there in the fourth quarter when we were down nine, but energy and defense really picked us up. Didn't shoot the ball well again. Had some good looks there in the fourth, but our defense grinded it out. There's no long-term. I'll be all right on Thursday. It's a little sinus infection. Hopefully I'll get some sleep tonight. Take some meds and be ready to go on Thursday. Just had a couple -- couldn't really finish around the rim. Had a couple of good looks today, but just really no lift. But like I said, the crew was outstanding. I thought Jet took it really upon himself today in the fourth when we were down nine. He made two back-to-back plays to get us right back in the game. So he was phenomenal today. Really, I was going to play the clock down, but I saw I had a little opening there. So I just went for it. I just went for it. Was able to rip through and go to the right. They really played my left, which obviously the whole league does. So I was able to rip through and get to my right and finally finish a lay-up. I thought I missed four or five good looks around the rim today. Kind of bounced around, bounced out. So that was unfortunate, but I was able to get one in. So that was good. You know, this is The Finals. You're going to leave it out there. Like I said earlier in the series, I think everybody -- it's June. We've been playing on a high level for eight, nine months. So everybody has a little something going, and this is The Finals. You have to go out there and compete and try your best for your team. So that's what I did. I never thought about MJ's performance. I was way off, looking at my line. I mean, that was a big free throw. First of all, I think we had a bunch of good looks there. I think Jet had one rattling out from the top of the key. He had one from the right wing, he had one from the left wing. And those are usually money for us in the fourth quarter. Then I think D-Steve had one in the left corner, who could have iced it. Wide-open look. So we had our good looks. Then Wade had a big run-out. And J-Kidd was able to get to him and foul him and, you know, the first one kind of bounced up and went in. And the second one a very fortunate roll for us. It was kind of in and rolled out and I was able to get the rebound that led to our last possession. And I was able to get to the rim. Hey, it's been always -- besides Game 1, all the games are like right there. A couple of bounces, a couple of defensive stops here and there could have gone either way. So sitting at a 2-2 right now. Obviously would love to get Game 5 at home before we go back to Miami. So that's a big game for us on Thursday. Phenomenal player. He's making tough shots this series from all over the place. He's getting to the rim and finishing like nobody else. Yeah, he's an unbelievable player. Yeah, I think our base did a good job helping on the screen-and-rolls. So that was big. And obviously, yeah, we would love to get Game 5 here. Don't want to go to Miami down 3-2, knowing they have two chances to close us out. Big game Thursday. Like I said, I thought our defense won us the game. To give up 14 points to an explosive team with LeBron, with Bosh and Wade on one team, if you give up 14 points in the quarter to close it out, I think that's huge. So hopefully we can carry that defense over into Game 5, and then we'll see what happens. First of all, I think they killed us on the glass in the first quarter. I think they had like ten offensive rebounds, or nine. Somewhere around there. And we obviously had to address that. We talked about it in between first quarter and second quarter, how we had to improve in that area. And then I think after that, we did a nice job. They only had a couple more, a handful more for the rest of the game. So that was big. Look, we're not a great rebounding team, so I think we got to have all five guys in there battling. Our go-to lineup sometimes is small with Kidd and Jet, one and two. So that means we're small there. We got to have five guys in there battling. We can't have anybody leak out. I think after the first quarter we did a better job protecting the paint and Tyson obviously with 16 boards was phenomenal. First of all, I think Kidd never ceases to amaze me. He can dominate a game without scoring one point. We've seen it the last three years here together, what kind of all-around player he is without even scoring. How he facilitates, how he defends, and how he runs the show is amazing. He's been great. I thought J.J. had some good looks again. But he kept attacking. You have to love the little guy. Fearless. Kept getting in there, had some tough finishes, tough lay-ups that went in. We need him to attack off the dribble, because he's good getting to the lane. Once you get to the lane against a team, they really suck in hard and open some of our shooters up. So J.J. has to keep attacking. Try to get out of here pretty quick, go home, take a long shower and just go to bed right away. I had some soup and had a good meal. Just drank some fluids, drank some tea and just feel a lot better today. I still got a little high temperature, but the fever is basically gone. So that's obviously the main concern always. Anything else, the sniffles or the cough, you don't really care about that as long as the fever is gone. That's the main thing you worry about. I felt I had an off-night really. Couldn't get anything going. Made my first three shots. After that really had nothing going all night. Was able to attack a little bit there in the fourth quarter, got to the free-throw line. But, really, I think our defense was what won us the game in the fourth. To give up 14 points on an explosive team like that, that was the key. I agree. Shooting 39% and getting a big win is unbelievable. I think Tyson added a lot to his defense. He's great in pick-and-rolls, he's showing he's still able to get back. He's so quick on his feet, protecting the paint and rebounding. Haywood some of the same things, when we got him last year in the trade. So I think those two guys are great for us in the back. And I think that really -- the front guys can be aggressive, if they know somebody is behind them that covers a lot of ground, that is able to be there for him. I think then J-Kidd can get up, Matrix can get up on their man and everybody is on the same page. Our comebacks have been really ignited by good defense. Well, I really like what Jet did there in the fourth quarter. We were down nine. He comes up two straight possessions, drove the ball at LeBron, got to the basket, finished, and then back to a five-point game. Then they had a timeout, and I think we kind of had the momentum after that. He really took it upon himself to really drive and be in attack mode. That's what we need out of him. He's one of our closers. Throughout the game I think we had our chances. We had our opportunities. We had good shots. For some reason this series we haven't made a ton of them, but we had opportunities. I thought Stevenson was great there in the first half. Gave us a lift. Made some big shots, corner shots, wing three. But we have to keep getting better. Hopefully tomorrow big game, hopefully we can make a couple more shots when they're there. Yeah, I said it already in Game 1 that everybody at this stage after playing eight, nine months on a high level has something going. Nobody is completely healthy. So it's time to fight through some stuff, and once the game gets going, the adrenaline starts flowing. I think everybody is out there and giving it their all. But the playoffs, I mean, we all know every game in the playoffs can be a huge momentum swing. So you always want to win the game. After the games you don't sleep much. So basically for a month and a half, two months, you're living on the edge every night. You're thinking about it, eat, breathe, sleep basketball, and that's what's fun about the playoffs, but also very draining. We have one more week to go, both teams, and we're going to go for it. Both teams are going to get their vacation afterwards. Yeah, I mean, they're a very explosive team. The thing is with them, who is going to have the ball? Is it Wade and he's going to take a shot? Bosh? Whoever has the ball, the other two can't have the ball. So sometimes it's hard if one guy is going, the other guy is hard to get the rhythm because you don't have a lot of touches. So they are obviously going to find a mix for everybody for them to attack in the fourth quarters, and we expect LeBron to be aggressive tomorrow and get to the basket and play his game. So we're got to be ready and we got to be a little sharper on the defensive end, especially early. Gave up ten offensive rebounds the first quarter, which was almost a killer. Where we actually felt we had everything going in the first quarter. We had the energy, we got stops and just the offensive rebounds were killing us. We have to be a little sharper tomorrow. It's a big game. Not much. I didn't do anything today. Slept in, basically, and just watched film and walked through some stuff. So that really hasn't changed from the other day. And then I'll probably come back tonight, get a little sweat for like 30 minutes, at least get the body used to sweating a little bit. And then I'll be ready tomorrow. Well, I think we have to be ready for anything. I think usually it's the team that loses that looks at the film and says, hey, we have to do this. Usually the team that loses has more of an edge, makes some adjustments with the coaches. So we've got to be ready for anything. Actually they did play a small lineup real quick. That was because Haslem had three fouls in the first half already. They went small for a second. So I think we got to adjust, and whatever happens happens. We all know if he wants to be, he's one of the best defenders in this league, because he can guard multiple positions, probably one through five if he wants to. He's long, he's strong, he's quick. So he's a great defender. Both. You know Jet, actually, it was earlier in the playoffs he said something, and I told him I was going to put him on a no-interview policy. But he didn't follow that either. He's a very confident young man. He believes in himself. That's what I like about him. When he has an off-night or going through a little slump, he's going to keep attacking, he's going to believe in himself. He's going to come back the next night and get some shots up in the gym, and he's a gym rat. He always works on his game. So Jet has been great here for the last six, seven years here we had him. Hopefully we can follow through. Yeah, like I said, it was great for me to see Jet like that. You can't expect him to always make huge, huge shots in the fourth quarters. But what I liked, he was just attacking. Even he missed some shots there at the end that kind of could have sealed it. But I like this mentality. We need him to be aggressive. We need him to get out and take those shots, because that's going to open up some stuff for our other guys. When he attacked and got some shots, that's actually opened the offensive glass up for Tyson, who was great there in the fourth. Had like two or three offensive rebounds. So, yeah, we need Jet to attack all the time. It makes us a better team. |
| Yeah, I mean that was a big win for us, obviously. We didn't want to go to Miami and give them basically two shots to close us out. So kept plugging there in the fourth. So definitely a big win for us. And now we have to go down there and basically approach Sunday's game as Game 7. You don't want to give this great team any hope or anything. So we got to play more of the same and keep attacking and we'll see what happens Sunday. Well, I don't actually think that was a good defensive night for us. All series long we're trying to figure out our offense. Tonight we're moving and shooting the ball well, but I thought all of a sudden we started giving up too many points. That's not how we won, and that's not how we want to win. We started trading baskets, even in the first half, when we were going well offensively. We traded baskets, gave up too many lay-ups. So that was a little disappointing. But at least we shot the ball well enough to get the win. I thought J.J. Barea was phenomenal behind screens, making shots, and Jet obviously in the fourth quarter made the big three top of the key to tie it. And basically made a tough one on the right wing to put the game away. Really, we kind of been waiting on an offensive night for us that we finally shoot the ball well. We felt like we had opportunities in the first four games, just couldn't knock anything down. So that was encouraging to see today that we made some shots. Jet was phenomenal. He was aggressive again from the get-go, I felt. Even the first half he came in, had a couple of pull-ups, got in the lane, got a floater, I remember. That's the Jet we need. We need him to attack and get in the lane. It opens up a lot of stuff for everybody else out there. It opens up Tyson on the rolls, that we actually hit him a bunch of times today. Our fives rolling, that was good. Also that opens up the corner threes and made a couple. We need Jet, Jet attacking. He was great. So did J.J. in the starting lineup attacking, got to the lane a couple of times, made some lay-ups. I thought that opened up his three ball. Well, I think if he just stands there and looks at him, I think LeBron is long enough and quick enough to kind of contest his shot late. So he's got to attack him. He's got to attack his feet. I thought the last two games he did a great job. We got to run -- obviously LeBron threw some screens when he's on him, screen-and-rolls for him. So LeBron constantly has to chase him and fight over some picks. I thought we did a better job of that tonight. We all know Jet is a confident young man. He always has a lot to say to us in the locker room. He's always talking. He's just an energetic guy. He loves to talk and he loves to hear himself talk. (Laughter). I thought we got in the fast break a little bit early. That was good. Had some good looks in the fast break. We were able to knock some shots down. But like I said, I thought in the first four games we looked at the film, we stepped into some good shots. We just for some reason we weren't knocking them down like we did in the first three series. I mean, if we would have struggled shooting the ball like that in the first three series, I don't know if we would have gotten here. Our ability to make shots in the weak side is a big part of what we do. Tonight we talked about it. Keep stepping into those shots when they're there. The J.J. screen-and-roll somewhere he stepped in and shot the ball great all season long. We kept telling him be aggressive and shoot those, and he was phenomenal, and so was Jet. J-Kidd had a big three there when we were up two. We swung it, swung it to go up five. That was a big shot. I thought we hit big, timely shots tonight. Yes, I think like I said, it's not a best-of-five series; it's a best-of-seven. So the first team to four wins. So we couldn't celebrate tonight, even though it was a big win for us. The series is not over. If you look at it really now, all that's happened, you can look they won their two home games, we won all three home games. That's how you look at it. They got two more. So far it looks like everybody protected their home court and they still have two games at home. So there's really nothing to celebrate. We're going in there Sunday swinging, like we did today, from the jump. And hopefully steal one Sunday. I really can't enjoy it much, because in the playoffs for some reason you're always on the edge. You don't sleep much. You think basketball 24/7. I can enjoy it hopefully next week when we're on vacation. As of right now, I'm always thinking ahead and thinking about the next game, what can I do better, what didn't I do and what I have to do to get other guys involved and more open. Hopefully I can enjoy it next week. Just stick with it. Just stick with it. First of all, this was the last home game in this building in front of our fans, who have been phenomenal all year and pushed us forward. We obviously didn't want to end this season here for them on a loss. I think we addressed that. We wanted to keep plugging, keep going. It was big, I think, when we were down four, the next offense I was able to get in the lane, get a pump fake, get to the free-throw line, kind of settle everybody down, make it a two-point game. And I thought that was big for us not to shoot a bad jumper and they go down in transition again. So it was good to kind of stop the clock, get two free throws and kind of set our defense. I thought that was a big momentum play. Well, we just don't allow ourselves to kind of be satisfied or be happy with anything. I think we did a good job in the first couple of rounds, always kind of keeping our edge to ourself. We won two games -- stole two games in L.A. and came back and still were able to win a big Game 3 at home. And I just think we're a veteran team, and we can't get too high with the highs. I've mentioned it all playoffs long. We addressed it today. Hopefully we'll be ready to play tomorrow. Well, you know, I never went back and watched the film. I never watched the celebration. But it is tough to always see another team win on your home court. It doesn't matter if it's a regular season or playoffs or championship. That's always tough in front of your home fans. Ultimately, that's what we got to do now. We've got to steal one more game on the road, hopefully the next one. We've been good on the road all playoffs long, we feel. We won a game in Portland. We won two in L.A. We won two in OKC and we won this series already. So we feel that we can execute on the road as well. We have a bunch of veterans that are road-tested, and hopefully we can get a big game tomorrow. Well, I feel like actually I haven't really shot the ball as well as I want to. I had some good looks, they just didn't go down. Just keep attacking. I think obviously my teammates are a big part of that. I think J-Kidd is able to give me the ball in situations where I want it. We got some good shooters around me. Tyson in the middle and Haywood have been great stepping in. So I don't have to force any shots if they're not there. Just swing it, run another pick-and-roll. So just experience, I guess, is a big factor. I just thought it was a little childish, a little ignorant. I've been in this league for 13 years. I've never faked an injury or an illness before. But it happened. It's over to me. It's not going to add anything extra to me. This is the NBA Finals. If you need an extra motivation, you have a problem. So we're one win away from my dream, what I've worked on for half of my life. This is really all I'm worried about. This is all I'm focusing on. And not really off-the-court stuff that happened. Well, kind of the same as yesterday or the day before that. I don't allow myself to sit back and relax now. In these playoffs, one win or one loss can switch the whole momentum. You don't ever want a snowball to start. I don't allow myself to sit back all of a sudden and be satisfied. We got one more big win hopefully to get, and then I can be satisfied. I think when we first started it was always about -- when you're 16 it's about other aspects of life, too. It's not just focusing too early on one thing and just get good at one thing and don't have anything else in life. So just challenging other aspects of the brain and stimulating it, and music is a big part and reading and other stuff, too. I just thought he was trying to show me other ways and not just on the court. That's tough. I love rock now. I have played the guitar for a couple of years. I listen to old-school rock. Led Zeppelin, Stones, stuff like that. Well, I think he's pushed the right buttons I think all season long. He's challenged us in ways. Sometimes he's backed off. Sometimes he's letting J-Kidd run the show. Sometimes he feels like things are not going the way he wants to and he's clamping down a little more. So I think that was the challenge the first two years, to find a good mix between play-calls and freedom and still play enough defense to win. And I just think he found a good mix and he found all the right buttons to motivate us every single night to get to this spot. I think every series, every time you go through a game, win or lose, you have to look at the film. You adjust. Sometimes it's major things, sometimes it's minor things the media doesn't even pick up. It might be little coverages. So I think every coach goes back after a game and adjusts, and we've done good so far. I think the major change was obviously starting J.J. He's been phenomenal for us attacking the paint. He was shooting the ball well last game. They were going under his screen-and-rolls. He was able to knock some big shots down. J.J. has been good in the starting lineup. You know, I feel we're a very close-knit group. We have a bunch of talent on the bench as well. Both of those guys bring us toughness. I think Mahinmi is very athletic, and Brian is a tough-nosed player who is very smart. They both gave us a huge lift last game, just by being in the right spot and kind of picking up our energy. Every player on the bench has been big at some point in these playoffs. I remember Brewer coming in and really changing Game 1 in L.A. We were down 15, or whatever, in the third. He came in and gave us a huge lift. At some point every player on this bench made a contribution. Well, I just think sometimes when you don't win, criticism comes with it. That's just a part of the game if you're the star or the face of the franchise. If you win, it's great for you, and everybody looks at you. And if you lose, you're going to get hammered. It's just the part of the business. I think we understand that. We've been around long enough. I got hammered the last 13 years, basically. So hopefully this year I can make the hammering go away for one year. Well, I don't know. I never really try to focus on other people, what other people say. I always try to worry about myself. Every summer go back home and try to work harder and come back next year, and during the series you can't worry about other stuff. You focus on the teammates. You watch the film, you talk to the teammates, see what they can do to help you, what you can do to help them. And that's all I was worried about in the playoffs, is trying to perform. I don't know. You never know. That's another thing I'm not really worried about. I said it before The Finals started, I said I'm not trying to win for my legacy or for anything other than for just me being on the best team there is for that year. You want to be a part of the best, and so hopefully we can fulfill that and everything else is kind of a side note to me right now. |
