

NBA Finals: Bucks vs. Suns

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

Brook Lopez

Khris Middleton

Milwaukee Bucks

Game 1: Postgame

Phoenix Suns 118, Milwaukee Bucks 105

Q. Brook, you haven't been shy nor afraid to get out on the perimeter when you do switch. What about tonight, was it more frustrating or where was CP able to get those shots off you? I don't know what else you could have done?

BROOK LOPEZ: I think I could have done a better job in trusting my teammates more behind me and try to make them put the ball on the floor more. But he hit tough shots. That's what he does. That's what he's done his whole career and he did that tonight.

Q. Felt like in the first half with the switching that you guys were doing, your teammates were also trying to help and kind of get those driving lanes squished down a little bit. Is that something that you were expecting, you want? I know there's that balance like if you're going to switch, that's what you're going to do and you're going to live with it?

BROOK LOPEZ: Yeah, I think it's definitely finding that balance, and it's obviously Game 1. We were hoping to come away with a win but we didn't. We learned a lot of stuff. We have a lot we can look at now and review and go forward after that.

Q. Khris, you had no free throw attempts with 26 shot attempts. Do you need to draw the foul somehow? Was that a little off-balance or a little surprising to you?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: It's tough, you know, teams have been getting up in me lately. Just got to try to play through it. Can't try to wait for the officials to bail me out. Just try to be strong with it. If they call a foul, they call a foul. But lately, they haven't, so I've just have to play better, be stronger.

Q. For both of you, how do you think Giannis fared after coming back from such a tough injury? And from



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your vantage point what is it like seeing him at the line when the crowd is trying to rattle him in such an odd way?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: I think he looked pretty good tonight. Looked like his normal self for the most part, driving guys, playing through contact, dunking some, jumping, running, springing, whatever. At the free throw line, he's been going through that for, I would say a couple years now. The counting has been going on since this playoffs. I don't think it bothers him at all. He knows what he is going to go through at the free throw line. I think he's a professional. Stays calm, cool collected and stays with his routine.

BROOK LOPEZ: I agree with everything Khris said honestly. I thought Giannis looked good out there. He was playing aggressive, being his usual self, making offensive and defensive plays.

And at the free throw line, he's just going to go through his routine. That's part of it now. The fans do what they do and he's going up there and staying focused and in his routine.

Q. You guys have been through a lot as a team to get to this point, kind of even going back to the Eastern Conference Finals against Toronto. How much of that stuff do you think has built resilience and do you think that's shown up in this postseason specifically when you guys have been down 0-1 all three rounds?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: I think it's just all of them, not just the Toronto series, last year in the bubble; this year in the playoffs against Brooklyn. We were down 3-2 and was able to force Game 7 and win a game on their home court. So I think, you know, we've been through a lot. We've been through it all. We know it's not going to be easy. We know it's going to be tough and there's times where we're going to be down in the series. But the series is not over yet if we're down. We still have to keep competing and just playing.

Q. For you, we've talked so much over the last couple days being without Giannis, but to know what he's had to go through to fight so hard to come back what does that do for you guys in terms of inspiration or wanting to put it all out there?



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KHRIS MIDDLETON: We know he's giving it his all. He's been on a crazy rehab schedule, just trying to get cleared to play. We know that's not easy, especially the injury that he had. We all saw it multiple times on the TV screen, videos, all that and people talking about it.

And talking to him, he did say it hurt, it hurt a lot. But he still found a way to get over it, play through a little bit of pain and fight for it. It's great. That's all you want from your teammate is to give it his all. I don't think he's fully 100 percent but he's close to it to go out and play and give it his all.

Q. Was the disappointing part early the free runs at the rim they had or the wide-open spot-ups? And I'm guessing if so, that would be a part you guys feel you can really improve on in Game 2?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: I think that was part of it. I think we fixed it and addressed that situation quickly once they got a couple of them. I think the most disappointing part is the free throws. Shot way more free throws than us. We have to do a better job of attacking and driving the rim like they did.

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