

NYK @ SAS

New York Knicks (NYK) at San Antonio Spurs (SAS)

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

Game Breakdown

- **Series opener, Game 1 of the NBA Finals** – NYK (53-29, East No. 3 seed) at SAS (62-20, West No. 2 seed), Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at Frost Bank Center.
- **Even engines:** both clubs post the identical 118.7 offensive rating (3rd best NBA) – the separation is on defense, SAS 110.4 (3rd) vs NYK 112.3 (7th).
- **Net rating edge:** San Antonio at 8.4 (2nd best NBA) vs New York's 6.4 (5th best NBA).
- **Pace contrast:** SAS 100.7 possessions per 48 (12th of 30) vs NYK 97.7 (25th of 30; 6th worst NBA) – the Spurs' tempo edge is 3.0 possessions.
- **Back-to-back losing streaks:** both clubs dropped their most recent listed game – NYK L 1 (6-4 L10), SAS L 1 (8-2 L10).
- **Rest gap:** NYK 9 days since May 25 vs SAS 4 days since May 30.
- **Travel gap:** NYK ~1,254 miles from Cleveland vs SAS ~421 miles from Oklahoma City.

Team Identity – NYK

- **Working – Corner Separation:** 41.6% on corner threes (13.4% of attempts) against San Antonio's 34.5% allowed – the widest attack edge in the matchup.
- **Working – Foul-Line Engine:** a 25.0% free-throw rate (6th best NBA) with 14.5% of scoring from the stripe.
- **Working – Second-Chance Pull:** a 32.8% offensive rebound rate (7th best NBA), ahead of San Antonio's 30.6%.
- **Working – Clutch Footing:** 56.0% clutch FG (163/291) with 20 turnovers and 50 fouls – the cleaner late-clock profile in this matchup.
- **Not Working – Paint Offense:** 47.8 paint points per game (9th worst NBA) – the club's softest scoring lever.
- **Not Working – Roll-Man Coverage:** concede 1.10 points per possession to roll men (55th percentile) against SAS's elite 1.26 PPP attack.
- **Not Working – Cutter Defense:** 14th percentile on cuts (1.37 PPP allowed, 68.6% eFG) against a 97th-percentile cut team.
- **Not Working – Turnover Gap:** a 13.9% turn over rate (10th best NBA) sits behind San Antonio's 5th-best 13.3%.
- **Half-court design:** 3rd best NBA offensive rating (118.7) at the 6th worst NBA pace (97.7) – points manufactured in the set, not the open floor.
- **Paint denial:** opponents manage just 43.4 paint points per game (3rd best NBA) and 14.0 fast-break points (6th best NBA) against NYK.