| Oh, man, I don't know. I mean, obviously that was one of my most disappointing losses in my career, to lose the Final series after being up 2-0. It took so long just to get here. I don't really know if it would have made a difference. Just this feeling to be on the best team of the world is just undescribable. Was he unbelievable tonight or what? Coming out right away in the first half and setting a tone. I think he watched me struggle there early, and he took it upon himself to really attack and look for his shot early and get going early. Man, he kept coming all night long. He was phenomenal. That one timeout he said to me, "Keep pushing. Remember '06." He said that to me in the fourth quarter. We kept plugging. It wasn't pretty for me, but I had to keep plugging and keep fighting. I don't really think that way right now. If you're in this league for 13 years of just battling and playoffs last basically ten years, 11 years, and always coming up a little short. That's why this is extra special. If I would have won one early in my career, maybe I would have never put all the work and the time in that I have over the last 13 years. So this feels amazing. I'm happy for Kidd. What a warrior he is at 38, chasing the most athletic players in this league out there and doing a great job on him, and also leading our squad. He's been in this league forever and had two chances. Just an unbelievable team. I said it all season long. We had great chemistry with the guys. We had fun in the locker room, on the buses and stuff. So this is a special group. We're world champions. It sounds unbelievable. Well, I just think we're a resilient bunch, and we saw it. This whole series we were down some. We kept battling back. Kept believing in each other. I just think this is a win of team basketball. This is a win for playing as a team on both ends of the floor, of sharing the ball, of passing the ball, and we've been doing that all season long. I'm happy. We never looked at ourselves as soft. Not for one minute. And we just kept fighting. Well, I think he's an experienced coach, and he pushed all the right buttons, and it took us a while to find a good mix. I think I mentioned that yesterday, of still keeping our defensive principles that Avery installed and also giving Kidd a little more freedom on the offensive end, letting him run the show a little bit, letting him create and letting him call some plays on the fly and push the pace up a little bit. So I think that he did a great job doing that, and during the course of the season, we had to adjust to some stuff. I thought in The Finals he did some phenomenal adjustments here to start J.J., and then decide to let Peja really sit for the series, bring Cardinal in, who has been phenomenal for us this series. Constant pro. Always stayed ready for us. It's an unbelievable team effort and the coaches and the whole organization. I give Mark a lot of credit. Cuban. He stuck with me through thick and thin. He brought all the right players always in, always trying to spend money and make this organization better and this team better. So Mark is the best. Man, this is what I obviously played for the last couple of years. I think when you come in in this league you want to establish yourself. All these All-Star Games and all those things are nice, in scoring, but when you get to a certain age, you've basically seen it all, and all you play for is for that ring. And I think that's the kind of energy we had from the beginning of the season this year, bringing Tyson in, who was unbelievable for us defensively again. Yeah, it feels amazing now to know that nobody can ever take this away from us again, and for one year we're the best team that was out there. That feels amazing. Well, I think in a lot of games we kept fighting back. All the wins we got in the fourth quarter, at some point we were down, besides today, and the way we kept plugging. Even in Game 5, we were up like 7 or 8. They made a huge run and they go up by a couple of points. And we had to battle back again and fight through it. So I don't really know where it happened, but we're just a resilient, veteran team that always kept coming. We never stopped playing, and we kept believing in each other. That was phenomenal. We talked about it in several time-outs, even when we were down, we have to keep executing, keep playing. You never know what's going to happen. And some of these wins we were able to come back. That was big. Well, you know, I think at the beginning I had some problems with the leadership role and talking. But over the last couple of years I think I've been more comfortable. Obviously my English is a lot better than it was when I first got here. So it's just being more experienced, more comfortable talking to the guys, talking to the fellows, and the experience of seeing something on the court that you want to address. And I just think it all came together for me with hard work and experience. It still feels unbelievable. It was weird. In the first half I had so many good looks. I can't even explain it. I had some threes top of the key. I had a wide-open three in the corner. I had some pull-ups. I had some one-leg fadeaways that I normally make. But like I said, the team always told me, stay with it, stay with it. You're too good of a shooter, too good of a player to keep missing. So finally there in the third I made a three, and there in the fourth I was able to make a couple of pull-ups. But like I said, this team every time somebody was down all season long, somebody else stepped in and picked them up. Mahinmi was unbelievable today, since Haywood went out a couple of days ago, and he gives us energy. All of a sudden makes some big shots today. So I think all season long if somebody was down, the team picked him up. So it was an amazing effort. I don't know. That's something I'll look back to and I can always look back to the '10-'11 season and say we're the world champs. Nobody can ever take that away from me. So that's really the best thing about this. Sticking to Dallas, that was the plan. We fell short so many times, and I committed for four more years this summer, and we didn't really know what was going to happen. We were a first-round, second-round exit a bunch of times. But consistency pays off. Like I said, Mark kept bringing in players. Losing Caron this year was an unbelievable blow. We kept playing, kept fighting through. Bringing Peja in, who was a big addition for us in earlier rounds of the playoffs. So it wouldn't have felt right to win it somewhere else. I'm happy. I obviously made the right decision. And this is also for the Mavs fans, who have been through a lot of disappointments with me over the last couple of years. And they always stuck with me and kept supporting us. And the gym was always full in Dallas during the regular season. This is for them. |
| 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. |
| I just think we have more of an awareness of what we need to do. It was a little surprise. Yeah, feeling pretty good. A little surprise. It was just one of those situations where we had played where we moved the ball around often. And you're so worried about the shooters, you're worried about Paul in the perimeter. Rondo got down the lane, because you're worried about getting out. I think it was an opportune time for me, because when I got to the paint, they were like, is he going to pass? We have to worry about the three point shot? I made it all the way. Anytime you have a scorer that gets to the free throw line easy, it gives you a rhythm, gets the ball in your hands, get your free throws, getting those easy lay ups in transition where you don't have to work as hard. Those are the things we have to work on early so they don't get in that offensive flow. It's really hard to say. We're prepared for whatever they do. We have a game plan to try to keep them from getting those easy buckets. It really changed because our lineup has been very untraditional. You know, when we go small, we can have four guys that are under 6'6" out there on the floor. So with that they go small, they have a shooting lineup in, it puts Rondo on Wade. Marquis was on him a little bit. It puts Keyon on him. So it just changes and we just have to adapt. For me personally, if I have to stop him, if I have to guard him, that's just what I have to do. The scoring aspect is I've always learned that you rest on offense. Defense is where you got to be there 100%. Right now the film work is important. Staying off your feet. You need what you're going to get from your guys in shoot arounds. I think the season prepared us, having such short time in between games. We really have had to focus in on getting stuff we need to get in with shoot around. Guys responded well to it. It's hard to say. It's a strategy. One thing I have learned over the course of my time is that I've been with plenty of coaches that never gave you any days off. You didn't do it was always coach always felt like you had to be in the gym. Sometimes it was at the detriment of players' bodies. At some point you just break down. Watching film and giving guys rest, you're going to with a veteran team, guys know how to get the work in they need. No. I've always felt that way with this crowd. I've always had great connection with these fans. I do believe that they think every shot I take is going to go in. I believe that. You don't want to wear him down. It's like trying to get him to it's like you get to the point where you use him to the point where almost he becomes a decoy. It's like you tip to the point where you know you're going to go to him, just like me on the perimeter, you know you're going to get to me, find me a good shot. But then somebody else gets the shot because the defense shades so heavily. So that's kind of what we do with him. If he has it, he has to take advantage of it. He got scores for us. Nothing. No. I don't attribute anything to this year from last year. I just know that they beat us last year and sent us home. So right now we know what the game plan is for this team. That's where my focus is. That he's been getting closer to the rim? Well, it's interesting, because Kevin, he's a jump shooter. But he's had such great match ups that we are getting him closer to the rim because we're staying so spaced on the perimeter. It's really it's a simple game that we play, and there's so many things, options we can run him through our offense. At the end of the day, it's just like you stay spaced, give him the ball and see how they guard him. Let him shoot over the top. That's what he's been doing. If you front him over the top, we're going to him. And that's what we've done a lot. And if you don't front him, give him the ball, and he still can shoot over the top of you. You contribute two guys. You have me, Paul, Rondo on the perimeter, then Brandon I think Brandon has helped a lot too. I don't think he understands his importance being able to shoot like he does. He's taken a lot of pressure off of him. It's a simple game. When we execute it, everybody is effective and everybody has an impact. |
| Just my legs, they've gotten considerably better. Actually, my leg, my ankle. Just going into the game, starting the game, having my legs underneath me is for me it's a huge deal now. How I feel now is a lot different from how I start the game. But that's what it's all about, like getting ourselves prepared, getting ourselves ready. So I feel like I have my lift starting the games. For me and for this team, that's huge. I try to keep myself ready. Off days you do what you can to stay off your feet. Well, at my lowest point I was ready to have surgery. I didn't think that I would get any better, because I was doing all the things I needed to do treatment wise and just staying off of it. It didn't seem like it was going to get any better. So I just stayed with it and stayed off of it and did what I had to do, and it just progressively got better over time. We'll see how I deal with it once the season is over. I would say there is a percentage of mind over matter. For me as aggressive as I run coming off screens, I have to almost be a little ginger going into certain directions, so I don't aggravate it too much more than it already is. I know what I'm dealing with, so I try to work through that. It was like chess, they took our queen, and we took their queen, so to speak. Paul went out, they both had five fouls. We always talk about getting it to the end of the game, and making sure we don't do anything where we get a call against us. And that was one of those situations. I told Paul before we came out of the timeout, be smart out there because you never know what can happen. That was just a bad situation we were in. We got plenty of guys. MP and Marquis and Keyon came in, and they did a great job defensively for us. Our guys were ready. I don't ever think I've seen that before, but Rondo was on the floor, I'm on the floor, Kevin is on the floor, Wade is on the floor. All the game has to be done all that has to happen is it has to be won. We don't care what it looks like. We just want to win the game. We have plenty from that point moving forward, we had an idea what we needed to do to close the game out. That was all that we cared about at that point. For me, the crowd has been great. It's as good as I've ever seen it. We all have friends in town, family, that's the one thing they commented on after Game 3, how amazing the building was, and how energetic they were. They got loud to some point where we couldn't even talk to each other standing next to each other on the floor. That's what you love about being home. And this building for me more than any building I've played in ever, it's my favorite building ever to play in. You got good eyesight. |
| N/A |
| 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 |
| Well, those guys, they came out on fire. They were passing the ball well, knocking down shots. We just wanted to continue to keep playing. It's a long game, and every time our coach was just saying play harder, play harder, and that's what we did. It's a game of runs, man, so you just have to make sure that every time we got a good shot on the defensive end, we've just got to contest up and just play hard. We've got to continue to do that. I mean, we're just trying to take it a possession at a time. You know, this is a tough series. This level of basketball is the hardest we play, and we just want to take it slow, and take it, like I said, a possession at a time. Guys got to just continue to believe in themselves. If we do that as a group, we'll be all right. Like Russ said, it kind of took us a couple minutes to get the nervousness out of us and the jitters out of it. We've just got to play our game. Next game we've got to start a little better because this team is going to come out extremely hard. He means a lot to us. He's been sacrificing his body, taking charges all season. Just playing hard. He could care less about how many shots he takes or how many rebounds he gets, he's just going to play hard and do what the coaches tell him to do. He's just a great teammate to have. We've got to continue to just give him confidence by feeding him down low on those dump off passes for dunks and he's going to come back down and give it his all on the defensive end. We need that from everybody. Like I said, we've got a long ways to go, we've just got to continue playing. Well, coach just told me to match up with him early on. They do such a great job of going small, going big, they can play different ways, and Thabo did a good job of just making it tough on them. You can't really stop a guy like that, just got to play hard and contest. For me he got a few lay ups, but I've just got to continue to stay in front and play my hardest. It's a tough match up, but I've just got to play with some fire, and we'll see what happens. Well, he's such a versatile defender, he can guard one through five, and we used Perk in a lot of screen setting, and they switched a lot of it, and he guarded Russ, he guarded me, he guarded one through five. You know, I'm not worried about, like I said, the one on one match up, it's just about the team, and he does such a great job of guarding everybody. We've got to figure out a way to try to get some easy points and just play hard on both ends. I can't worry about which guy is guarding me, I've just got to play my game. Well, Russ came out, like you said, he wasn't makes his shots early, but he didn't let that get him down. He just tried to do other things to help us win, 11 assists, eight rebounds. He's a guy that can come out on the floor and do that for us every night. He controlled the game on the offensive end. Like I said, he wasn't making shots, but he was trying to get everybody else involved. We've got to do a better job of finishing for him. But he came out and made some big shots for us. We've got to continue just leaning on each other. It's a game where everybody is going to have to chip in, and Russ was just making sure everybody did so, and we followed his lead. Well, I'm not trying to force anything. For this whole Playoffs, I'm just trying to play my game, be aggressive, and if I see a shot I have to take it, and if I see a pass I have to pass it. I have to go back tomorrow and watch film and see how I can get better, and hopefully I have a better game, too. I wish I could tell you. You know, just being in The Finals, we kind of was nervous, I guess. That's something we can't it can't happen next game or the rest of the series. Just got to come out with a lot of energy, and hopefully we do it next game. But I really couldn't tell you why. Just not think about it. Just play. Pride myself on working hard and learning and being coachable. I have faith in all those things that I do day in and day out, coming in, working hard, believing in myself and my teammates, and believing in the system. Whatever happens after that, it happens, as long as I know that I come in and give it my all every single day. I can't worry about what other people say or expectations they put on me. It's just all about how I view myself and how my teammates view me, and we'll go from there. I'm just all about getting better and all about believing, man. If that stuff comes along, then it does. I have faith that if I keep doing what I'm doing and continue to just learn every single year, anything can happen. I don't want to sound like a jerk or anything, but I really don't care what people say outside the locker room, outside of this organization what I need to do or what I didn't do. I really don't care. You know, I'm a guy that lets the game come to me but is also aggressive at the same time. I know when to take shots, when to make the right play. People can say this and that. I learn to just tune it out and just play my game. I just know it's going to come back around. I'm just taking it a day at a time. It's just a blessing to be here, not just in The Finals but being in the NBA, having this opportunity to do something I love to do, and just take it slow, take it a day at a time, keep working every single day, and at the end we'll see where I'm at. But I can't think too far down the line. Just got to be ready for the next day and prepare myself right for whatever happens. We'll see. I love to do everything you just said, but I've just got to take it slow, and we'll see. I kind of figured they would mix it up a lot, throw different defenders. They did a great job of since Chris Bosh was out a few series back, they did a great job of just playing a lot of guys that can defend different positions. LeBron can defend one through five and Shane Battier can do the same, and Haslem is good at defending some perimeter guys, as well. They're just mixing it up, and we've just got to find a way to kind of offset that. It just goes down to playing hard and make the right basketball play. Yeah, I think, like I said, they're going to mix it up a lot. I've just got to be patient and be aggressive, and I just really can't worry about who's defending me, I've just got to play within the concept of the team and play my hardest. That means a lot. My goal as a kid was to be the best player ever in my area. That was my first goal before even thinking about going to college or the NBA. So that means a lot to me. But I don't think I'm up there with those guys. Elgin Baylor and Dave Bing and Adrian Dantley and guys like that yet. But I've got to keep working and hopefully I get there. That's always been a goal of mine, and hopefully I achieve it. Everybody has been physical with me since I got into the league at 19. I don't expect it to be any different. Those guys bump me, pushed me, confronted me and denied me the ball, and I expected it to be the same. But me, I've got to start the ball off better on the defensive end and the offensive end, just being stronger and trying to get the ball and making the right plays. I turned over the ball a few times I shouldn't have turned it over, but I've just got to be stronger. I expect them to be a lot more physical, so I'll be ready for it. Only adjustment we made was playing harder. I can tell you guys Xs and Os and the schemes, but it just comes down to playing harder. Those guys got open threes, open lay ups. That's not what we pride ourselves on. We can't do that to a championship caliber team, can't give those guys open shots. So we just tried to step it up on the defensive end and know that they're going to be aggressive and make shots, but we can't get discouraged, we've got to continue to play our game. And we just tried to step it up a little bit, get our karma behind us some, as well, and kind of push us over the top. He has a chip on his shoulder, and he wants to be the best. That's the best part about our team, we have guys that want to be the best. I don't know how many points he had, but he had eight rebounds and I think 11 assists. I don't know if you can talk too much about a guy who does that, who can do that night in and night out. He had great shots last game, missed a few lay ins and a few easy jumpers that I think he can make. We're not worried about what people are saying on the outside, we're just worried about coming together as a group, and he did a great job of controlling everything last night. Only thing I remember was that everybody ran on the court. That's probably one of the best moments I've had so far in my life, playing at the mecca of basketball in New York City, and I hit a few shots then. It felt like everybody just swarmed me so quickly, man, and it was just a fun moment for me and something I'm always going to remember. That's something we've been preaching for a while, always just staying together. And teams win, you know, individuals don't win basketball games. You may win a few here or there but you don't get to where you want to go by just one guy, so we've got to do it together. We know that. We don't care who takes the shots, we don't care who gets the rebounds or assists, as long as we do it together. We just believe in each other. We trust in each other, and we've got to continue to keep building that if we want to get to where we want to get to. We've just got to keep doing it. I absolutely hate it. But I've gotten used to it over the years playing Shane, ever since he was in Houston. Last year in the Playoffs against Memphis. He does it a lot. You've just got to be disciplined on your shot, and I think shooting so many shots, you know once you kind of let loose, you know where it's going to go. Got to free myself up from him. He is a good defender. But it's something that you can't control him doing, he's going to do it whenever he plays. I've just got to be confident in myself and in my shot. He's probably the only guy that does that, so I'm used to guys contesting the shot, but putting a hand in your face is a little different. I've just got to play through it. I tried to approach it as a regular game. I think all the stuff before the game kind of made me a little nervous, the intros and all the media here, so many people here. I never seen this many people here in Oklahoma City before at a basketball game. So it's a little different. But you got used to it once the ball is tipped. It goes back to when you're a kid playing a game, just playing. All that stuff is out of the way. We've just got to be focused on Game 2 and be ready to play. None of that stuff is going to change. All we're worried about is basketball. Well, it took us some time. I think we're both willing passers, but we do know when we have to be aggressive. Russ is great at knowing when we're down, he has to be aggressive. When we're down, I have to be aggressive. But when we have a good flow in the game, that's when everybody is touching the ball, we're moving it, we're finding a good shot, finding a great shot. But it's kind of weird, but I think it just kind of clicks for you when you know you have to shoot the ball and when you have to pass it. We've got to continue to watch film and see if we can get better in that area, and hopefully we do. |
| 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. |
| N/a |
| 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. |
| We stay even keeled. But this time around we've got to understand the champions are going to they're going to come back ready to play a game. Them being at home should be another level that they'll kick it to. So we've got to come out and just match that energy. Not really. Not really. We just got to come out and continue to keep playing how we play. Don't let nothing distract us, but let nothing take away from what we do. Everybody play within themselves and continue to play how they've been playing this postseason. We know our defense, if it's as good as we want it to be, we'll have a shot at winning here. It is. It is. Because I'm not a player to try to force things to happen. I usually just try to let the game come to me. At times especially last night not being able to be on the floor for as long as I've been playing on the floor, I just tried to make up for lost time being on the bench and tried to make big plays and be aggressive. Got to do a better job with that. But the good thing is we had Lance Stephenson last night. Continue to keep rising to the occasion and continue to try to lead, and be someone that my team can rely on down the stretch. Again, just staying even keeled. How we play is that next play. Playing for that next possession and just forgetting whatever happened the last possession. It's been a key, especially down when you're playing in postseason, because games can turn so quick, and possessions are so big. We just got to go with the flow and let that last possession kind of air out of our minds and get ready for the next one. I mean it's a real grind. But we prefer it to be this way instead of having a couple of days, because you can lose your rhythm and lose your touch. I prefer I think our team prefers to play every other day just to stay in tune, because we're playing great basketball right now. Well, we played a full 48 minutes. In Game 1 we played about 47. Going into OT that last couple of seconds we slipped up. We played a full 48 minutes in that win in Miami. That's what it's going to take. We did it on the defensive end. We got off to a great start. We were able to rally their comeback and still find ways to score late. He's playing phenomenal. Other than Timmy, he's been the best center in this game right now, thus far in this postseason. That's the reason why we've done so well. Because we're getting a huge contribute from the post area. Yeah, that's huge. That's huge. Because their half court defense is so tough to score on. Roy takes it upon himself to create opportunities for us. Myself, Lance, George, we try to get our buckets in transition and early offense strikes. But when it's late in the shot clock, Roy finds a way to duck himself down there and get some easy baskets for us. Yeah. Yeah. Because we want to come out with energy. It's a three game series right now. We don't want to have to rely on doing our work here to not get eliminated. So we want to continue to keep the pressure on them. Yeah, but it is what it is. We will I will say settle. We have to settle for 2 2. We wish it would have been 3 1. We didn't take care of business when we needed to. So it just makes the job a little tougher. But that's the playoffs. |
| 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. |
