

NBA Finals: Bucks vs. Suns

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Mike Budenholzer

Milwaukee Bucks

Game 4 Postgame

Milwaukee Bucks 109, Phoenix Suns 103

Q. Can you just take us through what's going through your head as you see that ball get tossed up over the top of Giannis?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: Yeah, their connection in the pick-and-roll game, their ability to make plays is very good. Giannis just made a spectacular block, spectacular play. His ability to cover ground and get to that point, get to the top. That's an NBA Finals special moment right there, and we're going to need more of them. His impact on the game on both ends of the court -- it's a big-time block. That's what he's capable of.

Q. In the meantime, Khris Middleton went for 40. What did you think of his takeover in the fourth quarter?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: You need somebody who can make those shots. He and Giannis in a pick-and-roll, Giannis setting great screens. Khris, I thought he had some good looks kind of early. But then he just stayed with it. Credit to him. A lot of big, tough shots, and then the tough finish in transition. He was special. A lot of good stuff from Khris. And defensively, too, I think he's given us a lot on that end.

Q. You talk about the work that Khris and Giannis have done over the past eight years to build to this moment. How fitting was it to you that those were the two guys who pulled you out of the fire?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: To see the conversations or the engagement between those two, and Giannis talking about what we wanted to do offensively, and a lot of it comes down to just getting Khris into a good spot and him being unselfish and then Khris delivering. But a lot of reps, a lot of experiences together. We need that going forward.

Q. Pat hits the corner three that put you guys up. And I think Booker wanted that switch on Pat late and Pat with the contest. Can you speak about those two plays and what they meant?



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MIKE BUDENHOLZER: Yeah, I think we were able to get a stop and get a push up the court. They showed a crowd. They showed extra bodies on Giannis and he made a great read, great decision. Great look by Pat and he makes it.

Defensively, his athleticism and his ability to get to a contest and help us defensively, he's done it all year. A couple big plays from Pat.

Q. Along the same lines with Jrue, I imagine this was one of his more frustrating games. But to rebound late, mental toughness to not lose it there?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: Yeah, I think this is kind of a mental toughness win for us. I think both teams are scrapping. I thought Jrue made several winning plays late -- the steal, I thought he came up with a big defensive rebound in traffic and I thought he came up with a big offensive rebound.

So I think for him just to stick with it, the mental toughness that you mentioned, that's how he's built. He's a winner, and he made a lot of winning plays those last three or four minutes.

Q. Late when Devin seemed like he was almost intentionally trying to foul Jrue, which would make no sense when he had five, but did you get an explanation on how the whistle didn't blow? And generally your thoughts on Devin's night?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: I'll go the first one. There was just a little bit of a mix-up. I think they called the foul a little bit earlier on somebody other than Booker, so I think there was a little bit of confusion just in general, both the players. I think Booker just went to the bench and thought he had fouled out, and the foul was on somebody else. There's a little bit of, like I said confusion, mix-up, not that big a deal. What was there, seven, ten seconds left. I thought it was pretty late.

But as far as Booker's night, he's hitting contested, tough shots. I think we've just got to keep making him work for everything. Maybe we're able to get a couple stops late. But he's a heck of a player. Bounce-back game from him, which is exactly what we expected. We've just got to keep

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

making him work for everything he gets.

Q. Seems like we are at this point where both teams know what each other is running and there's a lot of familiarity and it will come down to who makes the best plays outside the framework of the offense and defense. Is that what you see in this grid look stage?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: The familiarity is certainly there. They do a lot of really good stuff defensively, creative. Monty does a great job, their players. I still think you have to be on point. There's got to be a mental focus.

But at the end of the day, you have to find a way to get the 50/50 balls, the rebounds. We've got to have great spacing. We've got to be in attack mode. So I think both teams are familiar, but they still have to execute down the stretch. You've got to make plays down the stretch. It's going to be that kind of series it, feels like.

Q. 33 field goal attempts for Khris tonight. What was happening offensively for you guys and then maybe defensively on the other end that allowed him to take so many shots? And did you notice early that that was going to be the kind of game that was needed, 33 attempts from him?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: No on the early part. I did think that he got a couple good looks. We, in general, got a couple good looks. It's always you feel like you want to convert those.

He stuck with it. Again, I think both Jrue and Giannis, and really even Tuck and Pat, finding ways to get him and get him late, set screens for him. I didn't feel it early, but as the game went on, I thought Giannis found him on some kick-outs, some offensive rebounds. Just a variety of ways he gets to 33 shots and 40 points, but late obviously the ball was in his hands a ton.

Q. It seemed like maybe you were going with Teague a little more tonight. Did you like what he was able to do in terms of picking CP up 90 feet on multiple possessions and maybe that has a cumulative effect over 40 minutes?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: Yeah, I think Jeff has been good for us. As a group, we're trying to make things difficult on both Paul and Booker. Jeff has been a part of that. His minutes have been really good. He can play with Jrue. Jrue can play off the ball. I think the more guys we can throw at them, you need every little bit you can defensively to continue to make it hard and difficult on these guys.

Q. Going back to Khris, what do you think makes him

an All-Star and a player capable of being decisive in a Finals game?

MIKE BUDENHOLZER: There's so many things. Khris, to be playing at the level he is and delivering for his teammates, it's a long laundry list. But I think the character, the care factor, is off the charts. He wants to win. He's obviously a great shooter, great passer, playmaker. I think he makes winning plays on the defensive end. He's an all-around good player.

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