

POST-GAME RECAP

NYK @ SAS

Final: NYK 105 – SAS 95

Frost Bank Center – San Antonio, TX · Wednesday, June 3, 2026

Road-Game 1: Brunson's Late Hammer Flips a Frozen Spurs Finish

New York 105 – San Antonio 95 · Frost Bank Center · NBA Finals, Game 1

For 42 minutes this was a Finals opener that refused to behave. San Antonio rode a 20-5 first-quarter flurry to a 12-point lead, watched it evaporate during a Knicks defensive stand, then seized the lead back on Victor Wembanyama free throws with 2:16 left. And then the Spurs' offense simply went cold and quiet – scoring nothing the rest of the way – while Jalen Brunson buried the two biggest baskets of the night. The Knicks closed on an 11-0 run, won the fourth 29-19 and the second half 57-40, and walked out of the Frost Bank Center with a 105-95 Game 1 statement that came with three decades of franchise history attached.

This was New York's first Finals win since June 21, 1999 – and the Knicks got it in the same building where they lost the 1999 opener 77-89. It was also the franchise's first Finals opener win on the road since 1972, and it came against the one opponent New York has ever met in the Finals before. The series, which went 6-2 to the Knicks across eight meetings this season, now opens with the road team holding the split advantage.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Final
New York	19	29	28	29	105
San Antonio	27	28	21	19	95

10 lead changes · 6 ties · NYK won the turnover battle 8-13 and the points-off-turnovers battle 19-14.

How the night flipped: a Q3 clampdown, then a frozen final three minutes

San Antonio actually looked like the sharper team early. New York sprinted to 14-7 behind Brunson's opening three, an OG Anunoby triple-plus-layup, and two Karl-Anthony Towns paint buckets – then went cold (8/24 FG in Q1) as **Dylan Harper** scored 10 first-quarter points and **Julian Champagnie** hit back-to-back threes. The Spurs closed the period 20-5, took a 27-19 lead, and carried **55-48** into the half on a 5/12 three-point half.

The pivot was the third quarter, the night's single biggest swing:

- **SAS went 0-for-9 from three in Q3** on 8/23 FG (34.8%), after shooting 9-for-24 from deep across the first two quarters. NYK outscored them 28-21 to knot it **76-76** – the 12-point deficit erased.
- **The Spurs never led after the first quarter**, despite taking the lead at 95-94 with 2:16 left in the fourth.

Then the ending. After a string of missed shots on both sides – Wembanyama's 6-foot floater, a Shamet three, a Brunson floater, a Vassell three – Wembanyama drew a Shamet foul and sank two free throws to put San Antonio up 95-94 at 2:16. **Brunson answered with a go-ahead three at 1:50** (28th point, off a Mikal Bridges assist) for 97-95. The Knicks never trailed again.

New York closed on an **11-0 run**: Bridges' two free throws at 1:11, Brunson's 14-foot pullup at 0:37 for his 30th point (101-95), then Anunoby's four straight free throws at 0:29 and 0:20. San Antonio's closing possessions were a disaster – Wembanyama's lost-ball turnover (his sixth) at 0:57 and Fox's bad-pass turnover out of bounds at 0:21, with a Champagnie three rimming out at 0:13. The Spurs finished with 13 turnovers to New York's 8.

Brunson wills it home on an ugly-but-big 30

Jalen Brunson's line was a paradox: **30 points on 12/31 shooting with a 46% true-shooting mark** – 4 points above his 26.0 season scoring average but a mile under his 6.8-assist and 58%-TS norms, going 2/9 from deep with four turnovers. It was a heavy paint-and-midrange night (16 paint points, 13.4 ft average shot distance) as the Spurs' drop coverage took away the three-point line and surrendered drives. It didn't matter. His two fourth-quarter buckets were the two that mattered, and his 30-point Finals opener puts him in New York's opener-scoring history.

Josh Hart was the night's most absurd box score: **3 points, 15 rebounds, 6 assists, 4 steals, 1 block, and a game-best +22** in 27 minutes. The 15 boards tied his season high and were a career best against San Antonio; the 4 steals dwarfed his 1.1 average. The Knicks outscored the

Spurs by 22 with him on the floor.

Karl-Anthony Towns posted 18/12 with 4 assists (+14), matching his 11.9 season rebounding norm and edging his 3.0 assist average, on a night New York's second-leading scorer did his work at 5.8 feet. **Landry Shamet** (13 on 3/6 from deep, 72% TS) and **OG Anunoby** (17 on 3/6 from three) rounded out the efficiency. Bridges added 9/3/3 with 2 steals and a +11.

The Spurs' 26 came from the line; the other stars went quiet

Victor Wembanyama's **26/12** night was the counterweight to his 6-for-21 from the field – a below-the-rim diet (15.6 ft average, 2/9 from three) that kept him away from the basket, while he drew fouls to go 12/13 at the line. It made him the youngest player on record to score 25+ in a Finals opener, ahead of Luka Doncic's 30 in the 2024 opener. But the 6 turnovers and a 2/9 from deep capped the night.