| David West understands what's at stake. You can tell at times he wasn't fully there. He was trying to fight through and give it his all. We very grateful to have a player like that. That's just David West stepping up to the challenge. And we still went to him, because we know David West, we'll take David West any day. Sick or healthy. He just gave us his all. Made some huge plays for us. The shots he knocked down really was in the clutch moments. And we needed those. That's just the kind of player David West is. I think it was a little bit of both. We executed well. No, but really, what separated was us being able to get in transition and trying to strike early against Miami, because their half court defense is tough. But still, we found opportunities to strike early. And we really executed. We were finding guys in the pick and roll and having Roy or David West make plays out of that. It was just Roy making a huge play. He's one of the, if not the best, defensive big in this league. And I'm glad he's being able to highlight that this series. I think if the voting if they continue to vote who is going to be Defensive Player of the Year, he would have gotten the award. But that's just him making a huge play at the rim. And then the refs calling the tech or whatnot, I didn't really know what was going on. I was just proud of the play that Roy made at the rim. We knew they were going to make a run. This team, they're deadly offensively. They can really put points up. That's just us staying together, being poised, and just rallying you know that effort they made. Again, Lance made some big plays offensively on the boards to get us some extra possessions. We shared the ball. We just made huge plays when we really needed to. It was just a credit to our guys playing our hearts out tonight. |
| 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. |
| We're here to win. It doesn't matter how we're categorized. It's been a lot of years since we've been here. We're just happy to be back here. Old veterans, whatever you want to call us. We're in the mix right now. Just great to get the first game under our belts. I didn't change anything, honestly. The first five shots I got were all good shots actually minus one. The first four shots were really good shots. Shots I usually make. Shots I'm comfortable taking. So I didn't change anything about it. I think I got a lay up to go, and that kind of changed it for me and just kind of went from there. We knew at some point they would do that. Tony made a couple of shots down the stretch there. That's when they switched it over. Tony made some great calls to get some switches in the right places, and then the unbelievable shot he made to obviously we're going to make adjustments. That's what Pop does. We understand that when it comes down to it, LeBron is going to be their best defender. They are going to put him on Tony. We have to continue to execute, continue to attack and just try to get TP as much space as possible. Yeah, they were great all around. I thought Kawhi did an excellent job staying in front of LeBron. You're not going to stop him. You just have to try to stay in front of him as much as possible and make his life as tough as possible. Our guys got a lot of open shots. We didn't shoot the ball real well, but we made enough shots down the stretch to extend a lead and get a win here. We'll shoot the ball better. We love the shots that we got. And all around I thought we did an excellent job. We made plays down the stretch. I think we got a couple of offensive rebounds down the stretch and put them back in. We did what we had to do. And all around the board we did a great job. Yeah. It was a key coming in here that we need to take care of the ball. Their pressure defense is what they do, their ability to get in the open court. I think it was a bit of a nightmare, the very first play they come and make a turnover, they run it back and they dunk it right down the middle. That's what we want to stay away from, obviously. That's where they're at their best. So we took care of the ball very well. As I said, we had some plays down the stretch on the offensive glass. I think we had one or two tip ins down the stretch there. That's where we have to continue to attack and continue to rebound the ball. Yeah. I would imagine they are going to use just about everybody they have there. It's usually Haslem starting on me. When they go smaller, I might have Bosh on me. Chris Andersen obviously can come in. So they are going to use all those guys. I know enough about them and I've prepared enough for them. Nothing really changes on how I attack. I just kind of play it as it comes. I don't know. I think at this point my mind was just blank. I just wanted him to get a shot up in the air. I was trying to get position on the board, trying to work Bosh up the lane a little bit, so I could get back to the board. I see him go down and I'm just praying he gets a shot off. Obviously, Tony makes an unbelievable play. He does just about everything in the book that he had. He fell to the ground, pump faked, stepped through and still got it off the ground. It was just amazing. |
| 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 |
| Obviously, if that be the case, it would be a huge loss for us. We played all season long with minus a couple of guys in different cases for whatever amount. I was gone for ten games, Tony was gone for a little while, Manu was gone for a little while. We made adjustments. We played without individuals. On this stage at this time it would be obviously a huge loss for us. Just getting out and just shooting individually. Just getting out there and just working on my game individually more than anything. And obviously just in game rhythm doesn't come from anything but in game. Just being on the floor and seeing a shot go in or making a play somewhere and all that stuff helps your confidence. He's been great with some of the younger guys, with Kawhi, Gary and Danny. You see him talking to them all the time during time outs or practice. Just staying in their ears about different things. I thought he's done a really good job of that, giving them tips here and there. I think it will automatically swing that way. I don't think I would put it on myself per se, but it will kind of come that way. The responsibility will fall on my shoulders more, obviously, and Manu as well. So we both will try to step up even more in the absence of his. I don't think there's anything wrong with LeBron's offense. We're guarding him with five guys. We understand what kind of player he is. He's the best player in the world, so we're respecting him as that. So we're trying to make his life as difficult as possible every time he touches the ball. When he comes out in the open court, that's obviously where he really thrives. If we can keep those away and keep his rhythm down, it's better for us. I don't think he expresses enough emotion to know either way. He's always the same. He's always even keeled and he always looks like he's right where he wants to be. No, I don't think I heard him say more than four or five words in a row or he sounded displeased in some way. That was about it. Yes. All of that and probably a lot more. Honestly, I don't read anything. I don't watch SportsCenter. I don't watch sports. I don't watch anything. I don't know what's said and I don't really care. I show up to play the games. We're here at this point and that's all that matters. As I said, I kind of stay away from that. So I don't even know how I guess if you allow yourself to be affected by it, and you allow yourself to look and read everything, then everyone is under a microscope. As I said, I don't envy that kind of scrutiny and pressure in any way. |
| 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. |
| I just thought he was a bit more aggressive. I know that's kind of the answer to everything. He's a bit more aggressive. He looked for his shot a bit more. And on top of that, just let the game come to him. He made some great plays, got the floor spread for him, got to attack the basket. Just got more opportunities more than anything. I think that's what it came down, just get more opportunities. A tremendous amount. A tremendous amount. We're not a team or an organization that kind of points fingers in that respect. I know it's on the media to find out what's wrong with everybody, what happened whatever game, but he's such a huge part of what we do. And how far we've come. And you can see it tonight in how we played and the results of the game. So we're always confident in him. We don't look at the stats and say, hey, it's his fault or his fault or his fault. We know he has it in him and we hope he can bring it for at least one more win. I waited for my opportunities. I played off the pick and rolls. I got to open spots. I played off of people more than anything. It's what's being given to me this series. It's what my role is. And I'm just playing that. Yeah, he's been unbelievable. Especially on this stage. He's shooting the ball so well. We're asking him to defend Dwyane Wade and LeBron and all these guys. He's got a lot on his shoulders and he's stepped up and answered the bell. He's been unbelievable. I hope he doesn't wake up and keeps playing this way. Yeah, we played more the minutes better. We still had too many turnovers. We still ended with 18 turnovers. That's still a bit much. But we shot the ball a lot better, moved the ball a lot better. We moved their defense very well. And we had a lot of guys attacking and making shots. So if we're going to turn the ball over that much, we have to play as well as we did. We still have things we can clean up in that respect, which is great. If we can take care of those turnovers, because we can't expect to shoot that well in every game, but we just need one more. So hopefully we can. Experience plays a role. We've been in situations like this. We've been together for a long time. So that definitely plays a role. I think we're just trying to do all we can to will it to happen. We hope we can respond better next game than we have after wins. That's the one thing we want to clean up. I think every one of us wants this very badly from the top on down. We're trying to play that way. We just need to put it on the floor and understand the kind of energy and the kind of aggression they're going to come with next game, and counter that with continuing to play well, moving the ball, and finding ways to find open guys. He did seem dejected. He was obviously he's a competitor, an extreme competitor. And he wants to play well and he wants to help our team do well. Just like a lot of us, we lose games and we take the blame for it. He's just the same way. And he wanted to play well. He wanted to play well really badly. I knew he would come out tonight. I knew he would play well. Everything that happens happens because of Pop. He makes all the calls. He let us know yesterday that he was going to start, and we were all excited about it. I'm really excited for Manu, for his performance tonight, but we need him to do it one more time. We need one more win. We need all of us to show up and play well. We'll be satisfied and happy about all that stuff if we can win one more. We honestly didn't change a whole lot. I thought we put a little more effort into it. We cleaned up a couple of mistakes. We're just trying to make their life as hard as possible. There are three incredible players that obviously have gotten their team to this point for three years in a row. They're some of the best players in the league. All we can do is try to do the best we can to make their life as hard as possible. I thought we did a better job in the open court, trying to keep them in front of us, not giving up lay ups like we did in that past game, that last game, and in that respect that changed the game a bit for us. |
| 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 |
| It was extremely important, you know, especially playing against the two time champs. This is a game we needed, and we couldn't let this one go. We had a past of dropping Game 1's in this playoff run, and that would have been a huge setback against this team. Yeah, yeah, I thought we just did a great job of moving the ball. We didn't let the ball sit in one person's hand all night or all afternoon. The ball constantly was in rotation. So guys were coming and stepping into shots with a rhythm, and that's the reason why we were able to get off to a hot start and shoot the ball well to start this game off. Well, having Battier on me, I think I'm a little quicker. So it doesn't pose that much of a threat for me. But I don't know. It was a move to kind of change the game up, for them to stay small. Obviously, LeBron can guard multiple positions. And they're aware of that, so I think that's what that move was for. In the past, David West has been pretty effective with Battier on him. So maybe that was the reason for the switch. I don't know. I don't know. That's something we'll have to look back on and a question Spo will have to answer about the adjustments they're going to make for Game 2. It was great. It was a fun matchup, the one that we've been waiting for all year, the chance to battle this team once again. We had a great crowd, great atmosphere. Just happy we were able to complete Game 1 and get this win. I think just getting into pick and rolls. We veered away from pick and rolls. I think we got back to being sharp as far as hitting a roll man and causing rotations against that. That's what's consistent with this group is hitting the pick and rolls and hitting our roll man. Yeah, because our bigs are great. We need a support system to help them when they're posting up and give them one on one matchups on the block. If we're not shooting the ball well, it's going to be a tough night for them as well. I thought it was a great job on our part, again, of getting guys great looks, getting shots in rhythm, and helping our bigs out. Energy. We played with a great energy tonight. That's been an area where we lacked this postseason, being consistent with our energy and urgency to start games off. I thought we brought that tonight. We brought a toughness. We brought an edge. We brought an aggression, or we were aggressive on both ends of the floor. I thought guys you know, if a play broke down, we made an extra effort to not, I guess, just take what was available, but we pushed the effort a little bit. At the end of the day, that's where we were able to really get a good lead on this team. A lot of times, we kind of just take whatever the defense gives us, but I thought George, Lance, myself, David, Roy, we all gave the extra effort to make plays. He's been able to control them. He's definitely been able to control them. That's as much as I could say on that. He's learned to be a professional. He's just an emotional person. That's what we need though. We need a guy with that energy, that toughness. He gets out of hand sometimes, but we can live with most of it. But I thought he did a great job tonight of just staying poised and keeping himself within the game. I don't know the track record, but we know we're playing against the champions, two time champions, and they're going to come out and make adjustments. It's not going to be nowhere close to Game 1. We expect that. So everything we did tonight has got to be that much more in Game 2 in order for us to move on. That will be the test. That will be the test. We've been complacent many times in series and throughout the whole year. We just can't get complacent. We've got to stay humbled off this win and come in with the same mindset that we've got to get another one and let it go from there. We know Miami's going to play well at home. They play well on the road as well, but we like our chances being at home. Roy. Roy was big. He was very big in the paint. Any time Roy is in the paint, he has a huge size advantage. So you've got to foul him. You've got to foul him. He's going to put himself in position to get fouled, and I thought he did that. But our guys did a great job of attacking, attacking to the rim, attacking their bigs. Again, posting with physicality. To really just shoulder everything. I think he's going to be much more aggressive with the ball. I think he's going to be looking to make more plays, looking to shoot more shots and really looking to get guys going. So it's going to be a tough night for me, but it's part of the league. It's tough because Bosh didn't have a good game. When those three are locked in, that's when they're really at their best, and their role players contribute from all over the floor. I think, had Bosh had a bigger role, played a bigger game for them, this game would have been a lot more tougher than it already was. But we got to just do a great job of containing the rest of their guys. They've got three great guys on their team who are going to make shots, make plays, make the special plays, but if we do a good job of containing everyone else, we'll be all right. |
| 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. |
| Excuse me if I'm a little shaken up. I was in a cold tub. I didn't start this game off hot. Early on, I got into a rhythm for the first couple of possessions. Really the first quarter, I felt good. Second quarter, the ball didn't drop, but I knew we were facing elimination. Coach told me green light. Stay on green. D. West kept telling me, "Don't keep no bullets in the chamber." So I really just came out firing. My teammates found me, and I got hot. Yeah. I like to just play. Let us play. It's the Conference Finals. Let everything just be left on the floor. I knew I was going to have to step to the plate. My teammates needed me to make plays down the stretch, and I was fortunate enough to do so for us. No, you know, I felt in the rhythm, regardless of who was guarding me. I think I seen every defender from the Heat tonight. I was just in the zone. Again, regardless of who was guarding me, I felt like that ball was going to go in that net, and that's a great, unbelievable feeling. It's always tough. It's always tough night in and night out to guard the best player in this league. It wears on you. You're going to be inconsistent shooting the ball when you're shooting jumpers. But tonight it went my way, and I was going to keep my foot on the gas. I knew I couldn't let up because they were making plays on the other end as well. My teammates was aware of it. They kept feeding me the ball and looking for me on the offensive end. I mean, we're going against history, but we can't feel like it can't be done. Every player in our locker room, every trainer, every coach, everybody in this organization have to feel like we can accomplish this. And we believe. We honestly believe we can accomplish this one. It's going to be tough. Like we say, it's one game at a time. That's just how we've got to treat it. It's Lance being Lance. He's been special for us, and whether he's scoring the ball, making plays, causing confrontation, you know, Lance is special, and there's a reason why we gain an edge and some opportunities during games. A lot of it comes from Lance. So we need that. Again, he's always got to make sure he's monitoring it, but I didn't think nothing was out of the spirit of the game tonight. Yeah, I just saw it. I just saw it. I hope his breath wasn't too bad for LeBron. What was it like? When he was in foul trouble, everybody had to be aggressive. That's a huge weapon that they're missing. Everybody was aware that he was on the bench and how limited this team was without him and how much everybody had to step up. And they did. They knocked down 15 threes. I thought a lot of players took on a huge role. But it's not going to be like that in Game 6. We're expecting LeBron to be LeBron, and that's how we want it. LeBron is the smartest player in this league. He's going to make the right play, and he thought that was the right play. They made 15 threes tonight. So obviously, they were hot behind the three point line. He found a three point shooter that's been hot lately for them in Chris Bosh. We were fortunate he missed. We walk away with a win. We're capable of winning the ballgame with LeBron scoring 30 to 40 points. It's Rashard Lewis having six threes that we've got to be cautious of. Ray contributing with 15 off the bench we've got to be cautious of. It's some areas where we can hold up with LeBron having a spectacular game. You know, again, it's containing the role players to make sure they don't have big nights. We know, with our backs against the wall, we've proved that we can come out. This is different. This is definitely different. We're playing against the champions. So we're happy to get this win, have our season still be alive, but it's going to be tough. It's going to be tough. We're not expecting any of this to be easy, this whole trip. We've got to do one possession at a time down in Miami, and we can't turn the ball over in this Game 6. This Game 6 is going to be about performing like champions. Well, I was asked earlier today about having my print on this game, and I felt I needed to have a print on this game. So that was always in the back of my mind is, how can I impact this game where we can continue to keep playing? So that was it. I knew I had to make some plays on the defensive end, getting steals, playing scrappy basketball, as well as trying to contribute on the offensive end. Again, that was in the back of my mind the whole night is, how can I be an impactful player for us? Well, this year, everybody I'll go on last year. Last year was me stepping up to the plate and rising to a new level. This year was about how can I grow from that and expand to another level? So it's just about rising to the occasion every night, you know, how can I we've got a great team. We've got a great group and a group that can very well move on to the championship. So I just have to make sure every night just ask myself, did I leave everything on the floor? Whether I'm making shots or not, whether I'm rebounding every ball, getting steals, deflections, I just ask myself, am I doing enough? At the end of the day, more times than not, I feel like I'm giving my all. No. I mean, Dwyane was the one that was going. Dwyane was the one that was taking all the load when LeBron was out, and I still was matching up with Dwyane. It was just the flow of the game. It was really just the flow of the game. It wasn't no where we came together and me and Lance decided to guard different matchups. It was just the flow of the game. If LeBron was on one side of the floor, Lance was going to stay and guard whoever was on the side of that floor. |
| 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. |
| I thought we played through it well. I think it affected both teams. It definitely affected both teams. It got to a couple different of guys and cramps started setting in. I thought Pop continued to switch guys in and out, keep us as fresh as possible and we finally got to a point where we took care of the ball and we got a chance to make a run and made 'em pay. I think just that, just what I said. We took care of the ball finally. We had 20 some odd turnovers for 28 points the last seven or eight minutes. We only turned the ball over once or twice. And getting them out of the passing lanes, keeping them in front of us, making them score over us, and we found something that worked on the offensive end. Started moving the ball and Danny Green got hot and hit a couple of shots and really opened it up for us. Honestly, the way he shoots the ball, I assume every time he shoots it it's going to go in. So we want to get him as many shots as possible. He's a confident, capable shooter. And I think Pop has instilled a lot of confidence in him in the fact that when he has a crack, he can shoot the ball. And that takes a lot of pressure off him deciding what shots to shoot and what shots not to shoot. So he hits one or two and then we call a play for him, he hits another one and that really opens up the game for us. Yeah, pretty close. Pretty close. I don't think I've ever played in anything like this since I left the islands. It was pretty bad out there. I honestly didn't see it until we had numbers going the other way, and I looked back and he was kind of on the baseline, limping on the baseline. That's the first time I really noticed. I think he asked out of the game once or twice before that, so we knew he was getting tired but we were all getting tired out there. So I didn't assume it was anything more than him getting tired and getting a blow. Him in or out, obviously he's one of the best players in the league. He's going to make a difference, but we played through all that. And as I said, we started taking of the ball and that was the difference. He was great tonight, he was great. We continued to roll and get in the middle of the defense and make the right reads. He finished some great ones in there, made some plays for us, made some good reads and passed it out to shooters. He's been playing well all season long and he knows what he has to do now, and he knows what he has to do and he's confident if he gets fouled he can go to the line, and knock off free throws, with all that said he put it together tonight. I don't know how to respond to that. We wanted to win it badly, and we just kind of stuck with it. I think Manu was out there for the entire fourth quarter. He was very effective tonight, moving the ball, making the right passes and made some shots early that kept us in the game. We both want it bad and we're both willing to do whatever. We're trying to stick to the game plan as much as possible and make plays when we can. What adjustments we made? We had a bad third quarter, almost 10 turnovers, and that was the difference for us. It took us until halfway through the fourth until we really figured it out and started taking care of the ball. So I think the third was our worst quarter, and we allowed them to up their pressure, allowed them to get in the passing lanes and allowed them to get in the open court and score some easy ones when we were able to keep them in front of us, and make them work for what they got. They still scored the ball but this was tougher than them getting out and running out on us. We're one step closer to four wins, it doesn't matter what happened last year. We know there is a lot of things we can clean up, and we're going to come in here on Sunday and hopefully play better and come out with another one. |