Starters – NYK

- **Jalen Brunson:** 26.0 PPG / 6.8 APG on 29.6% usage (74 GP, 35.0 MIN) – the floor's highest-usage creator and late-clock closer; 2026 All-NBA (tier 2), 2026 All-Star, 2026 East Finals MVP, 2025 Clutch Player of the Year.
- **Brunson form:** scoring stepped up to 27.4 PPG over the last 10 (24.8 last 5) with true shooting climbing from 57.0% in April to 60.7% in May at 27.2 PPG.
- **Brunson matchup:** 6/11 (54.5%) from the field and 3/6 from three when guarded by De'Aaron Fox this season – after 28/55 (50.9%) and 7/14 (50.0%) career REG.
- **Brunson physical edge:** 4.72 offensive speed vs Fox's 3.95 defensive speed – the one printed footrace mismatch in the backcourt pairing.
- **Brunson gravity:** 8.38 gravity score is the highest offensive pull of either rotation, with 12.75 off-ball creation (also the top mark in this matchup).
- **Karl-Anthony Towns:** 20.1 PPG / 11.9 RPG on 61.9% true shooting (75 GP, 31.0 MIN) – the glass anchor who found a higher-efficiency gear; 2026 All-Star, 2025 All-NBA, 2025 Player of the Month.
- **Towns form:** +31.2 net over the last 5 and +29.2 over the last 10 – the best stretch mark of either roster – with true shooting at 70.3% (L5) and 70.7% (L10) on lighter 19.7-20.0% usage.
- **Towns matchup:** Wembanyama is 5/10 (50.0%, 0/3 from three) when guarded by Towns in 2026 REG, but the career sample reads 21/40 (52.5%) with 7/16 (43.8%) from deep – the height gap (7-4 vs 7-0) is the constant.
- **Towns drawing contact:** a 16.0% drive foul rate leads the Knicks rotation – converting drives into free looks rather than contested finishes.
- **OG Anunoby:** 16.7 PPG / 5.2 RPG on 62.0% true shooting (67 GP, 33.2 MIN) – the 2026 All-Defensive wing (tier 2) whose playoff scoring has stepped up.
- **Anunoby form:** 20.4 PPG over the last 10 at 73.0% true shooting (17.8 last 5 at 66.4%) carrying a 97.9 defensive rating over the last 5 and 99.7 over the last 10.
- **Anunoby matchup:** Wembanyama is 5/9 (55.6%) when guarded by Anunoby in 2026 REG with zero makes from three (0/1).
- **Anunoby activity:** 6.9 contested shots and 2.8 deflections per game anchor the rotation's best activity numbers on a switchable 6-7, 240-pound frame.
- **Mikal Bridges:** 14.4 PPG / 3.8 RPG on 58.7% true shooting (82 GP, 32.8 MIN) – played all 82 games, the club's iron man and only full-season wing.
- **Bridges form:** May of this playoff run: 18.0 PPG on 69.2% true shooting, up from 10.0 PPG / 56.8% in April, with usage jumping to 18.0% (from 13.9%) and offensive rating to 129.9.
- **Bridges matchup:** assumes the primary on-ball cover on De'Aaron Fox – Fox shot 26/64 (40.6%) from the floor and 6/23 (26.1%) from three with 9 turnovers over 308.8 possessions with Bridges as the matchup.
- **Bridges off-ball:** 5.01 off-ball gravity vs 2.18 on-ball – the free-flowing complement to Brunson's creation in the cut-and-handoff scheme.
- **Josh Hart:** 12.0 PPG / 7.4 RPG / 4.8 APG on 41.3% from three (30.2 MIN) – remade his jump shot this year after 33.3% last season, the largest spacing jump in the rotation.
- **Hart form:** 14.8 PPG over the last 5 with usage climbing to 19.9% and a +11.5 net rating over the last 10.
- **Hart matchup:** splits the Fox and Barnes defensive assignments – career Fox 28/63 (44.4%) with Hart as the matchup, but Fox drew 10 shooting fouls on Hart over 165.2 possessions.
- **Hart disruptive:** 2.9 deflections per game, best of the NYK group listed – league-recognized off-ball disruption alongside 7.4 rebounds per game from the wing.

Bench – NYK

- **Miles McBride:** 12.0 PPG / 2.6 APG in 26.3 MIN – the stopper who stretches starter minutes as the bench's highest-minute piece and defensive heart.
- **McBride form:** scoring cools to 9.2 over the last 5 and 6.4 over the last 10, but offensive rating jumps to 132.8 over the last 5 (119.9 season) on a 58.0% true-shooting clip.
- **McBride defense:** point-of-attack stopper at 4.2 contested shots and 1.8 deflections per game with an on-court net that jumped from +7.1 to +9.5 year over year.
- **Landry Shamet:** 9.3 PPG / 1.4 APG in 23.0 MIN – the red-hot spacer entering the matchup scalding.
- **Shamet form:** 85.1% true shooting over the last 5 (59.8% season) at 10.2 PPG – the hottest efficiency stretch on this bench, delivered at 12.8% usage.
- **Shamet role:** a 15.1% season usage with a 59.8% true-shooting line – pure catch-and-shoot gravity with 2.4 drives per game for 1.1 points.
- **Jordan Clarkson:** 8.6 PPG / 1.3 APG in 17.8 MIN – the cold iso valve in his 13th season (12 completed), the bench's veteran isolation scorer and highest-usage reserve.
- **Clarkson form:** 3.4 PPG over the last 5 (8.6 season) with true shooting down to 49.7% (54.8% season) and usage dipping from 20.3% to 16.1%.
- **Clarkson role:** the bench's shot-creator at 20.3% season usage with 4.3 drives per game for 2.8 points – the best drive-scoring rate of this bench trio.