The supporting cast hurt:

- **De'Aaron Fox**: 7 points on 3/13, 0/4 from deep, 25% TS – the worst efficiency on either roster – plus 5 fouls and 3 turnovers in 38 minutes. He took 13 shots and drew exactly one free throw.
- **Devin Vassell**: 9 points on 4/11, 1/6 from deep, 41% TS.
- **Stephon Castle**: 17 on 7/16 but 1/5 from three, 8 rebounds, –9.
- The bright spots: **Harper's 16 on 6/10 (71% TS)** and **Champagnie's 16 on 5/10 from three**.

The shot-diet story: San Antonio lived and died behind the line

The Spurs fired **43 threes – 48.3% of their attempts** – and hit 11 (25.6%). New York launched 36 and hit 30.6% while finishing 19/29 at the rim (65.5%). The paint split went New York's way (50-42), and the Knicks won second-chance points 23-14 despite grabbing fewer offensive boards (10 to San Antonio's 14) – Towns (7), Brunson (5) and Anunoby (5) made their offensive rebounds count.

Team	eFG%	3 PT	FT	Paint	2nd-ch.	TO	AST/TO
NYK	47.3%	11/36 (30.6%)	16/18	50	23	8	20/8
SAS	42.1%	11/43 (25.6%)	20/25	42	14	13	16/13

The Spurs actually drew more whistles (25 FTA to 18) but converted worse at the line (80.0% to 88.9%). And the fourth quarter told the whole night: NYK 9/22 (40.9%) to SAS 6/21 (28.6%) – and the Spurs' 3-heavy attack going 2/10 from deep while New York hit 3/6.

Historical rarities & context

- **First Finals win in 27 years.** Tonight was New York's first Finals victory since June 21, 1999 (89-81 over these same Spurs in Game 3).
- **The 1999 echo.** The two franchises have met in the postseason exactly twice – both NBA Finals: 1999 (SAS won 4-1) and 2026. Tonight was the first Finals Game 1 between them since 1999, when New York lost the opener at this same San Antonio building 77-89 – making this a **28-point swing on Finals openers at San Antonio** (105-95 vs. 77-89). New York's recorded Finals-opener record now reads: 1951 L, 1970 W, 1972 W, 1994 L, 1999 L, 2026 W.
- **Road opener history.** The 105-95 win was the Knicks' first Finals opener victory on the road since 1972 (114-92 at Los Angeles).
- **On this day.** June 3 is a date New York owns: the only prior June 3 game involving either franchise came 32 years earlier – June 3, 1994, when the Knicks beat Indiana 98-91 in Game 7 of the East Finals to reach the 1994 Finals. Tonight was the Knicks' first June 3 game since.
- **Youngest 25+ in a Finals opener.** Wembanyama (age 22) is the youngest player on record to score 25+ in a Finals opener, ahead of Luka Doncic's 30 in the 2024 opener.
- **Career marks vs. the opponent.** Josh Hart's 15 rebounds were a career best against San Antonio and matched his 2025-26 season high. The context on the other leaders: Brunson's career high vs. San Antonio is 61 (March 29, 2024) – tonight's 30 was roughly half that; Towns' career high vs. the Spurs is 60 (March 14, 2022, with Minnesota); Wembanyama's career high vs. New York is 42 (Dec. 25, 2024); Bridges' is 41 (Dec. 25, 2024); Champagnie's career high vs. New York is 36, set Dec. 31, 2025 in San Antonio's 134-132 over time win – tonight's 16 was well shy of that.
- **Season series.** The clubs split 8 meetings this season – 3 regular-season, 5 Finals – with New York taking it 6-2. San Antonio won the Dec. 31 over time thriller 134-132 in the regular-season meeting; the Knicks owned the December and March regular-season games.
- **Why tonight's extremes happened.** Brunson's 30 came on a paint-heavy diet against drop coverage (16 paint points, 2/9 from three); Wembanyama's 26 was built almost entirely at the line (12/13 FT) against a Knicks scheme that packed the paint, held him to 6/21 from the field and forced 6 turnovers; Fox's 25% TS was the product of perimeter pressure funneling him into contested looks.

What it means next

The Knicks took home-court advantage in a series already tilted their way on the season ledger – they were 5-2 against San Antonio across the prior seven meetings. Game 2 is back at the Frost Bank Center on June 5, where the teams played a 105-104 Knicks win in the regular season and where Wembanyama's crew will need a far better three-point night (11/43 won't beat anyone). For New York, the temp late is set: let the Spurs fire from deep, win the paint and the turnover battle, and hand Brunson the ball with the game on the line. It worked in 1972 on the road in a Finals opener. It worked again here, 54 years later.