| 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. |
| Unfortunately it's how basketball goes. We knew they were going to make a run. We were obviously trying to stay away from that, but started out the third quarter, they made a quick three point play and a three pointer in transition. Just plays happen. That's how it happens. We were able to at the other end continue to take care of the ball, continue to attack. Understand that they're going to make a run, but even with their run, we're still up double digits at that point. And just not lose our composure and try to get it all back in one play. So we did just that. Finished out the quarter good, and continued in that fourth quarter to keep control. Well, they were the keys to the game. They took over the game. Kawhi was aggressive. He's been getting we've been on him about continuing to play. Foul trouble has been a problem for him in the first couple games and it kind of took him out of his game. And Danny's been shooting the ball well. They really got up and tried to make him do something else, and he made some great decisions there. Made some plays and finished them. Defensively, he was solid, he got hands on balls and knocked them away. Made some plays for himself, got himself in the open court and finished. Those guys were huge for us. They were the difference in the game tonight. Well, you don't tell them anything. You're either going to shoot well or you're not. The effort that they have there, the focus they have defensively, they can bring that nightly. They can bring that every night and they can make defensive efforts like they did tonight. Whatever happens on the other end happens on the other end. But it was a huge boost for us to get offensive performances like that from them. We're not going to expect to get that from them. But hopefully if we continue to get them shots and get them open, hopefully they'll continue to do that for us. I didn't know, honestly. I wasn't paying any attention to that. We were just kind of pushing the ball and things were working for us, and we were kind of going with the flow. I didn't look at a stat sheet. I didn't look up. I didn't look at the score. I just wanted to get a good start in, and things were falling how they were. Boris has been great all playoffs, in the entire playoffs. His ability to attack off the dribble, his passing ability. When they collapsed, he made some great passes, made some great plays, and his ability to finish at the basket as well. So just gave us another attack guy out there. Tiago's been playing great. He's finishing at the basket and making plays. But to have someone like Boris who can stretch your floor and make plays like a point guard in there and make decisions and punish them for their rotation, it was big for us. I don't know that there was much difference. I thought the Heat just turned up their intensity for a while and they got a couple turnovers, made a couple plays and made a couple shots. It was just the ebbs and flows of a game. We were able to only sustain it for a short while and get right back into it. They won that third quarter. We couldn't score the ball, but we were still up 10 or 11 at that point, and as I said, we just don't panic. We don't start forcing bad things, we continue to share the ball, move the ball, and get the lead back up. Luckily I played with him a bunch during the lockout time. He came down and worked out with us when we were before the team was together. So I kind of got an early look at him. I thought he had a lot of work to do. He wasn't shooting the ball like he does now. But Pop and the guys saw something in him and they allowed him to kind of develop and find his own way. Last year I think he really got his confidence and understood what had he to do, and he continues to evolve year after year. This year you can see when he gets in a groove like that, he can be special. |
| No, we didn't plan on that, but we thought that we could come in here and win these games. We've won games on the road in the playoffs, and we thought we could win here. We hoped to win two, obviously, but we were happy to win one. Then came the second game we didn't want to rest and say, hey, we've got one and let's just rest on that. We came in here tonight and had great focus, put a great game together, and came out with two. Yeah, great position for us, obviously, going back home with a closeout game. They're a very, very good ballclub. Obviously, they're the champions, and they're going to come out and show a lot of fire and come with a lot of energy. We're going to use our homecourt and we're going to come with the same focus that we did in these last two games, and hopefully close it out at home. It's not a focus on building a wall in the paint, but making their shots as tough as possible. They're both unbelievable players. They're both very good at getting to the rim, very good at finishing around the rim, and we just wanted to stay in front of them and make their shots tough. Whatever that turned into, that's what we needed it to be. So we're sending more than one defender against them. We're asking Kawhi and Danny and the rest of our perimeter guys to do a very tough job in pressuring them and making their life difficult, and we're using our team defense to make everything as tough as possible. I can appreciate you saying the names and having passed them in anything. It's an honor to be in that position. Having won helps, obviously, but the focus is winning one more, and once that one more is done, I can look back and say, hey, it's truly an honor. It will definitely come up. It will definitely come up. As I said, we know the caliber team they are, and we have a lot of respect for what they're able to do. They're able to throw it into another gear, and they're going to do just that. They don't want this to be done. They feel they can they've already won on our homecourt, so they feel they can do it again, and we don't want to give them any life. So we're going to use these two days to really get rested up, come out on Sunday and lay it on the line. Yeah, there was, there was. We won big in that first game, and we knew that they were going to come back with a kind of energy and kind of really attack the rim and make us play a different way. I thought our game plan pretty much remained the same. I thought we executed very effectively, shot the ball really well and got some play, great play from Tony, and Kawhi and Boris. Guys stepped up and made plays when we had to. At the same time, we continued to move the ball, share the ball, and just find a way to get it done. Yeah, he's been amazing, especially this series. I think he's really found his rhythm. He's always been effective with what he's done using his body, using his ability to pass and his ability to attack the basket and smaller players, and it's really showing in this series. He's been the key for us early, catching and driving, making the right plays, finding open people. He's really changed the game for us, along with rebounding, defending as well as he has. He hasn't really even scored that much, but he's found a way to be really effective getting in the paint and finding people and making plays for us. |
| Very special. It was already a special day, but to do it at home, to do it with my kids and my family and my friends here made it so much more special. Just a great experience, and a great experience for them. It is. It is. For whatever reason, it is sweeter than any other, whether it be because of the timeframe, because I'm coming towards the end of my career, because I can have these two here and really remember it and enjoy the experience, all of those things make it that much more special. It helped. What happened last year definitely helped our drive and stay focused for an extended period of time. It very easily could have hit us in different ways and we could have reacted in different ways. But we reacted the right way. We got great leadership from the top in Pop who came back absolutely fired up and ready to go, and to push us this far and this hard and to come out with the championship is amazing. It's amazing to think about having done this five times. The kind of company I'm in, the people who have had such amazing careers and having had the ability to have one, and for the stretch, and the span between them, to still be in a situation where we can win or I can win another championship is just an amazing blessing, and it's not taken lightly. I'll say a little bit of both . Very, very old when you put it like that. But as I said, that span and to be effective and to be on teams and to be starting, I feel a real part of what we had done this year, just it's an amazing feeling. Honestly? Don't listen to the media He's been unbelievable. He came in here after a lockout season, worked hard with us during that summer, and I can't say that I saw the player that I saw tonight at that point. What R.C. and Pop saw in him for him to become the player he is today, it's amazing because that summer I was like, hey, we gave up someone. It was George Hill who had been playing really solid for us. Obviously, you get attached to people and disappointed in that. He comes in here and don't know a thing about him. He works hard and continues to improve year after year. You see him play the first two games and everybody's talking to him. Everybody's saying to him: Just stick with it, just play hard, do the little things, whatever, whatever, whatever. And he shows up in the last three games and just plays out of his mind. He's not worried about just doing the little things. He wants to do it all, and he plays with a confidence that is just amazing. I'm honored to be on this team right now because he's going to be great for years to come, and I'm going to hold on as long as I can. Going from the youngest to the oldest? It happens. It happens. I'm blessed to be in the position that I can sit here and be asked that question and to be on a championship team and to even think about what that means. It's I can't explain. It's amazing to be a part of this for so long. Yeah, I have no idea. I don't know. I told someone I don't think we heard the horn in the beginning. We just we knew they'd come out with energy. We knew they'd come out and try to knock us down early, and I think we helped that. We just came out, we weren't getting shots up, we were turning the ball over. We were doing exactly what we did when we lost Game 2. But we kept our focus. We kept saying to each other that it's a long game and it's going to turn. And we get guys like Patty Mills step in and Kawhi starts stepping up, and Manu coming in with some great energy. That is the beauty of the team that we've had this year. We've had 10, 12 guys with the ability to step in and make a difference, and you see that tonight with the guys stepping in and finding a way to turn the game for us and give us a chance to win. It will be easy to remember from what we went through last year to every little step that we took this year. It was a very hard working team, a very focused and resilient team. This will be a very easy to team to remember top to bottom. We had a lot of guys that really laid it on the line, gave of themselves. We had guys that could have scored more, could have done more, could have been more this and more of that, but they gave it all up to be a part of one of the best teams in basketball, and that's what we'll remember them for. Yeah. I don't know. I'm guessing you're leading me into a question that I'm not going to answer, so I'll just go ahead and avoid that one. He said what do you think of your dad tonight Say something nice about me. |
| 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. |
| We've got to start the game better, get settled into the game a lot quicker than we did tonight. We only had 12 turnovers, but it seemed like there were some timely ones that killed a little bit of momentum for us, and we'll look at that on film. But, I mean, over the course of the game I felt like we stuck to the game plan. LeBron's going to dominate the ball and make plays. We have to just make it hard on him every possession. Don't give him any easy buckets, and not let anybody else get a rhythm, and that's what we're going to try to do every game we play against them. Obviously, there are going to be adjustments here and there, and we'll figure that out, but you've got to compete, and that is the bottom line. Yeah, they only scored two points, and it was at the very end. Andre, Draymond, Klay, Harrison, Festus, when he was in there in that overtime period, all competed. We were kind of small and we had to defend the glass and rebound the ball. Everybody sacrificed their body and made it work. I think we just forced them into tough shots the whole overtime, and we were able to get stops with that lineup that we had. We were able to push in transition, get to the free throw line, which got some momentum on our side. It was just a classic five minutes that we needed to get that win. If we win every game at home we'll be all right in the series, so that is a start. You have to come in ready to compete and kind of just, especially in the first game, kind of feel it out because it's our fourth team we're playing in the playoffs, and they've got a different style, and you've got to adjust, and we need to be able to do that. Yeah, just reading the situation. They had switched a couple pick and rolls, and you just go into your move and make a read, and thankfully he bit on the pump fake and I was able to kind of slow the game down and get to the free throw line. Did it again right after that. But after that, it all doesn't work if we don't get stops, so that's what fuelled all of that. It was just a read. Andre had him bodied up at the free throw line, and they had made a pass and kind of short distance, so I didn't have to run very far to get a hand in there. I got a deflection, but Andre chased it down. Used his length and speed to get to the ball, which I had no chance to get to it after I deflected it. He was the only one that had a chance to get it, and we were able to lock it down. He gets fouled, and we have control of the game at that point. So just a read that thankfully worked out. If I remember correctly he went out later in the overtime, so it was about three minutes where you were just out there playing and you have to adjust to his play making that he was doing all game. But at that point I felt like we had control of the overtime, and just about finishing out. So I don't know if it had a huge impact or not. |
| 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. |
| We want to make it as tough on him as possible. He obviously has a game plan for his defense on us to try to get into you and do whatever he can to try to make you uncomfortable, so you\'re going to do it back to him and make him work on the offensive end. Because he obviously had some pivotal shots in game or a pivotal shot in Game 3 that helped them get the win. So if you try to make him uncomfortable the whole game, you might wear him down and get into that battle a little more. So I think it worked. And to answer your question, he pretty much embodies what he just talked about, always being ready. I think he likes the challenge of his match up, and especially in this series and throughout the course of the season. Or each game no matter what he\'s asked to do, being ready to do it. Confidence in knocking down his shots when he\'s open, making plays. And we know his knack for just being impactful on the defensive end, whether it\'s playing one on one defense, getting steals, rebounds, blocking shots, he does it all. So it showed tonight and a huge reason why we\'re 2 2 going home. I think it I mean, it made sense when he told us just because we\'ve been getting off to such slow starts. When we have that lineup out there in parts of the game, we were able to turn defensive stops into transition and just pick the tempo and the pace of the game up. And if we can do that from the jump, we thought we\'d put some pressure on them and not let them be so comfortable with the lead like they\'ve had the last couple games. Obviously, they jumped out to a 7 0 run, but we settled in and played that first quarter, I think, pretty aggressively on both ends of the floor. Gave them a different look, and I think it worked. So he mentioned, obviously, just because we started that lineup tonight doesn\'t mean you can just go out there and expect to have the same results in Game 5. We have to actually do something about it and execute the game plan with whoever\'s out there. So we\'ve got to be ready for any adjustment we\'re going to make. Not afraid to take a chance, and obviously it\'s not a blind guess. He\'s obviously invested in our team and a smart coach that is willing to, like you said, make adjustments to help us be in a better position to win a game. We still need Bogut to be productive when he gets on the floor, and he\'s obviously going to play minutes and have an impact throughout the rest of the series, so we want to make sure he\'s still locked in. I know he will be. But Coach manages all that really well. You\'ve got to take a chance, I think, with the situation that we were in tonight. For a total of 48 minutes, definitely, since Game 1. We\'ve had spurts where, obviously, the last quarter in Game 3, the last 3:00 minutes of Game 2 we got to our identity, but it was a little too late. Tonight we came in with the mentality that, obviously, like we were saying, we had to win this game. It was about effort and consistent effort every possession. It\'s obviously not perfect. We still can play a little bit better, I think. But the effort was at a level that it erased some of those mistakes and we just battled from the start. So we gave ourselves a shot, and shots go in. Everybody starts to feel good. You pick up some momentum, and you get a big road win. I was kind of at fault for a lot of that. I had two turnovers in transition, where you can\'t have that and you give them extra possessions. Once we settled down, Coach got into us during the timeout and challenged us to answer their run, which we knew they were going to make. We weren\'t going to run away with the game at halftime. We knew we would really have to put together a solid effort in the second half to withstand the run that they were going to have, and that was a good calling card moment for us. H.B. comes out of the timeout and knocks down the three. We close out the last three minutes strong, and have a six point lead going into the fourth quarter, and the rest is kind of history. Just our effort in the fourth quarter knowing it was winning time. I don\'t know if there was a specific adjustment other than just playing smarter and keeping our composure |
| What is the best way to say really bad? I mean, a long season goes into these last moments of The Finals series. We fought hard all year and put ourselves in good position now to go to Cleveland and hopefully close it out. So we're confident. We're not getting ahead of ourselves. In the locker room, if you walked in there was the exact same after a regular season win. But we know the sense of urgency of the moment. It's a good feeling to get a win in Cleveland and understand we can get it done and how we need to get it done. So ready for the opportunity. It's a chess match, and we both have a lot of wings and guards that can fill a five man lineup. And they made an adjustment. Didn't play Mozgov pretty much at all in the whole game. So they tried to match our lineup. Obviously over 48 minutes we feel like we can be versatile with who we can throw out there and how we're going to win games. I'm sure there will be another adjustment going into Game 6 that our coaching staff will make and obviously theirs as well. We've just got to be 1 through 14 locked in. That's been our calling card all year. Whoever steps on the floor is going to give us something. L.B. came in tonight and did what he was supposed to do and impacted the game on the offensive end and defensive end. Can't be said enough what H.B. was able to do in his minutes with putbacks, giving us extra possessions, being physical in the paint. He really changed the game. Especially in the fourth quarter he got us three extra possessions that we needed. So everybody's got to be ready, and I think that will hopefully give us a good chance to win in Game 6. I mean, those are plays I've been making all year and the ones I feel confident in. I think it helps to have gone through Game 2 where we were rushing a little bit in the same situation. A one or two possession game in the fourth quarter, and we got I call them better shots because they were more in rhythm than in Game 2 where it was come down, look for the first shot. Don't even run any sets, only running screen and rolls, and we didn't kind of settle into them. And obviously when one goes in, it helps keep your confidence high. Yeah. It's more screen and roll heavy, and I love the chemistry I have with this guy right next to me to be able to make those plays. Because if he's not a threat, then they can kind of go all out and sell out on the traps. And that's how we've been effective all year, like I said, because we have the versatility and the talent, all 1 through 5 on the floor, to be able to make those plays. If I come off and they trap, I've got faith in Draymond to make the right play. He finds open guy or he's able to finish. He got us like six free throw attempts just off of him catching in that wide open space and making the play and attacking the big or whoever was rotating at the rim, knowing they didn't have really a shot blocker besides Tristan. So he was able to get to the free throw line and get us some easy points and I was able to attack when they were kind of in between, not really knowing what they wanted to do in the pick and roll, and gave me some open looks from three too. I mean, it was a fun moment, but it only means something, and I'll probably have a better answer for that question after we win the championship because signature moments only come for players who are holding the trophy at the end of the day. So I can sit here and talk about what a great play it was and what a turning moment it might have been, but we have to be able to back it up and finish the job. It helped us win this game, and hopefully after our next win we can talk about all the great moments in the series. I thought it was a heady play. A fouling situation. He did tell me well, we won't go into that. But I think I two shots I'll knock them down, he'll probably knock them down too. But I need to get that ball. |