Availability

- **Projected Health:** Both clubs arrive with no injuries listed in tonight's packet; full projected rotations are available for both sides.

All Things to Watch

- **Corner-Three Seam:** NYK converts 41.6% from the corner (13.4% of attempts) against SAS's 34.5% allowed – the 7.1-point gap is the widest attack edge in this matchup.
- **Roll-Man Pressure:** SAS runs an elite roll game at 1.26 PPP (top of NBA) against a NYK defense allowing 1.10 PPP (55th percentile) – a 0.16-point pressure edge.
- **Cut-Game Mismatch:** SAS fields a 97th-percentile cut attack (1.39 PPP, 72.4% eFG) against a NYK unit ranked in the 14th percentile on cut defense (1.37 PPP allowed).
- **NYK Elite Counter-Cut:** New York's own cut offense is elite at 1.45 PPP (73.2% eFG) against SAS's 83rd-percentile cut defense (1.25 PPP allowed) – the 0.20-point edge is the widest play-type advantage on the board.
- **Rim Collision:** SAS converts 67.9% in the restricted area (31.1% of attempts) against NYK's 64.7% allowed – the central test for the Knicks' 3rd-ranked paint denial (43.4 opponent paint PPG).
- **Clutch Shooting Efficiency:** NYK shoots 56.0% in clutch minutes (163/291) vs SAS at 52.7% (176/334) – New York enters with the cleaner late-game shooting profile.
- **Foul-Line Engine:** NYK carries a 25.0% FTA rate (6th best NBA) supplying 14.5% of their total scoring, while SAS sits at a 12.0% FTA rate (19th of 30).
- **Transition Choke:** SAS defends transition in the 93rd percentile (1.09 PPP) and limits opponents to 12.8 fast-break points per game (3rd best NBA).

Team Identity – SAS

- **Working – Paint Gravity:** 67.9% restricted-area conversion on 31.1% of field-goal attempts, both the highest-volume and highest-efficiency slice of the offense, against a Knicks defense allowing 64.7% there.
- **Working – Rim Resistance:** Roll-man defense at 1.03 PPP and post-up defense at 0.86 PPP, both 97th percentile, anchoring the 110.4 defensive rating (3rd best NBA).
- **Working – Tempo & Transition:** 16.3 fast-break points per game (10th best NBA) on offense with 12.8 opponent fast-break points allowed (3rd best NBA) on defense.
- **Working – Ball Security:** a 13.3% turn over rate (5th best NBA) protects the possession counts the paint-shot diet requires.
- **Not Working – Corner-Three Defense:** the Spurs allow 34.5% from the corners, and New York converts 41.6% there on 13.4% of attempts – the 7.1-point gap flagged as the widest attack edge against this defense.
- **Not Working – Free-Throw Generation:** a 12.0% FTA rate (19th of 30) leaves the club drawing far fewer free looks than New York's 25.0% (6th best NBA).
- **Not Working – Clutch Foul Budget:** 58 fouls in close-and-late minutes is the counterweight to the club's 52.7% clutch field-goal clip.
- **Not Working – Clutch Giveaways:** 24 turnovers in the clutch against a season-long 13.3% turn over rate (5th best NBA) is the sharpest deviation in the profile.
- **Two-way ceiling:** only club on this floor with top-3 ratings on both ends – 118.7 ORtg (3rd) and 110.4 DRtg (3rd) producing an 8.4 net rating (2nd best NBA).

