

NBA Finals: Bucks vs. Suns

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

Chris Paul

Phoenix Suns

Game 1: Postgame

Phoenix Suns 118, Milwaukee Bucks 105

Q. Monty was praising you and Devin and Deandre for having a lot of talks about just what that dynamic will be from a chemistry standpoint. What did those discussions throughout the season entail and what do you think it's taken to get to this point?

CHRIS PAUL: It's been a lot. It's been a lot. It was some tough ones. DA couldn't have said it better. Sometimes people take it as arguing or whatnot, but I think it was all constructive. Talking about pace, they have been on me about getting the ball up the court faster. Talking to DA about the angles of the screens, and you see as the season goes on how much that stuff is important. Hitting the bottom, getting out, making yourself open. I could show you play after play where it helped tonight.

Q. The first five or six minutes, for you, it seemed like it took a little bit to kind of settle in, and then you took off. When did it start to click and what were you feeling in those initial minutes in your first Finals game?

CHRIS PAUL: I just missed my first couple shots. I think that's the way that we play. Book got it going. I think Book had 12 in the first quarter. That's just the way our team is. It's not just one guy that we depend on. Mikal could get going, Jae might be hot, DA might have it going. We just feed off of each other, and it just sort of all game long -- this guy, that guy, and we just try to find away to win.

Q. You waited a long time, but the fans here waited a long time to see the Suns play in the Finals again. Did you get to kind of just notice how much they were taking in this whole scene and how much they were enjoying what you guys were doing out there today?

CHRIS PAUL: Not really. Not really. Probably maybe initially when we run out for warmups, but I'm just so locked into the game I ain't really paying attention to much. Just trying to stay in the moment.

No, it got crazy loud during one of those timeouts. But it's



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exciting. That's one win, and I think I'm just focused on the task at hand.

Q. The pick-and-roll tonight with you and Deandre and then Devin getting involved in the pick-and-roll, what were you guys seeing tonight that led it to just seemingly flowing and getting buckets seemingly every time you guys went to it?

CHRIS PAUL: We play a lot of basketball, so we sort of know. I was watching them soccer games today, which was crazy. I watched a hockey game last night. I'm watching that like, damn, how do they know to pass it there? And they probably think the same thing with us. But we do this so often, and we have seen just about every coverage you could possibly see, so it's second nature.

I think our coaches, the way they prepared us since training camp day in and day out, it seems repetitive to some, but for us it's necessary.

Q. You're talking about pace. You guys had 20 points in transition. As far as pushing it with Mikal, is that just an automatic when he's ahead to get it to him?

CHRIS PAUL: Yeah, they be on me bad about that, especially Willie Green. Willie was my teammate. Willie always said that I held onto the ball too long. You know what I mean? But it's like I said, constructive criticism. In that Clipper game, the closeout game, Willie came and said we need to get the ball over half court with 20 seconds [left on the shot clock]. So I'm trying to make a conscious effort of making sure we're playing with the right pace.

Q. Adam Silver gave his press conference today that he always does at the Finals before the game. He said it's kind of poetic justice that you and him were on the phone so much last year from March until whenever the bubble started, and now all of a sudden you're here. I don't know if you've ever put all that into perspective of all the things you did to keep the league going, and now you've ended up yourself here in the Finals. But how do you sit with that statement?

CHRIS PAUL: Not too often. I'm just like everybody else. I got those memories that come up on my phone, that show you where you were like a year ago. Abdul Nader

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

came up to me in the locker room before the game, he was like, C, a year ago today we left to go to the bubble. So it's amazing to think all the things that have taken place since then. But I'm grateful for where I am now and happy to have this opportunity.

Q. Monty shared before the game that the message around the facility on all the screens was just go hoop.

CHRIS PAUL: Hoop.

Q. Yeah, when the message is that simple where it's not like here's a tactical game plan thing, like just go out and play, how much does that put a team at ease to trust what you've done to get here and just go out and play?

CHRIS PAUL: I think it's really good for our team, because I've said it all season long, one thing that we're going to be is prepared. We're going to be prepared for every game. We always talk about when preparation meets opportunity. So shootaround, Coach said go hoop, y'all know what to do.

Q. I'm curious with the way that you guys were able to kind of have a solution to a lot of the defenses that you saw them throw at you today. How much of that was scripted versus you guys just reading and reacting to what they were doing?

CHRIS PAUL: Combination of both. Like I said, we play a lot of basketball, watch a lot and our coaches told us all the different things to be prepared for. We played against these guys twice. We prepared for Giannis or not Giannis. So we're sure they're going to make some adjustments going into Game 2, and we'll probably do the same.

Q. Your voice and many others have been in DA's ear throughout the year. What are you most proud of the way he's played this postseason?

CHRIS PAUL: I sat in the background during DA's press conference right now, just seeing him talk, just seeing the maturity in him not only as basketball player but as a person. Everybody doesn't get a chance to know him off the court, but he has the biggest heart. One of the best guys you'll ever meet. So the success and the recognition that he's getting right now is well deserved, and I couldn't be happier for another guy on our team. Not even you, Book. (Laughing.)

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