| It makes it so much more special to have gone through some down years and injuries and transition from a roster standpoint and to be able to sit here six years later from my rookie year and hold this trophy, this is an unbelievable experience. Love every single one of my teammates that sacrificed, put in the work, the time for us to be able to enjoy this. The coaching staff as well. So it just makes it so much more special to have gone through some lows, gradually work your way up every year, learn some things, and it all came to fruition with the championship trophy. Same thing. He's taken a solid foundation that we built over the last three years. Obviously Coach Jackson had a huge part in changing our identity, and Coach Kerr came in and was very humble about how he was going to approach his job. Because, like I said, he had a lot of talent to work with, a great coaching staff, but he had some ideas as well that he wanted to implement. Ball movement, player movement, managing all the different personalities and situations, handled them so well. Made sure everybody was accountable, like Klay said. Every decision he made, I think everybody bought into it. Whether you understood it or not, you bought into it. Because he's a champion. He's won five of these or something like that, so you've got to trust a guy that's been here before and his view for our team. To block out the noise. That's the biggest thing. Because it's obviously just you and another team, and all eyes are on you every single step you take. But it's all about winning. Stats really don't matter. I mean, guys have great series and all that and people take notice and take their place in history with those stats and all that stuff. But at the end of the day, it's all about winning and what you can do to help your team get to that point. I can speak volumes about the guy sitting next to me. You look at his stat line tonight, he had a lot of foul trouble and didn't really get going, but when he was in there, he was defending. He was playing physical, and he was doing everything he could to help us win. Little things like that make this trophy possible. And it takes every guy that steps on the floor. So that's the biggest thing I learned. Stats and numbers and story lines, they're fun to kind of watch, but you've got to kind of block that out and just worry about winning. Oh, man, he was special. Obviously he deserved that Finals MVP for the way he impacted the game on both ends and was always ready. I don't think I learned anything new about him because I know that's who he is, and he's shown that all year and throughout his career. He just needed an opportunity and stage to show the world. Playing against a great talent on the other side that was determined to try to help his team win. And Andre stepped up to that challenge every single night and a huge reason why we're celebrating right now. So can't say enough about that guy. For him to have gone through all the different things he's gone through in his career, to be able to hold a championship trophy, I know it's special. Well, I mean, we'll see. We found a recipe for success, and that's the most important thing for us. Now that we have this under our belt, I think we can actually appreciate what we were able to do this year from start to finish. It's hard in the moment to really understood what 67 wins means in the grand scheme of the history of the NBA, how hard that is. But then also to cap that off with a championship playoff run. So we'll appreciate, I think, that whole journey a lot more now, be able to reflect. I think we definitely are a great team, and a team that should go down in history as one of the best teams from top to bottom. We have a lot of things to be proud of this season. I'm just so happy, man. God is great. For us to be able to have this opportunity, and I'm going to try 1800 more ways to explain this, because this is amazing. Yes, it's an unbelievable feeling in that moment. I followed in his footsteps. I've talked about how impactful he's been in my life, just being an example on and off the court of what a true professional is and how he raised me and my brother and my sister. So to be able to have that moment was special. He's living through me and my teammates this and my whole family through this whole journey. I can't be more proud of him as a father and a role model and example for me. I hope it made him proud tonight. I know Klay is probably going to I don't know if you had that moment or not. You probably did. But your dad was a champion before. But it's special to have a guy that plays 16 years in the league, and you understand how hard it is to get to this point, and that makes it so much more special for me to have this for my family. |
| I think for us, it's never -- our game plan is never dictated. I think for us, we want to push the tempo. We want to move the ball from side to side, and we want to attack. With myself and Ky, we love to live in the paint. We love to attack, and then when the defense collapses, we're going to spread out to our shooters. Tonight they wanted us to be in the paint, and we just tried to take advantage of that. We had 56 points in the paint, and everyone was still in a great rhythm. I think probably the least amount of threes that we've shot and made probably in the postseason so far, but as I keep telling you guys every single day, we're not a jump-shooting team. You guys kept looking at me crazy about it. We're not a jump-shooting team. We're a balanced team, and whatever the game dictates, we're able to adjust to that. I don't predetermined what is going on or how they're going to defend me. I read and react. They played me straight up in the post. I just tried to make quick, solid moves to get into the paint. If they brought help, I was still going to be able to find my guys. You know, whatever the defense is doing in that possession, I'm able to read and react and know what's going on. I've seen every coverage, so definitely we have to be better in Game 2 because we know they're going to have some changes, and that's what the series is about, being able to adjust from game to game, and they're going to make adjustments, and we have to be ready for whatever. Well, we didn't rest. We just didn't have a game. We didn't rest. Coach Lue gave us one day off. Other than that, we was in the gym working, keeping our rhythm, keeping our legs ready for whenever the game was -- whenever we was going to play, so we didn't rest. We just didn't do -- we didn't have a game in front of cameras. Our whole mindset was whenever our game was going to present itself, we was going to be ready to play our game and do it the same way we've been doing that all postseason, and we were able to accomplish that tonight. I don't think we have complacency in our minds right now. We have a goal, and our goal was not nine wins. It's just not my focus. I've won nine games in the postseason before, won 14 games in the postseason before. It's not my goal, and as the leader of this team, I'm going to continue to make sure that these guys understand what our goal is and they know. They know what our goal is, and tonight was just another step in the direction that we want to head into. And we will face some adversity. We will. And we have to be able to handle that, which I think we'll be ready for. Just having the opportunity to play the game that I love in front of some unbelievable fans and unbelievable teammates. When you make plays like that, you know, it's the passion that came through. It was the excitement that my teammates was getting, looking over at the bench, the other four guys on the floor and the 20,000-plus fans that was cheering it on at that point in time, so that's where it came from. You don't know when it's going to happen. Sometimes it just happens. So yep. Well, I think no gas, the Kyrie that I see on a daily basis when you guys are not around is the Kyrie that I envisioned. He's grown every single day, every single week, month, and over the course of these last two years or year-plus, becoming a leader and becoming a staple of our team. We all knew how talented the kid was and how talented he is still today, but his growth and what he demands out of all of us, you know, as the point guard, as one of the leaders of the team. That's what's the best part about it. I mean, you roll out a ball any single day of the week, and he'll play. When you're that age, you can play as long as you want to anyways, but his growth, his mentality, and it's what's great about him right now. Well, the game ball definitely goes to our bench tonight. I mean, you look at plus-24, 20, 18, 17, all the way down, those guys gave us a boost in that second quarter, and I was out there with them. But Channing, Shump, Delly and R.J., at that moment they pushed the tempo. You just got to work at it. In practices we do a lot of work together, but we've got some very smart, cerebral players. Coach Lue is able to mix and match some lineups that he feels best fits, and that's one of the lineups that's been working pretty good for us throughout this postseason that we did not -- like you said, did not use in the regular season. So we've got to continue to work our habits. It's not going to always be as great as it was tonight in the second quarter, where we outscored them 33-16, but we've got to continue to work at it and continue to see ways we can help each other, and if we do that, we'll be fine. |
| I've seen everything. I've seen a lot, and the best thing about it, my teammates have read and react, and either given me space or given me outlets for me to make a pass to them. Tonight was another example of that. Well, I mean, it's always difficult to deal with me. I think it adds even more when you have two All-Stars with you, two guys that command multiple eyes any possession. They're so in such a great rhythm right now, I've been able to just pick my spots and do other things to help us try to win ballgames while those guys take the load. Tonight was an example of them giving me a little bit more space, and I just tried to make some plays. I don't think it feels like a streak. I think it feels like we won one game. We won the next game, and how do we prepare and be better the following game. We've taken one step at a time. We haven't overlooked any steps along this process thus far, and I think that's part of the reason we're in this position today. We have to be much better, obviously, in Game 3, going into a very hostile environment, going in there where they're extremely loud. They play well, they play faster. But we've enjoyed the process to this point, and once we got to it, we've tried to take care of business, and then once it's over, we want to learn from that instance and move on and see how we can get better the next time. Well, it's hard to say. Obviously last year there were no excuses even with these two guys out, and for me personally and the rest of the guys, we gave it everything that we had. So I didn't feel sorry for myself, didn't feel sorry for any of my teammates. We didn't feel sorry for nothing because we gave everything that we had. As far as my body, I've been telling guys all year, this is the best I've felt in a while, and I've been able to do things outside of the game that kind of help me, and then when I get to the game, obviously you have two guys like this to help you. It takes a lot of everything off of you when you have two All-Stars that can do great things. Well, I think it's a collective workload that we all put on each other throughout the break. Like I said, Coach Lue gave us one day off, and that was the game after the Sunday game in Atlanta. I believe we got Monday off, and from that point on, we all worked together just to mentally prepare our bodies, physically prepare our bodies, waiting around to see who we were going to face in the next round, but we just stayed on top of each other, trying to understand, and how can we learn from the Detroit series when we swept to the next round. We've all put in our individual work. When we're not at our practice facility, and then when we all get together, we just combine it all and just try to make the most of it. Well, first of all, for me being in a position where -- it just always takes me back to my childhood and watching so many of the greats playing basketball and saying I wish I could be a part of that or at times saying there's no way I could be a part of such a great league, there's no way. Just the statistics don't look right for me as an African-American kid growing up in the inner city. I played both sides of the fence as a kid growing up. To be in this position today where I see my name linked to a lot of the greats that have played this game and paved the way for myself and Kyrie and Kev, it means a lot. It's very humbling. It's an opportunity for my family to be proud, for my fans to be proud, so that's just a lot of respect with that. I was actually, to your second question, jogging into the locker room like we usually do off the floor, and obviously I saw a legend outside of our locker room, and I slowed my pace up drastically just to embrace a legend being in our building, watching us play. What he did for the game, the championship runs that he had with the "Showtime" Lakers and him being the all-time leading scorer in NBA history and so on and so on and so on, it's just respect. When you see a guy like that, when you put him in a class with like Jim Brown and Muhammad Ali and Oscar Robertson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, those guys all laying that same thing, Bill Russell. It was a pretty cool moment. Elaborate. We're good. We've got Tristan on our team. . We don't need them. We've got Tristan. I think it's just the even-keel mentality that he has. He's always preaching next play. Just always next play. We come to a timeout, no matter what's going on in the game, he just continues to breed confidence and talk confidence to us, the unit that's on the floor, the unit that's off the floor. Just a sense of calmness. The game is so fast. The possessions come so fast. There are a lot of things going on in between the game, and when you come to a timeout or whatever before the game or at halftime, there's just a sense of calmness. T-Lue has been great for us as the captain of this ship, and us as the soldiers or whatever you want to tell us or call us on the boat, we're just trying to follow his lead and execute it the right way. |
| Well, he gives us that confidence. He gives us that rim protection. I think he had another game like this in Indiana where he had like 25 rebounds. He's been doing a great job of filling in when Jonas went down. But it gives us the confidence. It gives us the energy. It gets the crowd into it. Bis does a great job of just getting the crowd into it, and the crowd gets us into it. We feed off of that energy. Four blocks, 26 rebounds, there's no substitution for that. With Bis, you want to throw it up. He's super athletic. One thing about it, if you get it up in the air, he's going to go get it. You can throw him bounce passes. He's going to attempt to catch the ball. If he doesn't catch it, it's not our fault. It's nobody's fault at the end of the day. We've just got to throw him the ball. We trust in our teammates to make the right plays. For Bis, you throw it up to the rim, he's going to go get it, because there are not many guys who can jump up there with him. We get nights like this often now, and it's fun. We need it. We want it. I don't know if the fans know how much we appreciate it, but we really do appreciate it, and we want them to be as loud as they possibly can. I think it affects other teams, and it gives us just that energy. We know we make a big run or we make a big shot or Bis gets a block and he goes and does his little thing, they love it. We feed off that positive energy. No comment on that. No comment on that. |
| My background has kind of made me the man I am today. But coming into this situation where we're down 0-2, they did what they were supposed to do on their home floor, and we had an opportunity to do what we had to do on our home floor. Just understanding the situation and taking advantage of being at home and completing the task. So now we've got to go on the road and try to get one. He's a legend. Just having him around -- he doesn't say much, but we understand what he's done, and we've got some things in our locker room and in the training room, his words. He's just a good, positive-vibe guy. He doesn't say much at all. We just know he's there and supporting us. It's really that simple. People have their own opinions. Everybody has their own opinions, like I always say. We go and do what we do and that's all we're focused on is our team and what we believe. Not aware at all. All we worry about is what's in our locker room. That's all that matters. They shot 47 percent. They made 13 threes out of 41. We only made seven. We could always play better. They won the second half, and we've got to continue to get better. I don't rate any game. I don't think we have a perfect game. There's no such thing as a perfect game unless you shoot 100 percent from the field. We've got to continue to look at it and tweak what we need to tweak and get better and continue to get the things we need to do execution-wise. I think we're four games deep into learning, and vice versa. I'm sure they've figured out some things that we've done, and we've figured out some things that they've done. But it's a match. We've got to figure it out. You've got to tweak things. You've got to see things. You've got to watch the film and see where you can get better at, see where you can get an open shot at, see the things that we are executing, but also see the things that we are executing and making sure that we keep continuing to do that. Game 2, I think we finished the first quarter well. The second quarter it was tied. We've got to go into halftime close. We can't let them get on one of those big runs. We really can't. That's where they start to make separation, and that's what they did the first two games. They'd make a big run, they'd get a double-digit lead. We can't have them get a double-digit lead. We have to make sure when they punch, we punch back, and if they punch three times, we punch four times. We've got to continue to understand that they're not going to just lay down. They're going to continue to go, push, push, push, push. We ain't laying down, either. I don't think they ever looked at us like inferior opponents. They did what they were supposed to do on their home floor. I don't think they -- I said it before, we won 56 games. We got the 2 seed for a reason. They played well their first two games and they protected home, and now we came home and protected home. I don't think they looked at us any different. We knew and they knew it was going to be a battle. Them winning the first two games, that was what they were supposed to do and now we won our two games, now it's the best of three. I think some games we haven't shot the ball well, and we just continue to go back and understand the work that we've put in. I know the work he's put in and I know the work I've put in. You can't go away from that. You have to continue to stay with the work and the process that you've put in throughout your career, throughout the years. I think the things that we've learned from ourselves is one game, two games erases everything that has happened before. Yes, we have the memory, but you win a game, it's like, oh, then you lose a game, it's like, aww. It's just back and forth. But you've got to find a way to be more consistent. I think both of us want to do that, be more consistent throughout the whole series. |
| 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. |
| I missed some shots and didn't get a rhythm, but the way that they defended, we'll be able to find some adjustments for Game 2. Not worried about that. Just really proud of the way everybody contributed. You don't win championships without the entire squad coming in and making an impact on games. And the way, obviously, Shaun came in, was so composed, got to his spot, had that confidence to knock them down. Andre the same way. L.B. That's why we're here, everybody having an impact on our team in the game. Yeah, I was just frustrated missing open shots and turning the ball over, not playing the way I should up until that point. You make a shot and you just let out that aggression. But our athletic trainer, Drew Yoder, has plenty in the holster for me. So I don't throw them too often, but he's got my back. No doubt. My recollection is correct, I think the first like five minutes of the fourth quarter me and him were on the bench and those guys go on a huge run. We're getting stops and pushing transition, making timely baskets and keeping our crowd in it. So they were doing their job and doing it topnotch. So regardless of how the night's going shooting for me, Klay, throughout the course of the night, we definitely get a boost when our bench guys come in and change the game. So we rely on that pretty much every night, whether it's 45 points off the bench or just playing aggressive and continuing what we start. But tonight it was the opposite. They really changed the game, and it allowed us to win tonight. No, nothing I haven't seen. It's something when I go back and look at the film I kind of rush in certain spots. I was a little indecisive, but the Xs and Os were pretty much kind of standard with how they guard the pick-and-roll. The way we play there's going to be a lot of cross-matching, and that's what we want in those situations where you take the defensive aggression and kind of work it against them, whether I get a shot or somebody else gets a shot. So we did a good job of kind of sticking with that plan. Over the course of the game, not turning the ball over was huge as a team. I did a lot of that. But getting a pretty good shot on every possession and making them work regardless of who's guarding who. He's amazing. Ever since he's been with us. I know me and Draymond talk about it all the time. When we're on the bench, we watch it. It's unbelievable. He has great timing, great eye-hand coordination, and obviously his wingspan works to his advantage to be able to close that space up. But it's really uncanny the way that he can do it without fouling. And for the most part, I think 99% of the time he really doesn't foul, and sometimes the refs might miss it because of how good he is and how consistent he is at doing it every single time. So he knows that's a strength of his and he waits for the right moments and attacks. Yeah, I mean, we've definitely got an edge and picked up a lot of momentum winning three straight just to get here. That taught us a great lesson of how important it is to obviously start a series off on a good foot and win Game 1, especially when you're at home. And we obviously learned a lesson last year, like you said. Same situation, came in and dropped Game 2. So now that we've got this first one under our belt, it doesn't mean anything for next game besides our confidence. But we have to come out and really execute the game plan again, understand they're probably going to make some adjustments and come out just focused and with a lot of energy. I think that was missing last year and obviously at the beginning of the Thunder series, so we're better because of those two situations. Sometimes there's really nothing you can do about it. You try to just contest his shot, but sometimes he won't even see you. For me in practice it's the loneliest feeling in the world because Draymond needs somebody to talk to and to talk trash to. And if he's on the other team -- sometimes even if he's on my team, he'll "mouse in the house" or whatever kind of phrase you want to talk about when [Livingston] gets in the post. And I'll play the best defense of my life, and he'll knock down a shot, and you've just got to live with the chatter. So it's not fun. |