Starters – SAS

- **Victor Wembanyama:** 25.0 PPG / 11.5 RPG on 62.6% true shooting at 31.6% usage (64 GP, 29.2 MIN) – the 2026 Defensive Player of the Year, 2026 All-NBA (tier 1), 2026 All-Defensive Team (tier 1) and reigning Western Conference Finals MVP.
- **Wembanyama form:** last five playoff games at 25.8 PPG on 60.4% true shooting, nearly identical to the season marks (25.0 PPG, 62.6% TS) – the engine has not cooled in the postseason.
- **Wembanyama matchup:** holds roughly four inches on Towns and moves at 4.58 offensive speed against Towns's 3.89 defensive speed.
- **Wembanyama head-to-head:** 5-of-10 (50.0%) with 2 turnovers when Towns is the primary defender this season; 5-of-9 (55.6%) against Anunoby's coverage – career 21-of-40 (52.5%) vs Towns including 7-of-16 from three (43.8%) across 26.1 matchup minutes.
- **Wembanyama two-way:** 6.2 paint points per game on 5.9 drives with 9.4 contested shots a night at the other end – the rare anchor who is the primary scorer and primary rim protector.
- **De'Aaron Fox:** 18.6 PPG / 6.2 APG on 57.8% true shooting at 24.2% usage (72 GP, 31.0 MIN) – the 2026 All-Star veteran engine in his 10th season, cooling in the postseason.
- **Fox form:** 11.2 PPG on 42.4% true shooting over the last 5 and 15.2 on 49.3% over ten, both well under the 18.6 PPG / 57.8% TS regular-season line – May slid to 14.7 PPG on 49.8% TS.
- **Fox drives:** 12.1 drives per game producing 7.3 points – the primary way San Antonio pressures the Knicks defense – with a 4.65 offensive speed edge on Brunson's 3.78 defensive speed.
- **Fox vs Bridges:** career 26-of-64 (40.6%), 6-of-23 from three (26.1%) across 57.6 matchup minutes – but this season flipped to 6-of-9 (66.7%) in limited run.
- **Stephon Castle:** 16.7 PPG / 7.4 APG on 57.5% true shooting (76 GP, 30.0 MIN) – the breakout playmaker, peaking late in his 3rd season; 2026 NBA Player of the Week, 2025 All-Rookie Team (tier 1).
- **Castle form:** 19.5 PPG over the last 10 on 62.7% true shooting (16.8 last 5 at 59.7%) vs the 16.7 season mark – the run has gotten better the deeper the Spurs go.
- **Castle creation:** team-leading 12.7 potential assists per game with 12.9 drives per game for 7.0 points – the highest drive volume on the roster, feeding the roll game the Knicks struggle to defend.
- **Castle size:** at 6-6, 215 pounds he brings a physical mismatch against New York's smaller backcourt with 4.3 contested shots and 2.3 deflections per game.
- **Devin Vassell:** 13.9 PPG / 4.0 RPG on 57.4% true shooting at 17.6% usage (67 GP, 30.5 MIN) – the low-usage spacer whose efficiency leap remade his value.
- **Vassell effiency leap:** net rating flipped from -6.2 in 2025 to +11.4 this season while ORtg jumped from 111.9 to 121.3 – from a 16.3 PPG, 21.7% usage starter to a 13.9 PPG, 17.6% usage spacer.
- **Vassell form:** best month entering the Finals – 13.2 PPG on 57.8% true shooting in May, up from 12.6 PPG and 49.1% in April.
- **Vassell matchup:** career REG, NYK bench guard Jordan Clarkson has gone 0-for-9 from three with Vassell as the primary defender (12-for-28, 42.9% overall).
- **Keldon Johnson:** 13.2 PPG / 5.4 RPG on 61.3% true shooting at 20.1% usage (82 GP, 23.3 MIN) – the 2026 NBA Sixth Man of the Year, closing the season on a cold stretch.
- **Johnson form:** 9.2 PPG over the last 5 with true shooting at 49.9% vs the 61.3% season rate – May usage climbed from 17.7% to 22.0%.
- **Johnson matchup:** career REG, Bridges has held Johnson to 14-for-32 (43.8%) with Johnson going 0-for-12 from three when Bridges is the primary defender.

