

NBA Finals: Bucks vs. Suns

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

Deandre Ayton

Phoenix Suns

Game 1: Postgame

Phoenix Suns - 118, Milwaukee Bucks - 105

Q. Very serious question. Did Chris steal that last rebound from you?

DEANDRE AYTON: Yeah.

Q. I saw you cracking up about it.

DEANDRE AYTON: Book got on him. I didn't really care. I was just happy how we all performed, to be honest.

Q. More broader question, you and Chris have both alluded to just the candid conversations that you guys had maybe early on in the season when you first started working together. When you think back on those conversations now, what were the biggest things that you took away that now you feel like is helping you in moments like now?

DEANDRE AYTON: Really just approaching the game the right way. Always being alert, little things that matter in long stretches of the game, knowing my matchup tendencies and just being a presence on both ends of the floor. Just putting pressure on the rim and also protecting the rim.

Q. How much fun are you having with this whole experience?

DEANDRE AYTON: I'm just happy because I woke up saying this is just one game closer. I get goose bumps, sometimes I overwhelm myself on the way to the game. I'm having a lot of fun because my guys in there they keep me level and they keep me intent with it.

Q. At what point in terms of tonight were you like, I'm doing my job, I'm playing the way I need to play for my team?

DEANDRE AYTON: Really when CP and Book started getting to their spots out of our pick-and-rolls early. Me setting good screens and just adapting to how the Bucks was throwing defense at us, whether they were switching



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or going over or under, just really trying to get a good hit on them and they got the rest.

Q. Monty talked about the last couple of days with this matchup how important rebounding was going to be. How much pride do you take individually in that when you know it's going to be a key in a matchup or a series?

DEANDRE AYTON: I mean, them dudes is big dudes, man. That's how they really get their offense going especially. Just try to clean up some of that stuff so we can get on a run and give ourselves some momentum as well, and I tried my best. Like Jae Crowder and T-Craig, coming in there just getting some tips or boxing out guys like P.J. Tucker, to not really strapping up my hand when I get the board.

Q. Why do you think you and CP3 and Devin complement each other so well? Monty kind of alluded to there's a lot of stuff that goes on behind the scenes that kind of led to you guys coming together so well and stepping up the way you guys are right now in the biggest of stages. Like, what has happened behind the scenes?

DEANDRE AYTON: It's just the respect level. Like you say, we all got on each other, had candid conversations where we had to adjust. But candid conversations leads to wins, and it started to be great communication and constructive criticism and we just all take it into a positive and play together. Bring it to the other guys, and they see how we are playing as unit and it's contagious. That's about it.

Q. You mentioned how sometimes you overwhelm yourself on the way to the arena. What kind of butterflies were you dealing with tonight? And when you get kind of excited and anxious what do you do to calm yourself down?

DEANDRE AYTON: Me, I really just take three deep breaths. Close my eyes and after I do that, the whole arena is really empty, to be honest. I just see me teammates and my coaches. There's a task at hand after that.