| I mean, we haven't won anything really. I mean, we took care of homecourt advantage, which is what we're supposed to do. There's still a lot of basketball left. How we show up in Cleveland will be a big test for us. They have a great home atmosphere, and obviously the way the first two games have gone, you would expect Cleveland to come out with a lot of energy and feed off of that home crowd. So I'm only worried about Game 3. I mean, you could pick from a lot of guys. Draymond, what he did tonight; Shaun, what he did in Game 1; Andre with his defense on LeBron; Klay making timely shots. We're doing it by committee, and everybody's playing their role. The crazy thing is we can all play better. So we've got to continue to play the defense that we're doing and individuals will shine along the way, and that's what we're about. He's just smart. He knows how to close the space but also give some room to move his feet and stay in front of him and obviously use his hands and get deflections and get steals. So you kind of underestimate his length when he's guarding you because he can be two feet off you and still impact the ball and contest shots. He's obviously not going to give any ground if you try to go through him. So he's done a great job. And being so versatile, he can guard a bunch of different guys and make those adjustments pretty quick. So it's pretty fun to watch. Yeah, it's the first time we've met. L.B. and Varejao talk about him all the time. But obviously a star in the soccer world, and such skill and kind of grace when he's out there on the field. So he's fun to watch. I know he's a basketball fan. I saw him dribbling two basketballs the other day trying to mimic my two-ball routine. I told him I appreciate that and he doesn't want to see me with a soccer ball because I wouldn't know what to do. It's pretty cool to know we've got fans all over, and obviously it's inspiring what he does on the soccer field. I mean, you know how he's going to impact the game consistently every night with his defense and playmaking, getting guys involved. The way he was shooting the ball and having that confidence and bailing us out of a couple of possessions, knocking down his threes, whether they were open or contested. The one stepback one, that's when I kind of lost my mind watching him just impact the game on the offensive end the way he did. So we needed that push to separate ourselves, and he provided it, for sure. It's been three or four years he's been with us, so I want him to keep shooting. He's got some work to do, though . For sure, that's what we're about. If you watch us play, you know how we get the job done. Everybody falls in love obviously with how me and Klay shoot the ball, and that's a big part of what we do, and having success over the course of the season in a Playoff run, you need to have that punch. But you look at the stat sheet and look at some names that jump off, whether it be Shaun, L.B., Andre, H.B., obviously Draymond, what he did tonight offensively, that's huge, but it's the little stuff that you don't see on the stat sheet that has gotten us to this position. I'm talking about Andre's defense, talking about L.B. being ready, that microwave we need off the bench, and Shaun's steady hand. That's where you become a consistent team. We need that along the way for sure. I mean, the overall theme was we have each other's backs and the way that we're playing right now is great, and we're obviously closing on a second win, but there's a long way to go. Me and him need to continue to bring energy and just do what we can to focus on Game 3 and not getting ahead of ourselves. So he did a great job of really all night kind of being vocal and allowing us to stay in the moment and understand we did what we're supposed to do, taking care of homecourt, but Game 3 is when it will be a big test. I mean, I would say we'd like to get to the free-throw line a little bit more. We're probably going to need to do that in Cleveland. But some things, the way they guard and what might be open, you know, shots-wise, might cater to that lack of a lot of free throws. But for the most part when you're out there on the court, you kind of feel the flow and understand the way that we cut and screen for each other, you're going to get a lot of open jumpshots, you've just got to make them. But on the road, I think we need to focus on maybe getting to the paint a little bit more, putting pressure on defense in the paint and swinging it out and getting to the free-throw line if we need to slow momentum down if it gets away from us. But during the course of tonight, you're not really worried about it if you're getting open shots and making them. I mean, I'm not surprised that we won, but, yeah, the margin. Nobody would have guessed that coming in. But every game is different in the Playoffs. You can't really rely on the fact that the margin is what it is. Game 3's going to be totally different, and we need to play like that for sure. What was the first question? Our defense clicked in and we had a brief moment where we didn't turn the ball over. Obviously we had 20 tonight, and a lot of those were early and a little bit of third quarter. But when we're going on those runs, that means we're taking care of the ball, getting stops and getting in transition and have their defense on their heels. That's the thing Coach has been so adamant about throughout the course of these last two games is we can play a lot better and be more composed with the ball, taking care of it and not giving them opportunities to, again, use those turnovers against us. They had 26 points off those turnovers, so thank God our defense was good in the half court, because that's not a number that you can probably win with on the road. Yeah, obviously schedules didn't work out. But he's got business to take care of, so good luck to him. I know he's going to be ready. I'm sure we'll be watching in Cleveland. Just playing smarter and letting the individual defensive talents that we have on this team, letting them shine. Because when we don't have breakdowns, we can use our length, we can use our quickness, our speed, our IQ on the defensive end and for the most part in this series, specifically, we haven't had many, many breakdowns with the game plan. So that's kind of what it's all about. Granted there's been a couple possession where's they've gotten open shots and just missed, and we want to shore those up, but a team shoots 35%, that means you're doing something good. And the key now is for our defense to travel on the road and be the most consistent part about what we do. I mean, Kyrie and LeBron are two different players than Russell and K.D., but they all have, obviously, amazing strengths which have put them in the category they are. So there's no real comparison. It's just you know what their strengths are and what our game plan is to attack them, and we've done a good job of just staying consistent with it in our game plan this series. That's all you can ask for is try to make them take contested shots, tough shots, make them work to get open, and you live with the results. If they go off and make tough shots all game, then you tip your hat to them. But you don't want to have breakdowns where you're giving them easy looks, and we've done a good job of that so far. I don't really have a favorite one, but Baby-Faced Assassin was first one I ever got when I was in college. That was like the first one that became popular, so it has a special place in my heart, even though I've got a little bit more facial hair now. I don't know how to answer that one . No, you can fall in love with numbers and averages and comparing averages to what people might expect or whatnot. Right now we're up 2 games to 0, and everybody's doing what we need to do to make that happen. So looking forward to trying to get Game 3. That's it. That's all I'm worried about. I mean, we're feeling confident, but, like I said, we're not getting ahead of ourselves. There's no point in celebrating or jumping up and down and saying look at us. We're two games away from winning a championship. We still have to go out and get the job done. It's a trap to think that we've figured things out and that we have the perfect formula to beat Cleveland and they have no chance in the series. Like that's not how we're supposed to think. I mean, that's probably going to be the chatter the next 48 hours, but we have to stay in our own little bubble and worry about what we're doing and how we're going to go out and win Game 3. That's all we can really worry about. So we've been on the other side where people may have thought we didn't have a chance to come back in the series, and now we have a good handle on it, so we know how quickly it can go away if you don't come out and play the way you're supposed to and keep the focus and the edge that we've played with these first two games. So Game 3 will be fun |
| 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 mean, it's business as usual. Obviously it's a big game, and one we needed to bounce back individually as a team to figure out how to get a win on the road and put ourselves in pretty good position. So, you know, we answered the bell, especially in the first quarter, controlling the pace of the game and not losing it like we did in Game 3. And for 48 minutes we executed a lot better, and I think we got back to enjoying the process and the challenge of winning playoff games, especially in The Finals. Yeah, if I had them in the road bag I would have definitely worn them and showed you how fire they are. I love the nicknames, though, they came up with, but I like them. Why would I be angry at him? That's just normal basketball talk. I wanted a foul. He didn't think he fouled, and we were just jabbering. There was nothing to that at all. And we as a team had to understand that, yeah, we were a little lackadaisical, didn't really show up, and myself included in that. Today is a new day, a new opportunity for a fresh start to come out and get back to who we are as a team on both ends of the floor and play with aggression and assertiveness and confidence. Like I said, we did that in the first quarter, took their first punch and handled it well and then came right back at them. So we did what we were supposed to do. Just took what the defense gave us in that situation, not pressing or trying to force something that's not there. And the way that they were defending and have been for most of the series, they're trying to take away our perimeter shot. We found it a little bit tonight, but like you said, early in the game there were driving lanes, and instead of settling, just tried to attack and be on the downhill as opposed to allowing them to get into us. I honestly don't remember much about last year. It was a huge win in Game 5 at home and then you're going on the road, so you have to kind of understand and get your travel mindset ready. But we need some rest and need to take advantage of being at home and getting back into our routine and be ready to go on Monday. It's going to be our biggest game of the year, obviously. We always talk about just because we're going home doesn't mean you can relax or take things for granted. You work all regular season to have home-court advantage, and this is a great opportunity for us, and we need to play with a sense of urgency and a sense of aggression like we did tonight. So it will be a fun 48 hours to wrap our minds around the opportunity we have in front of us. A little bit of both, but more so when I had the ball in my hands, I had to be assertive and decisive with what I was doing. I was in between in Game 3. I obviously didn't have to deal with foul trouble, so I was on the floor a lot more. And my teammates set great screens. We got the ball moving from side to side, so I got some better looks off the ball as well. When you have obviously Klay knocking down threes on the wing, H.B. [Harrison Barnes] the way he stepped up and made some timely buckets for us, it kind of softens the defense because they've got to be aware of everybody, and then lanes open up and that's when we're at our best. So just kind of feeding off of that rhythm. Getting stops. When we have the lineup we had out there, we were obviously really small with Draymond at the center and going down the line. So if you get rebounds, you can push in transition. And Andre, when he gets the ball in open lanes, he's able to play-make and either look for a shot or find guys on the wing. He found, I think H.B. twice, like you said, and just that's when we get our rhythm. And in that moment, our endurance and our depth shows because I think we have fresher legs, and that's the time when everybody's locked in. |
| 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. |
| I think it was the play called by Brad Stevens. He did a great job of putting us in the right position, forcing them to have to help and not be able to switch. Al Horford made a great screen and Marcus Smart made an even better pass, and I was able to knock down a shot. It was a great play by Brad. He was aggressive from the beginning of the game. That's what we needed him to be. A lot of people counted us out with Isaiah not being here, and he is a big part of this team. But Smart took this opportunity to come out and be aggressive on both ends of the floor and make plays for our team. He was able to do that tonight. We need Smart to play that way all the time. He's a very good player. We know he's capable of having big games for us on the offensive end, and I think it's definitely going to give him confidence for the rest of the series. I think that one of the good things about this team is we're able to believe in whatever Brad draws up. If it's a good play, bad play, whatever it is, we all believe in it. I think that always helps because you're able to just read and react after that. One of the plays that he drew up when Jonas Jerebko hit the shot, it was for me to lay the ball up. But it was a play that I knew that if they helped, Jonas would be wide open, and he was able to knock down his shot. Those are all plays that Brad makes, and then it's our job to go out there and make sure that we make the next right play. I knew LeBron was going to help. I knew I was going to suck the defense in, and it was my job to act like I was going to lay the ball up, and kick it out to Jonas. I told Jonas to make sure he was ready. I wish he shot a three. But I'm just happy for Jonas. He was prepared and ready to shoot the ball, and he made some really big plays for our team tonight. He made the most of his opportunity. Jonas went games without playing, and now he was able to come in and make some really big plays for us tonight. I just want him to keep being ready to shoot the ball, because we're going to make sure we find him. It was hard. It was embarrassing. I know everyone leaving the arena after last game, we were pretty down. But once we were able to get together the next day, we decided that we're just going to go out and play hard, and whatever happens, happens. We're going to go play with our backs against the wall, come out swinging. We're going to go and play as hard as we can. We're going to be the toughest team. We're going to battle for the loose balls. We're going to play hard consistently the entire game. We wanted to be that team. That was our mindset. We never counted ourselves out. We knew that if we came out and played hard, we would give ourselves a chance. You saw that tonight. And we're going to continue to play that way throughout the series. I think it helped us out a lot. They're going to make plays. It's our job to make sure we're out there playing basketball, not complaining. That was the main thing for us tonight. The foul count wasn't where we wanted it to be. We can't complain about that. We can't control that. All we can control is the way that we play. I kept telling everybody that we can't complain, because it's hurting us on the offensive end because you're thinking about it. You just have to go out there and play the game of basketball. If we continue to play that way and stick together and play hard no matter what adversity we go through, I feel like we're going to be the best team that we can be. It showed tonight. We had a few times down the floor where we were complaining, and it ended up hurting us on both ends of the floor. But we got over it and we were able to stick together at the end of the game and make some big plays. I think it started with Marcus Smart, how poised he was at the end of the game. He was able to get us in our sets and make the right play, make some really big plays for our team tonight. I feel like guys like Jae Crowder and Al Horford, whoever switched on him, they did a great job. Like I said, we understand not only him but Kyrie, they're going to make tough shots. It's our job to make sure that we try to make everything hard on him and have a mindset to chip away. What I mean by chip away is not try to win the game or get back in the game with one shot. Just force enough shots. We understood that we needed to move the ball around, get good shots and get continuous stops on the defensive end. That's big. For a team that you could say that is a young team, we came out here and I feel like we were mature tonight with the way that we played. We were able to stick together, get consistent stop. We're playing against a really good team. LeBron, we understand that down the stretch of the game, he's going to make plays for his team. I felt like we did a great job trying to box guys out, defending him. He's a tough guard, but we really did a good job of forcing everything, making everything hard on him. Marcus did a great job on Kyrie tonight. It's our job to make sure that we have that same mindset next game because if we don't, we're not going to have a chance to win the game. |
| 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. |
| That was just -- that was organic. I was just -- I don't know. I don't know when I'm going to dunk or when I'm going to get the wide-open three. I just go out there and play. I try not to predetermine anything, just go out there and hoop. And tonight, we could be a lot better than we were tonight. But in The Finals, you get the W, we'll take it. Well, it's not about me. He's going to do what he does. He's LeBron James. He can, you know -- you guys know what he can do. So I just tried to play as hard as I can and not make it about a matchup, it's about us, it's about the Golden State Warriors versus the Cleveland Cavaliers and we're only going to do it together. That's just our whole mindset. So I just tried to do my part, stay locked in on both ends and have some fun out there. But they're tough to stop, but I think we did it as a group tonight. Like I said, I'm only as good as my teammates. I didn't say that here, but I said that to Doris Burke. But I'm only as good as my teammates. And Steph and Klay and Draymond and Zaza and the rest of the guys, we just complement each other, try to complement each other and try to make the game easier for each other. And in transition, I only can get in transition because we got stops and rebounding. And they're a great offensive rebounding team, and we got to take them off the glass if we want to win. I think we did a solid job of that. They did have, what, 15 offensive rebounds? So we got to correct that. But only way you get out in transition and get those baskets and get the crowd into it is if we get stops. So I just try to focus on defense. It's not easy at all. We got to go out there and execute. It's hard to try to do it every possession. You got to stay locked in and focus every possession if you want to do it. So it's not easy at all. I don't even remember that. Really? Yeah, I won't get into that. I'm cool. Have fun with that. What other option did I have? This is what every player wants to be, is the highest level of basketball. That's what you dream about as a kid, is to play at the highest level. So I would have -- I wouldn't done my teammates any good if I wasn't just enjoying the moment, no matter what. So I just tried to stay locked in on that, at the same time have some fun. But know that it's hard to do what we want to do and it's hard to stay locked in for 48 minutes. So just trying to do my best to be there for my teammates and to play up to my standards as an individual as well. So just trying to -- I'm probably going to say this a lot over the next couple days, we're just trying to stay locked in, man. That's all it's about. Yeah, I mean, we moved the ball and we just tried to move our bodies. If I see a lane, just try to attack. Coach and my teammates always want me to attack and try to open it up for everybody else and try to score as well. So I felt like in transition they were running out to the 3-point line, and we got the best 3-point shooters in the world on our team, so obviously teams want to take away our 3-pointer, but just tried to be aggressive to the rim and loosen them up a bit. And Steph was able to hit a couple in transition. But like I said, it all starts from getting stops. We get stops, we worry about defense first, and offensively we can move the ball around, drive and kick and try to find shots as well. So I'm more focused on defense. |
| Geez. You waiting on him to go across the line. Well, that was a good play by Steph, just driving to the rim, just trying to be aggressive. We love when he's aggressive. And tonight he shot 14 free throws, so that's huge for us. We needed that, especially when we were struggling a bit, turning the ball over, not getting shots up. He was great. And he controlled the game from the point guard position really, really well tonight. As far as Klay, no matter if he's making them or not, he's still drawing a lot of attention because he can shoot so well. But I think that his driving to the rim, his defense got him going and knocking down his three, so he drove to the rim a few times. He had what? Seven rebounds. Never seen it. But all in all he just played with confidence, he just tried to follow the game plan on the defensive end, and it was good for us. Yeah, they were, they came on through a nice blow to start the game, getting to the paint, and I think that's one thing we got to cover. We can't give up 23 points off our turnovers. Especially a championship team like that, they're going to thrive off of it. So they were going downhill, getting into the paint, but I just think we just stayed poised and tried to play better one-on-one defense and make them shoot over or contest. And they're going to make some, but if we just try to make it tough on them, it will be in our favor. I'm not going to take a step back. Like I said, we're worried about the series right now. So we're just trying to just stay in the moment. But for the most part we just try to play hard and try to play smart every possession down. Can we do that? We could play hard every possession, but can we play smart? That's the question sometimes. And so we're just trying to stay with it. We know this is far from over. We know how hard it is to be the best team in the league. So we got to just keep going, man, keep our foot on the gas and keep getting better every day. Yeah, when Draymond went out, I just tried to do my best to help everybody out. He's so good at just sniffing out plays before they happen. And so I just tried to follow his lead with that, and I learned so much from him throughout the season. But I'm just trying to play hard, man. I keep saying that. Just play hard every possession. I'm going to make mistakes but not get discouraged because guys make shots over me or I gave up an and-one the first play of the game. So I just try to just keep my head up and think about the next play and just play hard for my teammates. First off, and Andre Iguodala was guarding him for the most part in the second half, and Draymond was out, so I had to play four and guard a big. So Andre did a solid job with just trying to make it tough on him. And we just tried to help him out as well. Offensively, I just tried to play within the offense and move and be aggressive when the ball's in my hands. And so there you go with that part. Oh, my gosh. |
| Yeah, you answered your own question. I just tried to -- first off, it was a great stop. Who got that stop? Klay maybe? Somebody got the stop, and always starts on the defensive side with us. We know if we get off the board and push, we're a dangerous team. And I seen him backing up, and I just wanted to take that shot. Also it was a good time, it was 45 seconds to go, we were down two, if I miss, we could have got another stop. But glad I was able to knock that down. I just tried to stay disciplined in my shot, hold my followthrough, and it went in. So but more importantly we got two stops after that. So we got to build on that. But we got to be better in Game 4. Well, it's not over. Job's not done. Closeout games are always the toughest. As you heard from many players in this league over the years, how tough closeout games are on the road. I never been in this position being up in The Finals and trying to close it out. So I know how exciting that's going to be for us as a team, but their fans are going to be into it. They're going to be wanting a win from their team. And tonight it showed. Fans were great. They obviously fed off their energy. Kevin Love, of course, LeBron and Kyrie did. And we got to be even better in Game 4 if we want to take this. So it's an exciting time. The job's not done, but we still got a lot of work left to do. I think, I mean, basketball is a feisty sport. Both teams want to win. The crowd was giving them a lot of energy, and those guys came out with a lot of force. And sometimes that brings some commotion out there between two teams. So it's nothing personal, it's nothing serious. We moved on. Draymond got a tech, he gathered, got it back together, we moved on. So it just didn't linger. We didn't let a call we didn't like or a turnover or a missed assignment linger over to the next play. It was always about the next possession. And even when things aren't going your way with the refs or a shot or anything, we just try to move on, and tonight it showed over the year that we talked about that a lot. It's not worrying about the refs, not getting distracted, and tonight it was -- it kind of came full circle. Chanting who? It didn't look like it to me. I mean, they both shot over 50 percent from the field, over, yeah, 50 percent. My math's not really good, but they shot over 50 percent, they both had almost 40 points, and they did it for 40-plus minutes. They played extremely well, but I just think we stayed in front of them late in the game and got to contest some shots and rebound the basketball. But they had it going all night, you got to give them credit. Yeah, like I said earlier, I never been in this position before. I don't want to relax. It's not over. This is a crazy game. Anything can happen. So I don't want to relax or feel like it's over, it's not. And I'm just trying to enjoy this moment and not -- trying not to look in the future or in the past, just try to just stay in the present and enjoy this moment and for what it's worth and just keep pushing, keep getting better until -- and then I'll sit back and probably reflect on everything once the season's over. But for now I'm just trying to stay in the moment, enjoy every single minute and just keep getting better. I didn't look at it as an unsuccessful third quarter. That's just half of the battle there. I just tried to stay positive and move on to the next play and know in the fourth that Coach is going to call my number and my teammates are going to look for me and it's up to me to finish. I work on my game every day, and I just had to trust in this, and I was able to get some shots to go in. And but we played with force in the fourth, and the in the third quarter we were a little bit too relaxed. We were up six, and that was a good place for us to be coming out of the half, but we didn't do what we were supposed to do in the third. So I think we just played with more force as a group in the fourth quarter and they put it on us in the third. So we got to watch some film and see how we can be better coming out of half. |
| 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. |