Bench – SAS

- **Dylan Harper:** 11.8 PPG / 3.9 APG on 57.4% true shooting in 22.6 MIN – the sophomore engine of the second unit and youngest creator in the rotation.
- **Harper form:** 13.5 PPG over the last 10 vs 11.8 for the season with true shooting held at 58.4% in the last 5 (season 57.4%).
- **Harper pairing:** Harper and Wembanyama share the floor 10.4 minutes per game at a +27.0 net rating over 54 games – the strongest printed two-man net on the Spurs' board.
- **Harper drives:** 8.7 drives per game for 5.0 points with 7.2 potential assists – the bench's primary distributor, not just a scorer.
- **Julian Champagnie:** 11.1 PPG / 5.8 RPG on 60.9% true shooting in 27.6 MIN – the low-usage glue wing who closes, appearing in the starting-caliber five.
- **Champagnie form:** 12.8 PPG over the last 5 against 11.1 for the season, with efficiency cooling to a 55.1% true-shooting rate (season 60.9%).
- **Champagnie gravity:** 4.67 gravity score is far and away the highest of the featured bench trio with 4.0 contested shots per game, the most of the three reserves.
- **Harrison Barnes:** 9.9 PPG / 2.8 RPG on 60.8% true shooting in 25.8 MIN – the veteran spacer in a cold stretch, 15th season (14 completed).

- **NYK Rest/Travel:** The Knicks have 9 days of rest since May 25, 2026, and traveled ~1,254 miles from Cleveland for this opener.
- **SAS Rest/Travel:** The Spurs have 4 days of rest since May 30, 2026, and traveled ~421 miles from Oklahoma City.
- **Layoff Contrast:** NYK carries the longest layoff of the two teams (9 days vs 4), while SAS holds the lighter travel burden and home-court edge.

Play Types & PnR

- **Roll-man collision:** SAS elite roll game (1.26 PPP, 65.4% eFG – top of the league) vs NYK's 1.10 PPP allowed (55th percentile) – the 0.16-point pressure edge on the matchup's central action.
- **Cut-game mismatch:** SAS 97th-percentile cut attack (1.39 PPP, 72.4% eFG) vs NYK's 14th-percentile cut defense (1.37 PPP allowed, 68.6% eFG).
- **NYK's elite cut:** New York's own cut offense is elite at 1.45 PPP (73.2% eFG) against SAS's 83rd-percentile cut defense (1.25 PPP allowed) – the 0.20-point edge is the widest of the play-type board.
- **Putback defense:** NYK defends putbacks at 1.04 PPP (93rd percentile) blunting SAS's 1.19 PPP putback offense (83rd percentile) – a 0.16-point NYK edge.
- **Handoff advantage:** NYK elite handoff game at 1.05 PPP vs SAS's 0.93 allowed – a 0.12-point edge.
- **Post-up counter:** NYK's post-up offense is league-worst at 0.87 PPP against SAS's 97th-percentile post-up defense (0.86 PPP allowed) – the Spurs' 1.01 PPP post offense vs NYK's 1.02 allowed plays even.
- **Transition choke:** SAS defends transition in the 93rd percentile at 1.09 PPP holding opponents to 12.8 fast-break points per game (3rd best NBA).

Drives & Paint

- **Paint-volume gap:** SAS scores 52.2 paint points per game (9th best NBA) with 43.5% of total points coming inside vs NYK's 47.8 (9th worst NBA).
- **Paint-denial clash:** NYK holds opponents to 43.4 paint points per game (3rd best NBA) – the matchup's central battle: SAS's paint-first identity vs NYK's paint denial.
- **Fox drive engine:** 12.1 drives per game producing 7.3 points with a 9.9% drive assist rate directing the Spurs' drive-heavy attack.
- **Castle drive volume:** 12.9 drives per game for 7.0 points – the highest drive volume on the roster, pairing with Wembanyama's roll finish.
- **Brunson drives:** scoring-first at a low 8.5% drive assist rate with elite ball security at a 6.0% drive turn over rate.
- **Transition profile:** SAS 21.3% of possessions in transition at 1.15 PPP vs NYK's 18.2% at 1.17 PPP.

Lineups & Closing

- **NYK starting five (43 GP):** Towns-Anunoby-Hart-Bridges-Brunson at +2.3 net, 115.0 ORtg / 112.8 DRtg, 100.7 pace, 58.3% eFG in 12.6 minutes.
- **SAS starting five (29 GP):** Fox-Vassell-Champagnie-Wembanyama-Castle at +17.6 net, 125.4 ORtg / 107.7 DRtg, 104.6 pace, 61.2% eFG in 9.8 minutes – the cleanest early-game edge this matchup offers.
- **NYK explosive window:** McBride in for Anunoby – Towns-Hart-Bridges-Brunson-McBride at +16.3 net, 132.9 ORtg across 16 games at 7.7 minutes, 95.3 pace with 62.4% eFG.
- **NYK shutdown look:** Anunoby-Bridges-Brunson-Robinson-Shamet at +17.8 net on a 94.1 DRtg across 10 games at 4.8 minutes, pushing a faster 102.5 pace.
- **NYK rim anchor:** the Anunoby-Brunson-Robinson trio owns a +18.6 net over 45 games – Mitchell Robinson gives the second unit a rim anchor to close halves or hold a lead.
- **SAS bench frontcourt:** Barnes-Fox-Kornet-Vassell-Champagnie at +6.6 net (13 GP), and Barnes-Fox-Kornet-Vassell-Castle at +8.3 net (15 GP).
- **SAS bench-swing:** swapping Barnes into the starting alignment for Vassell turned a +20.6 net on a 133.8 ORtg / 65.8% eFG across 19 games at 7.2 minutes.
- **SAS loudest pairings:** Wembanyama-Vassell at +20.9 net (51 GP), Wembanyama-Champagnie at +20.4 (64 GP), Wembanyama-Castle at +17.0 (60 GP), Wembanyama-Fox at +16.9 (54 GP).
- **SAS cleanest three-man:** Vassell-Champagnie-Wembanyama at +25.2 net over 48 games.
- **NYK chemistry peak:** Towns-Anunoby at +8.0 net over 62 games; Anunoby-Robinson at +16.7 net over 49 games as the rim-protection pair.
- **NYK bench backcourt:** Towns-Alvarado at +20.6 (25 GP) and Anunoby-Alvarado at +23.5 (23 GP) – the loudest combinations are the Robinson and Alvarado bench mixes.
- **Late stagger:** Harper and Wembanyama share the floor at a +27.0 net over 54 games – when SA staggers the anchor into the second unit, Harper is the running mate who closes with him.

Notable Streaks

- **Stephon Castle:** Carries an 18-game streak of 5+ assists – 1st best NBA and the longest active stretch in the league.
- **Karl-Anthony Towns:** Has recorded 10+ rebounds in four straight games – 2nd best among all active NBA streaks.
- **Jalen Brunson:** Averaged 27.2 PPG in May (up from 26.0 season) while his true shooting climbed from 57.0% in April to 60.7% in May.
- **New York Knicks:** Enter on a one-game losing streak (6-4 over their last 10 games).
- **San Antonio Spurs:** Enter on a one-game losing streak (8-2 over their last 10 games).

On This Day

- **June 3, 2026:** No specific historical on-this-day facts were printed in the available packet.
- **Franchise History:** The only prior NBA Finals meeting between these two franchises occurred in 1999.
- **Venue Context:** This marks the first Game 1 of the NBA Finals held at Frost Bank Center in 2026.

Milestones

- **Mike Brown:** 507 career regular-season wins (60.4% W%) – enters tonight with 66 career playoff wins and 1 HC title.
- **De'Aaron Fox:** Currently playing in his 10th NBA season (9 completed); one of the most experienced guards in the series.
- **Jalen Brunson:** Enters tonight having maintained a 26.0 PPG average in back-to-back seasons (2025 and 2026).
- **Mikal Bridges:** Completed a full 82-game regular season in 2026, continuing his status as the club's iron man.

Last Meeting & Recent Highlights

- **No prior meeting data printed** – in tonight's packet beyond the season-series matchup notes on individual defenders.
- **NYK route:** 53-29 regular season, East No. 3 seed, 7.0 GB – reached the finals having navigated three rounds from Cleveland at ~1,254 miles of travel.
- **SAS route:** 62-20 regular season, West No. 2 seed, 2.0 GB – arrived 8-2 over the last ten having navigated three rounds from Oklahoma City at ~421 miles.