| I remember the first day of camp and I walk into camp, and I didn't know what to expect, I didn't know what these guys were like on the court and how they came in and worked. I didn't know anything about the team. I just wanted to come in there and just be me. And I did that from day one, and I just tried to stay with that. I had my lows in the season where I was beating myself up, where I was struggling throughout the year, but the great part about it is I'll get a tap on the head from Steph or a Draymond or -- I can remember when we were in Sacramento and we just lost to Memphis, we gave up the lead, we were up 20 -- I'm sure you guys remember -- Draymond pulled me aside, we were having dinner the next night in Sacramento, and he told me to be myself. Don't worry about anything, just be you, keep working, everything's going to come around. And I was struggling at that point. And to have teammates that encourage you, that lift you up, that's what we all need in life. And it was amazing to just see that all year, and right now just to be here with these guys, it's amazing. Yeah, it was 55 seconds left, and I went other over to half court line and I bent down, and I'm like, is this really happening? And Draymond was like, Keep playing to the end. Andre is like, Keep playing. We have like 50 seconds left. And I'm like, Bro, we're about to win the title. So I just tried to stay in the moment the whole series, and I think that worked for me. I remember plenty of times throughout my career I continued to just look in the past and look ahead and not stay in the moment. In this series I just stayed in the moment. And we did it together. Without the whole team, you got to -- what about Patrick McCaw tonight? What about Zaza Pachulia to start the game? He was amazing. What about Stephen Curry after not having a great game in Game 4, came out tonight, played like a big dog. 15 free throws, 10 assists, 34 points. Say what you want about him, but he played like a big dog all series. And so to do that as a group, call us a super team, and I go with 20 off the bench, you a call us a super team, but it's been a lot of super teams that hasn't worked, and we came together and we continued to just believe in each other and we sacrificed, and we're champions now. Like I said, just the encouragement every single day, just the belief that I could -- I can do whatever I want in life, not just basketball, everything. So I carried that all season, especially when I made the decision. And you hear so much chatter about what I should do. To have Rich, Tom, my brother, my mom, my dad, all my friends, just continue to just pour into me, just pour into me every single day, people that you don't even probably won't even meet in your life, pour it in me, John Gray, Carl Lentz, Adam Harrington, just to shout out a few names. Everybody, just from -- so many people poured into me every single day, and I just tried to continue to keep grinding and let them know that it doesn't -- it doesn't go in vain, I'm just working and I believe. And just every day, man, I'm just grinding and believing in myself that I can make this happen, and to do it feels great. The toughest challenge was to come in here and see how I can help Steph get better, see how I can help Klay get better, Draymond, Shaun Livingston, Andre Iguodala, JaVale McGee, the whole team, just see how I can help them get better, that was more important to me than anything. Proving haters wrong, like that's cool, that's cool for me to talk about it on Instagram or Twitter. But like you don't concern me, I'm coming in and working every day, seeing how I can be the best teammate I can be, the best player I can be. You can talk about whatever you want to talk about, but nobody comes in and cares about the game or loves the game as much as I do or works as hard as do I at the basketball game. You can talk about whatever happens on the outside, but inside those lines, I come to bring it every day. I work hard, I believe in myself, I believe in the game, I respect the game, I love the game, and I knew at some point in my life that it will come around for me. So I just tried to stay with those principles and keep grinding. I'm kind of lost for words right now. It meant a lot. Steph is -- I never seen nobody like him. I told him last night. I said, When you play with force, like I never seen a player like you before. And he played with force tonight. The stuff you hear about Steph as far as sacrificing and being selfless and caring about his teammates, caring about other people is real. It's not a fake. It's not a facade. He doesn't put on this mask or this suit every single day to come in here and fake in front of you guys. He really is like that. And it's amazing to see a superstar who sacrifices, who doesn't care about nothing but the group. He obviously wants to play well. He obviously wants to show who he is, because he's competitive, but it's all about the group. So when I asked him, like, Yo, you want to work out, some guys want to keep it to themselves. But he's like, No, let's get some work in. We have been doing these 30-35 sessions, is what we call it. We have been doing it all season, and we have been doing it every -- probably since the second round of the Playoffs, and definitely paid off for us tonight. I found that at the beginning of the year when we first went to Vancouver in the first pre-season game, just the camaraderie, just the togetherness of the whole organization. That's what it was about. We just kept -- I kept building on that from day one. So that's what I found when I came here, and I definitely appreciate just the type of people we have here from the top to bottom. So a championship is just a cherry on top. Well, we have grown closer and closer as the year's gone on and as the Playoffs have started, and he's -- we're always are encouraging each other. So it feels good to win one with him. And for him to play so well throughout the whole series, it's -- it feels great. A lot of people have been doubting him and been hoping that he fails and hoping that I fail, hoping that we fail as a group. And the one thing that it was a constant with us was the joy that we have for the game of basketball. I learned -- I got a lot from him from that. He enjoys playing basketball. And his energy -- I told him, his energy, we feed off of him. He's our leader. He's our vocal leader. He talks up -- like I said, 15 free throws. He missed three free throws tonight I was pissed about, but 15 free throws and in a closeout game in The Finals, he's a big dog. You better start respecting him. man averaged a triple-double. I ain't doing no slaying. Feels great. It feels great to win, but to go up against somebody I view as like a rival, personally, is an amazing feeling to beat him. But one thing I know about LeBron James, though, he'll probably be back in the gym the start of July getting ready for next season. So I probably got to beat him in the gym -- beat him to the gym. But just the mutual respect, it's -- we talk about guys being too friendly, but like it's a game and we compete on the court hard as we can, both of us, and after the game it's respect. And I did that, I respected him, and he won his first one in 2012, and he reciprocated that. So I got nothing but love and respect for him, and I can't wait to compete against him again next season. Yeah, I hear all the narratives throughout the season that I was joining, I was hopping on bandwagons, I was letting everybody else do the work. But then that was far from the truth. I came in and tried to help my team. Like I said, tried to be myself, be aggressive and sacrifice as well. There's some games I might not get shots, as many shots as I'm used to getting. Some games where Steph is going to go off and hit 13 threes or Klay might hit 60 or Draymond might get a triple-double with no points. But nobody cared, as long as we won. Andre Iguodala, who is right there, he continued to preach that every single day. It's all about the group. If your intentions are good, then that means as a team that we're moving in the right direction. So I just tried to think about that, but also add my flair to the game. And it feels amazing to win a championship with these guys. I can't wait to celebrate for the rest of the night -- well, maybe the rest of the summer. It feels so great because, like I said, it's a team sport. Man, you got to want to sacrifice. You got to want to put your teammates in front of yourself sometimes. And I just tried to do that but also be aggressive. Andre told me all the time, it is your time, go take it, it's about you. But I'm like, no, it's about us. It's about us. But I'm still going to be me. I'm talking too much at this point. I had a couple too many beers. I haven't had a beer since February. So to have a beer right now and come talk to you guys, it feels great. |
| I think that through the regular season there was so much changes with our group, guys in and out of the lineup, different injuries, a lot of things like that. Once we've been able to settle down and kind of find what fits this group, I feel like that's what prompted us being better offensively. But you've just got to give credit to Coach [Brad Stevens], because he ends up making adjustments and being able to key in in the playoffs, whichever the matchup is, and giving us those options to go out there and execute on offense. I think it was our energy defensively. I felt like we really fed off a lot of our crowd, and then on offense, we were taking good shots. We were really moving the ball and really taking really good looks, that helped. We were knocking them down. Yeah, Marcus is one of our leaders, and he's been a presence since the first day he got here. So I think that taking on this challenge is something that we expect out of him. We have his back out there. Like he said, we're doing it as a unit. It's not all on him. But you do have to give him credit for his focus and his commitment for the team. I normally don't like comparing teams, but last year we came off of a grueling seven-game series against Washington, one day rest and we had to play Cleveland. Give them credit, they were the better team. This year we were able to close the series out with Philadelphia, have a couple days. I feel like the coaches came out with a great game plan for our group, and we just bought in and did what we were supposed to do. I think that the guys that started the fourth there were just great. They came out really focused on the defensive end. We got some stops. We turned the defense into offense. Just ran our offense well, and they really, I feel like, opened the game up at that point. They just kept attacking. Guys just kept playing the right way, and that's all it was. I mean, at times this year we've struggled early in the fourth with the leads and things like that. But I felt like the focus level was just really good, and guys were able to hold the lead. |
| Yeah, it was that point of the game where we needed to make plays. They went on a run, and we felt like we needed to go on a run of our own and make sure that we secured the win. You know, I think our team did a good job really keeping -- we kept our poise and just kept playing our basketball the way that we've been playing. Tough on defense, moving the ball on offense, and that's just the way that we tried to play throughout the whole game. Amazing. You know, Terry, just like a switch goes off, and he just goes out there and plays. Terry is fearless. He's always been like that. It's just now he's getting the opportunity to show it, and it's a lot of fun to see him just grow continually game by game. I think that we just have a group of guys that really believe in each other, and we are trying to play the right way, trying to play hard. Really just buying into what Coach [Brad Stevens] is telling us, and just have a lot of guys that have a lot of fight in them in the locker room. You've been following us, it's been like that all year. It's not like this is something new. Our group, in tough times, we've always found a way. Yeah, it was -- I felt like it was uncalled for, that type of play there, but that's the one thing about the group of our guys. We have each other's backs, and it is what it is. We moved on to the next play, and we just locked in even more after that. I mean, we just play hard. We go out there, we compete. It's Celtics basketball. We're really embracing Celtics basketball. We're playing hard. We've got each other's backs, and that's it. |
| 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. |
| Yes, that was very encouraging to see Jayson really just taking on the challenge, really playing well on offense, playing well on defense. Just very poised for most of the night. I was just very happy to see him have such a good game. Yeah. I felt like we played much better tonight defensively. The energy was much better. I was encouraged by the performance of our group tonight. I just think that at home, one of the big things is I truly believe it's our fans. I feel like our guys feed off of them and it really just drives us as a group. When we're sometimes on the road, it's just different in the playoffs. You get on the road and you're just out there against everybody else. Here, I just think that our guys just feel comfortable and good. It's a credit to the atmosphere that's here. It's just a lot of fun to play in right now. We did what we were supposed to do. We won here, a big Game 5 for us. Now we have a big challenge to go on the road. The first game [in Cleveland], we didn't play very well. The second one, I felt like we played a little better over there. We're going to have to play a great game come Friday because they're tough at home. At least in our series, they just had their way. So we have to make sure that we're really focused and committed to playing the right way the whole game. I think that we've done it at spurts over there. We have to be more consistent. I haven't talked to him personally. I know that Coach is always staying on him and Jaylen [Brown] and Terry [Rozier], just all our guys. Just talking to them about the intensity and making sure that we're doing things with pace, that we're playing the right way. Honestly, with Jayson, all I talk to him about is defense. Most of the guys, most of the time, that's all I'm talking is defense out there. I feel like he's doing a good job on that end. We just have to go out and play. We can't think about it as a Game 7. Just like today, we were thinking this was a Game 5. We have a good challenge to go on the road. We haven't won there this season. It's going to be very difficult, but we have a great opportunity in front of us. Our approach as a group, we're going in there, staying together, playing the right way. We want to be more consistent playing the right way on the road. It's a lot of fun, just because these guys, they want to play the right way. They play hard. I feel like we hold each other accountable out there. I think that's a big thing. And when those things happen, it becomes fun. It's fun to me. And there's no coincidence why we're in this position right now. The guys have really bought into what Coach wanted from them. We've been preparing the same way all season. We're having some success that's paying off because of the commitment that we're doing as a team. I think for our team in general, it's the lineup that we were going with most of the year, or for a good part of the year. I felt like it was great for us defensively. They made adjustments after Game 1. We kind of stuck around with the same lineup. But I think that just by doing that, it was a change that worked in our favor. Aron was great tonight -- his energy, his physicality. Just very happy that he had a good game as well. Feels great. It's definitely a lot of fun. For whatever reason, we were just so locked in, so engaged. It's not like we haven't been in the past, but I just felt like the guys were just ready to get on the floor tonight after the loss in Game 4 and just get it going again. So it just felt good to be able to do that. It was a lot of fun playing in this game tonight. Yeah. It's our defense. We always preached all year, or Coach preached all year, he would say there are going to be nights that we're not going to shoot it well, but we have to rely on our defense. Since the first day of training camp, that's what we've hung our hat on as a group. Tonight, it paid off because we had a lot of good looks. They had a lot of good looks as well. But for us, we didn't drop them. Missed a lot of layups. Things like that. But defense was the difference for us tonight. |
| 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. |
| I can't control that. Well, I could have boxed JR out, I could have done a better job, so I'm glad we were able to get the win with that happening. But the blocked charge thing, last year in the regular season same play happened to me. It was a block. They called it a block, and they went and reviewed it and changed it to a charge. So I knew once it was 30 seconds to go that they could review that situation. There were a couple, like goaltending and block/charge a couple years ago, they put those rules in that you could review them. Just like you can review out of bounds calls. So I knew that. I knew he was late on the drive, and I knew I had my man beat and he came over a little late. So when they called the charge, I was surprised, but I'm glad they reviewed it. Well, they still had enough time to get a shot off. They still got a shot off with that. But I thought he was looking for LeBron, because I was right there. If he had tried to put a lay-up up, I thought I had a good chance to contest it. But I'm glad we don't even got to think about that. They did a good job tonight coming in and hitting us in the mouth. They outrebounded us. I think that's always the way they get us, on the offensive rebounds. So they had 18 of them. We can't give that up if we want to win. Yeah, Bron does a good job on the screen and roll, kind of balancing and unbalancing the floor and in match-ups and getting a lot of screens to get guys on him. Then after that, it's hard to stop him. I thought JaVale did a good job of using his length. I know as a wing player, when you see a big, you feel like you've got so many moves in your bag that you don't know which one to bring out. And I think after while, LeBron just got a little confused, and it was good that JaVale was able to stay in front of him. We've got to be better next game. We know he's going to come out and be super, super aggressive. He made shots tonight and he rebounded well, so we've got to try to control that. I mean, anything can happen on the basketball court, you know? We've all done stuff like that on the basketball court. You know, I can't talk about a guy like -- I can't talk about a situation that way because I do some dumb stuff on the court. So I can't really talk about that. But I'm glad we got a W. I don't know what was going through JR's head, but he made a great rebound and gave them an opportunity to win the basketball game. I didn't get a good look at it, but obviously I was right in the middle of the scuffle. But, it's what happens when you play in The Finals. I don't think it's anything that we should be concerned about. I think it's something we could easily move past. Well, that's our thing. That's our thing. It's no disrespect to any other team, it's just what we do. We don't want to take the turnover. We take the shot. So we've been doing that all year, since I've been here too. Well, I mean, it's all him. It's tough to stop him. Especially, you know, he's getting a lot of screens, he's getting Steph on him a lot, and that's what the mismatch is, and getting the bigs on him. So we've got to do a better job of helping him out. In transition, you've got to be aware of his catches. Because he wants to catch and go to the rim, but, you know, that's what he does. He's been in the league for so long doing the same thing. We've just got to try to make it tougher on him. But he got the ball in his hands all game. He's playing -- well, without the overtime, he's playing 42 minutes in regulation. So he got the ball, and he could orchestrate the offense. So we've got to be patient and not get discouraged when he makes shots and just keep playing hard. If I get a three-pointer up, it's because I want to. Well, actually, one of them Kevin Love did play great defense over on the wing and rushed the shot. But I'm glad I made up for it at the free-throw line. |
| Yeah, I agree with that. That's about true. What else do you expect Trump to do? When somebody says they don't want to come to the White House, he disinvites them so the photo op don't look bad. We get it at this point. It's good that guys are sticking to what they believe in and what they want to do. Like guys said before me, I'm sure whoever wins this series won't be going. Just being patient. Just taking what the defense gives you. Just slowing down a bit. I think defensively we focused in a little more, which always allows our offense to have a little bit more freedom, when you're getting stops. Just try to be patient as much as we could. Find things that were there. But also play with some pace as well. If they make a shot or if we get a rebound, just try to play with some pace too. We know it's going to be different coming into this building tomorrow. So we've just got to be even more on point. Two years together, two seasons together, I think we've figured out a good balance. I think being able to play off of each other definitely helps. But not just us two. Everybody else on the court kind of plays off each other well. We just try to do whatever it takes to get the W. Run the right plays. Run them with force and with pace. When you get your opportunities, be disciplined in your work and trust in your work. That will dictate the outcome. So just try to keep things as simple as possible. I think a lot of people lately have been talking about that because of how we played in Houston. Houston did such a good job of switching everything. And in basketball, when you switch everything -- meaning pin downs, cross screens, just everything -- it takes you out of your movement of your offense, and it puts the ball into the guys that create off the dribble the most. We had a lot of those opportunities because of the switching defense. So I think that's the reason why things may look a little bit bigger than what they really are as far as the iso stuff is concerned. But I thought we did a good job of navigating through it all and still playing our game and just showing that we can adapt to different situations. I don't really think about being up 2-0 because the series could turn so fast. It's a great position to be in. I don't want to take that for granted; don't get me wrong. But the job is not done, and you can't relax or be comfortable when you're still trying to win this thing. We know coming on the road is going to be tougher. We just want to play our best brand of basketball and play as hard as we can when we step out on the court. We didn't play well. They shot the ball extremely well, and we were a step slow on everything. So we can't be that way. He doesn't complain., He's low maintenance. He doesn't really care for the celebrity or the fame that comes with being an NBA player. He just works hard every day, comes and plays defense hard. And he cares. You see that. Sometimes you see it, sometimes you don't with Klay, but we know it's there all the time because he's so consistent every day. Somebody who just genuinely loves to play ball and wants to do it as best as he can, because he knows his time is short. So somebody who embraces every single day, that's toughness to me. Just another guy with veteran experience that can do multiple things; that can pass; that can rebound, dribble, can shoot the ball. Just smart. Just knows how to play the game of basketball, especially the Warrior way of playing basketball for us. He kind of settles us down a little bit. You look at 'Dre, he has an even keel for the game. Somebody that's just always dependable. We're looking forward to getting him back. Hopefully he's here soon. Don't know the significance of the injury, but just knowing that we miss him out on the court and we want him back out there. Yes, so he really is hurt. It really didn't do anything for me, to be honest. We won a championship, but me personally, I mean, there were just so many other plays in that game that helped us get that championship that were just as important. That's how I approach the game. Just knowing that everything that led up to the win, it happened the days before. It happened in practice. It happened in the first quarter, second quarter. So we just know how important every possession is. That situation may not happen again. So we've just got to embrace whatever happens and look forward to a crazy, crazy environment with a team that's desperate. Those combinations are tough to stop. We're looking forward to it, though. We've got a great opportunity, being up 2-0, and we can't wait to go out there and take advantage of it. |