Staff & Front Office

- **NYK HC Mike Brown:** 53-29 with the club this season; career 507-333 (60.4%); 66-43 in the playoffs; the only ring-holding head coach (1 title, 2 conference championships) on either bench.
- **SAS HC Mitch Johnson:** 62-20 with the club this season; career 94-65 (59.1%); 13-10 in the playoffs; led the Spurs to their first conference title in his second season.
- **Officiating Experience:** The four-man crew (Sean Wright, Scott Foster, James Capers, JB DeRosa) brings a combined 100 years of NBA officiating experience to the floor.
- **James Capers:** The most senior official tonight in his 29th season (debuted 1996); Spurs are 4-1 and Knicks are 2-2 in his games this year.
- **JB DeRosa:** 23rd season official; prints the most lopsided team split tonight with SAS 4-2 and NYK 0-2 in his games this season.

- **Barnes form:** 2.2 PPG over the last 5 and 2.1 PPG over the last 10 with true shooting cratered to 22.5% over the last 5 vs a 60.8% season rate – the steepest form dip of the three featured reserves.

Shot Profile

- **Zone diet – restricted area:** SAS attacks 31.1% of attempts at 67.9% FG vs NYK's 64.7% allowed; NYK takes 28.2% at 66.3% FG against SAS's 63.5% allowed.
- **Zone diet – corner 3:** NYK converts 41.6% on 13.4% of attempts vs SAS's 34.5% allowed; SAS shoots 39.0% on 13.8% against NYK's 38.1% allowed.
- **Zone diet – above-break 3:** NYK 35.3% FG on 29.3% share vs SAS 35.5% allowed; SAS 34.4% on 28.4% share against NYK's 35.4% allowed – the matchup plays even above the break.
- **Zone diet – midrange:** the thinnest slice for both – NYK 11.4% of attempts at 44.5% FG vs SAS's 40.2% allowed; SAS 9.6% at 43.6% FG against NYK's 42.4% allowed.
- **Shot-type mix:** NYK at-rim 66.3% FG (2067 FGA) vs SAS at-rim 67.9% FG (2,304 FGA) – SAS's rim volume and conversion both lead.
- **3-point volume:** NYK 37.3% FG on 3,133 attempts vs SAS 35.9% FG on 3,109 attempts.
- **2-point jumpers:** NYK 45.2% FG (2,128 FGA) vs SAS 45.0% FG (1959 FGA).

Matchups To Hunt

- **Jalen Brunson vs. De'Aaron Fox:** Brunson is 6-of-11 (54.5%) from the field and 3-of-6 from deep against Fox in 2026 REG – career REG marks show a 50.9% clip (28-of-55) for Brunson in this pairing.
- **Victor Wembanyama vs. Karl-Anthony Towns:** Wembanyama is 5-of-10 (50.0%) when guarded by Towns in 2026 REG; his career sample vs Towns is 21-of-40 (52.5%) including 7-of-16 from three (43.8%).
- **Mikal Bridges vs. De'Aaron Fox:** Bridges assumes the primary cover on Fox, who has shot 26-of-64 (40.6%) and 6-of-23 from three (26.1%) across 308.8 career possessions with Bridges as the matchup.
- **Devin Vassell vs. Jordan Clarkson:** Career REG, Clarkson is 0-for-9 from three when Vassell is the primary defender (12-of-28, 42.9% overall).
- **Jalen Brunson vs. Julian Champagnie:** Brunson shot 4-of-8 (50.0%) and 2-of-2 from three against Champagnie's coverage during the 2026 regular season.
- **Mikal Bridges vs. Keldon Johnson:** Career REG, Bridges has held Johnson to 14-of-32 (43.8%) and a perfect 0-for-12 from three-point range.

Quarters & Flow

- **Q1 Efficiency Edge:** SAS's opening five (Fox-Vassell-Champagnie-Wembanyama-Castle) is the most dominant unit on the floor with a +17.6 net rating and 125.4 ORtg in Q1.
- **Quarterly Slope (NYK):** NYK efficiency peaks early at 48.5% FG in both Q1 and Q2 before sliding to 47.5% in Q3 and a game-low 46.5% in Q4.
- **Quarterly Slope (SAS):** SAS opens at a game-high 50.1% FG in Q1, dropping to 48.2% in Q2, 48.0% in Q3, and a game-low 46.8% in Q4.
- **Late Q4 (≤5:00):** The clubs are nearly identical in final-minutes efficiency; NYK shoots 47.9% FG (362/756) vs SAS 48.1% FG (337/701).
- **Bench Stagger:** SAS maintains a +27.0 net rating over 54 games when staggering Wembanyama to play with sophomore Dylan Harper during non-traditional bench windows.