| It's a different game, different season. I mean, different feel. Just a different vibe around the team, around just -- everything's just different. But I'm not done playing basketball yet, so I don't really look at these as defining moments. I don't want to downplay anything, but I don't want to act like this is the end of the road. So just get back to work tomorrow and figure out a better game plan. I thought we did some things tonight that we need to correct if we want to win the next game. So I'm just really trying to come in and be the best teammate, player I can be until this thing is over. I've just got to stay locked in. I didn't think about it at all. I just tried to play hard defense, tried to rebound as best as I could. If my shots were there, I just take them patiently and with poise. I found some good spots, and my teammates did a great job of setting screens for me, setting me up. Coach did a great job of calling plays for me, and I just tried to come through and be aggressive, just to do something, you know? But my main concern was defensive effort, intensity and rebounding. I just felt like especially the way he was missing shots tonight, he was struggling to shoot the ball, and the confidence that he had to pull that one up, and just the momentum of the game just kind of turned in our favor at that point. I know they hit a three coming back down afterwards, but they took like three or four shots to get one. So I felt like they were searching for a three. But we stayed poised through it all. We made good plays, and Andre came down and hit a dunk. And that just -- that momentum -- came down and got a nice dunk. But that momentum started when we had a stop first. And when Steph came down and took that three, no conscience, no matter how many shots he missed. That's what I love about him. Yeah, just tried to focus on each possession down. If we get a good shot down, no matter who takes it, I think we're all cool with that. I think defensively is when we came to play in the second half. We're going to need more of that effort, especially for a full 48, if we want to win. Yes. Don't get me wrong, every time I make a shot in the NBA I get excited. I just internalize it a little bit as I get older a little bit more than I did as a younger player. So I was definitely excited. It's hard to make shots at this level in the NBA, and I understand that. But at the same time I knew the game wasn't over. I've seen some crazy stuff happen in my years of playing basketball, not just in the NBA but just overall. We were up 6 with 25 seconds to go, I think. So anything could happen, man. You know, I just tried to make sure that we came out and didn't foul a three-point shooter or didn't give up a wide-open three or got too excited about that play. I just try to stay in the zone of trying to win the game and we'll figure everything else out after the game's over. So I just try to wait until the buzzer goes off to even think about anything else. No, not at all. I just took the shot. It just happened within the flow. I wasn't expecting to come out or shoot a lot of shots or look to score. I was just trying to play great defense and run the plays that Coach draws up and just run with the flow of what our offense is like throughout the game. I try not to think about just scoring. But, you know, we struggled to shoot the ball early on, and I felt like I had some good looks. I started asking for more of them, and I was able to knock down some shots for us. I mean, I just love that support from my teammates, and I think we all just support each other in a real -- with a real childlike approach to the game. That's rare in the NBA because we're all professionals. We're all grown men. But I think having guys that get so excited about a good play, a good block or a good rotation or a good shot or dagger shot. I think everybody gets excited for the small parts of the game, and Steph is one of those guys that just brings that joy. That's what the Warriors are all about, is just us having some fun out there, but also being, you know, poised and all those good words. Yeah, we just -- we didn't want to panic and let them push the lead from 12 to 16, 17 going into the half. So we knew that they were knocking down shots, and we knew we had some breakdowns that we could correct. On the offensive side of the ball, we just kept moving and moving the ball, finding the mismatches, and just being aggressive, all of us, to score. I thought Jordan Bell was tremendous tonight, Javale McGee was tremendous tonight, just giving us that, you know, rim presence, might catch the lob and it opened it up for everybody else. It's stuff that you really don't see as a normal fan or somebody watching the game, like JaVale and Jordan brought that for us. I think that was key in the first half, at the end of the first half, those guys coming in, and Andre and the bench did a great job of kind of settling us down a little bit. I didn't. I didn't beat myself up about that one. But this team, Cleveland especially, I think a lot of teams just try to beat us up on the glass and get more possessions than us. After Game 1, I had nine rebounds, but they were just like a soft nine rebounds, just ball falling in my hand or I'm in the right spot or uncontested rebounds. So I knew coming in that should be my focus because these guys are so great at getting extra possessions for their team. So, you know, Draymond and JaVale and D. West, they do a good job of boxing out, so I wanted to come in there and help out as much as I can and help us kind of push the break if we get a rebound. |
| Does it matter? Does it? Does it? We won two championships. We just won back-to-back. I don't think anybody's even worried about that type of stuff. I'm glad that we came out and played a great game tonight. We were able to finish the series off. That's the only thing that matters to us. All of us. We all want something that's bigger than ourselves. I think we love to see each other succeed. We love to come together and figure stuff out on the basketball court. And I think tonight everybody just played their roles well. Steph came out, was aggressive for us early. Got us -- set the nice tone for us, and everybody else kind of filled in. Our defense was great. 34% from the field, I think, the whole series. The whole playoffs our defense has been great. We finished it off with a championship, so we've got a bunch of guys in the locker room that don't care about anything but just being better basketball players every day and winning. It makes the environment great. Yeah, you could see it when you play against them and through the TV. But when you get up close and personal on an everyday basis, you really, really feel that way. Grateful and excited that I get this opportunity, and it feels so good to be a part of a group like this. To win two championships is -- that's what you want as an NBA player. That's how you know we're a great team is when everybody's coming after us. Whether it's opponents, whether it's different coaches panning for us, whether it's the fans, the media that hate us, it feels good when you're the team that everybody's gunning for. It makes us better. It makes us come to work and try to play at that championship level every single day, and that's the hardest part. But, you know, I'm glad we were able to lock in, especially in the playoffs, and do what we were supposed to do to win this thing. I've just got to keep getting better. I don't think I prove -- I proved to myself I picked the right career as a kid. I think I've got a lot more to go. So I'm just trying to prove to myself that I could just stay in it for the long haul, and hopefully I continue to have some success. Just keep growing as a player. That's my only concern. Late Registration. Yeah, that's probably equivalent. But it feels good. You know, when you experience something for the first time and you do it again, those emotions aren't going to be there as they were the first time. But just knowing that the work that you put in paid off and the care that you have for something, you know, it means something. I feel like I did something that pulled back into this Earth, I pull good energy back into the Earth when I go and work hard every day on my game, and I care about the game, and I watch basketball and care for my teammates, and we care for each other. I think we're doing something good in the world. I feel really good. Former players and players now that got a lot to say about what I did, they know how I play. They know exactly what I bring. They know. They know. They understand when they get on the court with me or they check up with me. They know what it is. So I kind of try to just stand on that, but I know what I bring to the game. I know how I approach the game, how hard I work, how much I care. I think that's the stuff I try to focus on more than anything is just being a professional basketball player and doing stuff for me and the team. So I pride myself on that and everything else is just noise. Oh, it feels great to go out there and win a championship with these guys, the way we did it. Like Draymond said earlier, it's the season, it was just an up-and-down season, so many guys got hurt. We were going through so much. When Pat McCaw went down, that put a lot on us emotionally as a team, and we got through that. I feel like we had a lot of those episodes throughout the year. To finish it off with a championship, especially in a sweep, it feels so good. I'm just so happy for Nick Young, Quinn Cook, their first championships. It feels great that we can go out there and give an experience to guys that haven't been here before, just like they did to me last year. So it feels great that we can do that. Just the brotherhood that we have in that locker room, and just the family atmosphere that we take on the road, not just the players, but support staff and everybody in the organization. You know, they don't get the credit. They don't get the praise, but so many people helped us get to this point, and we appreciate them. And it feels good to kind of win it for them. No. Just the product of hard work, and care and love for the game. I treat this game with -- I just feel indebted to the game. I feel like it saved my life, it changed my life. It took me out of an environment that I didn't think I'd ever be out of. Living in Maryland my whole life. I thought I was going to live in Maryland my whole life. But to travel the world and meet different people, and go to different arenas and different cities and countries around the world, I'm just forever grateful for this opportunity. So however it came, the championship and all that stuff, it means a lot. But just to be able to change my life in picking up a basketball and change my family's life, you know, this is the cherry on top, and I'm definitely excited about it. But just to be able to leave Maryland and experience and see different parts of the world, that was -- that's why I love this game of basketball. It was able to teach me so much about life. To win a championship on top of that means a lot. One thing about our team is that a lot of guys really don't care about statements. We just want to win the basketball game. If we happened to lose tonight, we were just going to focus on going back home and trying to finish it off. We weren't thinking about a sweep coming in. We knew we had a good chance to play well this series. But we were just trying to play great basketball, especially after coming out of that Houston series where it was a tough, grind-out series. We just wanted to win, and however it came we were excited about it. But to win in a sweep feels pretty good. I want to see Jordan Bell come back a better player. I want to see Quinn Cook come back a better player. That's all I'm concerned about. And I know the veterans are going to come back and do exactly what they need to do. But to have two young guys that contributed and helped us out the whole season, I'm excited to see how they come back next year. Looking forward to just to different tricks that we use throughout the season next year. I can't wait. Thank you guys for whatever you did all season. I appreciate the love and support, and we're back-to-back champs. |
| 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. |
| Of course, we know it's a game of runs. They had a really good run. I think we kind of stopped playing, waiting them to just quit, which would not happen. I think even we had open looks and they continued to play zone. Jamal made really, really big shots in the end of the game and that's why we won the game. I mean, no. I'm just whatever. If I can score, I'm going to score. If I don't need to score, I'm not going to. It happened that way. I’m never going into the game, I'm going to do this, this, this, this. I'm just going to take whatever the game's giving me. It's easier that way. I mean, again, they're doing their job. I'm trying to do my job. Sometimes they win, sometimes I win. It's a game, so I don't think about it as a matchup. I don't know the answer. I'm just trying to play the game how it's supposed to be played. If they're aggressive, try to attack me, if they backing off. I'm just going to play the game. Yeah, I mean, I said from where we were against Portland last year. We play four overtimes, lost, then we won the next game. Then the Clippers, too. We just don't want to quit. That's the mentality. Maybe they can beat us by 20, 30. But we just cannot quit, you know. Effort needs to be there. He's always good. I think he doesn't have a bad game. Sometimes he cannot score, but he's doing the right thing that he's supposed to do. He's helping us during the games. Sometimes it's the matchups. Sometimes it’s just the circumstances on the floor, that we cannot have him on the floor. I think he's doing a really good job of making plays for us. When he's open, he's knocking the shots down. He's playing really good for us. I mean, he was injured before. When we came here, he was kind of struggling with the shoulder, with the elbow, I don't know what it was. But I really believe in him. I think he can make the big shots. He is built for the big shots. I really, truly believe that he's a superstar and he's a really big part of this team. He carried us today, a bunch of nights. I'm really glad that he's my teammate. I think Monte played really well, too. I think Jerami played amazing. In that third quarter, I think he had like 10, 12, 15 points. I don't know how many. He was really aggressive. He was going to the rims. That's what we need from him. He was going to the defense. He's a big guy, can finish around the rim. He played really well today. He's going to do that in the next games. It seems like every series is kind of the same for us. Even Utah, we lost the first. Did we? The first game? Sorry, it's not (smiling). I mean, I think the game before, we saw that we could play with them. The first game, they were just really aggressive. They were making shots. We were kind of one step slower than them. They were kind of surprising us in every way, by the pace, by the rebounding. Second game we kind of knew what we were going to see out on the floor. Today it was just a really good night for us. We were playing really good defense I think. Just we need to figure out that big run that they had, we cannot let that happen. But, yeah, it was a big win for us today. |
| 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. |
| We won. I could care less about a triple-double. We play this game to win. I'm glad my teammates got a lot of trust and faith in me to go out there and hoop like that, but like I always say, you guarantee me a win, I could care less. My trainer James Scott does a great job of making sure that I'm strong enough to play through contact and just be conditioned. That's what we do here in the Heat. We pride ourselves on that and I love it. I love the work and I tell Coach all the time, I'm ready for this. Like the biggest stage, whatever you ask me to do I can do. I mean, that's competition at its finest. I think LeBron has got the best of me way too many times. I respect the guy for it, but this is a different time now, a different group of guys that I have around me, and we are here to win, we are here to compete. But we're not going to lay down, we're going to fight back in this thing, even it up 2-2. No. You got to empty the tank on every possession, especially playing against a great team like the Lakers. But we got a good team. Like I say, I got the easy job. These guys create so much space for me, I get to shoot it whenever I'm open, pass it whenever I'm not. I really do have the easy job. But none of us, none of us are ever going to leave anything in the tank. We're going to lay it all out there on the floor. I saw him just hoop, which is what I tell him every single chance I get. This isn't a big stage for him, this is just basketball. Do what you've been doing all year long and we're going to live with it. We ride with you, we're supporting you and we're constantly giving you confidence. There's no shot that you've never seen that you don't like, and we love you for that. So you take those because that's what's going to help us win games, compete, guard. And being the youngest to play or start, it's another day for him. It is. Everybody remembers winning, that's it. They don't care how many points you score, they only care if you won or lost. For us we're all about winning. We are. I say it all the time but I mean it. The guys that we have, the group that Coach Pat and Coach Spo put together it's always to win, nothing else. So I hope the next game I score zero and y'all talk all you want to talk and we win so I come up here and say the same thing. It means a lot. I go out there and I go to war for those guys because whenever they're out there, they're going to war with and for me. Whatever they ask me to do, I want to do it to the best of my ability, obviously. They asked me to go out there and win, like they did the previous two games, and tonight I couldn't hold up my end of the bargain. Tonight I did that -- we did that, I should say, and give them an extra couple days and get those guys back. That is what I said. First of all, I'm not just out there talking trash because I'm not. LeBron said that to me at the end of the first, that's what happened. I just said it to him in the fourth quarter. And talking about playing damn near perfect, we did a good job of that tonight. We rebounded the basketball, which is what we always talked about. We got back. But I think guys are starting to realize how much we belong on this stage and that we are in The Finals for a reason. To tell you the truth, I think when we get these other two guys back, they're going to make everybody's job including mine a lot easier. So I'm excited, but we still got to play better moving forward. The offensive player is always at the advantage, as long as you can get to your spot, you do what you really want to do. But like I always say, like my teammates do that for me, you can't leave those guys, because if you do I'm passing it to them. Half the time it's a bad pass and it will be at their feet, but they always find a way to make the shot. I have so much confidence in this group of guys, as does Coach Spo, it's so fun to play with them guys, even better to win with them. I saw it. He did that thing with his lip, I saw that. Tyler's always going to be Tyler. I think we all love him for that. But like I tell T all the time, he's my third favorite Herro. His little brother Myles is definitely my favorite, so I'll talk more to Myles tomorrow than I will to Tyler because I think he is the reason that Tyler plays like that. He understands that he looks up to Tyler, and so Tyler goes out there and plays with so much confidence because he knows that his brother is watching. No, it means nothing. I, we stay focused on ourselves that's how we got here. But we're just settling down. I think it's a lot of bright lights, it's a big stage for almost everybody except for Coach Spo, Andre, OG [Udonis Haslem], and nobody been here before. But we're coming to realize that we belong here. We're a really good team and we can win, as we have shown tonight, if we play basketball the right way, if we do what we say we're going to do. So everybody is just becoming more and more comfortable as the days go by. We put bodies on bodies. We played a lot more man, which I think we all agreed was a good call on coach's part. He's great at adjusting. We rebounded the basketball. We made a lot of things difficult for them, all hands on deck, getting into the paint and I think that it's going to be even better whenever we get Bam back. It doesn't. I don't care. We don't, we really don't care. We could care less if they pick us to win. Obviously ya'll picking us to lose. We're just going to go out there and compete, do what we know that we're capable of. I will say, Duncan needs to shoot the ball a lot more. He needs to hunt shots because he's going to be a reason that we win one of these games. He's going to hit six, seven 3s and I'm going to jump up and down and I'm going to give him a big hug, maybe a slight kiss on the back of his head, because I know how important that that guy is to our team. We're always confident. We know that we can win any game if we rebound, if we don't turn the ball over, if we get back, things like that. But we got a group that, like we're, I don't like the word "underdog" so -- nobody's picking us, there you go, nobody's picking us. And we really don't care. We're going to go out there and compete that's what we have been doing all year long, all playoffs, the time that we have been here. Stay confident because we know we're a good team. |
| 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. |
| Nothing. I left it all out there on the floor along with my guys, and that's how we're going to have to play from here on out. Like I always say, it's win or win for us. But this is the position that we're in. We like it this way. We got two more in a row to get. Because that's what my team asks of me, that's what they need me to do, and I think Coach Pat and Coach Spo brought me here for that reason; to help us win games and I have to continue to do that for two more games. I know that I'm capable of it, but I got a hell of a group of guys around me that make my job a lot easier. I'm fortunate for those guys because when I pass it to them they make shots. When I get beat going to the rim, they're there. So we're in this thing together and they give me a lot of confidence to go out there and hoop. Look, man, I can say it every time I'm up here, but we live for these moments. Like the work that we put in, we're built for this, we have been doing this all year long. This didn't just start in the bubble. We have been playing together, win, loss, draw, whatever, we're in this thing together. And that's what's going to win us games. I think night in and night out it could be anybody. It could be Bam, it could be hopefully Goran. Like we're so together when we're out there on the floor, off the floor, that's why we win because everybody wants everybody to be successful. I mean, if you're the best player in the world, you're supposed to be able to do that. We keep our head high knowing that he's going to hit some tough ones. That's what really, really, really great players do. But we ain't backing down. We ain't shying away. We can go on the other end and do what we do. I think he had a hell of a performance tonight, along with AD, the whole team. But we're still fighting. We're in it to win it, we're not backing down, we're not scared of nobody. I think it's easy whenever I have the group of guys that I have around me and that I have the coaching staff that believes I can play at a high level. Coach Pat brought me here to play at a high level. I got so many people in my ear just telling me to keep doing what I've been doing, play basketball the right way and we're going to end up winning. So that's why I smile, knowing that we're always going to play the right way and we're always going to live with the result, because we're going to leave it all out there on the floor. I know that I'm capable of it. I believe in my skill set and my talent. My teammates do as well. But it's not just me, Duncan had a hell of a game, K-Nunn came in and did what K-Nunn did. Bam had a huge one. All of us, all of us was the reason that we won this game and it's going to be the same way for the next two. To stop running from the basketball, can't shoot the ball if you don't have the ball. I think he gets lost in trying to get other people open, when everybody is going to react to him probably more so than they're going to react to me. A three is worth more than a two. So as long as he's coming to the ball, shooting the ball when he's open, when he's not open, that's the Duncan Robinson that we need, that we want, because that's how he's been playing all year long. And we're going to need him to be even more aggressive for Game 6. To tell you the truth, I don't know. I'm going to go back and talk to Armando and whatever he says do, I guess I got to do. I really hate when people tell me what to do, by the way, but I know that he has my best interests at heart and he'll probably tell me what to do in Spanish as well. Just stay aggressive. I don't know what they're going to throw at me on any given night, but I think whatever you throw at me it's not going to work because if I'm open I'm going to shoot it. If I'm not I'm going to pass it to Duncan or Tyler or K-Nunn or Bam or Jae and they're going to make the shot. So as long as we stay together and play basketball the right way, no matter how they guard me, I'm going to make the right play. I started to put people into positions that they need to be put in. I think I rushed a lot, I didn't have guys knowing where they were supposed to be. And that's my fault, because coach is telling me the play and I'm not echoing it down the line. And I can't let that happen because then you go on a 10-0 run or whatever they went on. We'll watch it, we'll be better, but we got to know, I have to let everybody know where we're supposed to be at. I mean, I'm sure they wanted to win, thought they was going to win coming into it. As did we. But it was a hard-fought game, I think it's going to be even harder for us next game, but I like our chances. Not really, I don't be paying attention to them over there. I don't pay attention to the confetti machines. I do pay attention to Rondo's son, Pierre though, that's my guy. Other than that, I’ll be so locked in on the game, I’ll be locked in on my squad, because we're here to win, we're here to win. So for these next two we're going to, we're in the trenches. This is over with. We got to get better, even from wins. I don't think we ended the game the way we were supposed to. We didn't rebound when we needed to. We got lucky. Luck is a part of everything and that's what that was. Now don't get me wrong, I'm taking the W, but I think going into the next one got to play even more perfect. We got to secure the ball, we got to get back, we got to do everything right to give us a chance to win. |
| 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." |