Situational

- **Officials crew:** Sean Wright (22 years, debuting 2005) – Knicks 2-4 in his games, Spurs 3-1.
- **Officials crew:** Scott Foster (26 years, debuting 1999) – New York 2-1, San Antonio 3-1 with Foster on the crew this season.
- **Officials crew:** James Capers (29 years, debuting 1996) – the most experienced official tonight; Knicks 2-2, Spurs 4-1.
- **Officials crew:** JB DeRosa (23 years, debuting 1999) – the only official with a lopsided split this season: San Antonio 4-2, New York 0-2.
- **Combined experience:** a century of officiating on the floor tonight – 100 total years across the four-man crew.

Cool Stats & Storylines

- **Identical engines:** both clubs post the NBA's third-best offensive rating at 118.7 – the separation has to come else where, and the printed gap sits on the defensive end (110.4 vs 112.3).
- **Brunson's year-to-year constancy:** 26.0 PPG both 2025 and 2026, but net impact jumped from +2.6 to +6.1 while offensive rating rose 118.3 → 120.2.
- **Towns's role reshaped:** scoring down 4.3 points year over year (24.4 → 20.1) while staying efficient – the trade of volume for impact that reshaped his role.
- **Hart's make over:** 41.3% from three after 33.3% last season – an eight-point jump that turned a floor-spacing liability into a real spacer.
- **Fox's efficiency-over-volume shift:** scoring dropped 23.5 → 18.6 PPG and usage 27.4% → 24.2%, but ORtg climbed 113.7 → 118.8 and net rating flipped from -1.2 to +9.9.
- **Wembanyama's across-the-board leap:** ORtg climbed 112.5 → 120.5, true shooting 59.4% → 62.6%, usage 30.0% → 31.6%, and net rating flipped from +2.6 to +17.0.
- **Castle's third-year step:** ORtg 111.8 → 118.2, true shooting 52.2% → 57.5%, and a net swing from -4.7 to +9.8.
- **Johnson's efficiency turnaround:** net rating swung from -5.8 in 2025 to +7.8 with true shooting climbing from 57.2% to 61.3% and ORtg from 110.1 to 116.0.
- **Historical hook:** head-to-head Finals history between New York and San Antonio goes back to 1999 – the only prior Finals meeting between the franchises.
- **Q4 shooting by quarter position:** NYK shoots its lowest FG% of any quarter in Q4 (46.5%), as does SAS (46.8%).

Betting Lines & Props

- **Spread:** San Antonio -4.5 at -115, New York +4.5 at -105 (consensus close).
- **Moneyline:** Spurs -190, Knicks +158 – roughly a 2-to-1 favorite in the opener.
- **Total:** 217.5 – even -110 on both the over and under.
- **Prop watch:** no player props were printed in tonight's available board – only the game line (spread, moneyline, total) is on file.

Shot Diet & Zones

- **Restricted Area Collision:** SAS attacks the rim at the highest volume and efficiency on the floor, taking 31.1% of their attempts there and converting 67.9% – this hits a Knicks defense allowing 64.7% in the zone (a 3.2-point SAS edge).
- **Corner Three Seam:** NYK converts 41.6% from the corner (13.4% of attempts) against SAS's 34.5% allowed – the 7.1-point gap is the widest attack edge on the board.
- **Midrange Contrast:** Both teams minimize the midrange; NYK takes 11.4% of attempts at 44.5% FG (vs SAS 40.2% allowed), while SAS takes only 9.6% at 43.6% FG (vs NYK 42.4% allowed).
- **Above-Break Evenness:** The matchup plays even above the arc; NYK shoots 35.3% FG on a 29.3% share vs SAS 35.5% allowed – SAS shoots 34.4% on 28.4% share vs NYK 35.4% allowed.
- **Overall Volume:** NYK takes more 3s (3,133 attempts, 37.3% FG) and 2-point jumpers (2,128 FGA, 45.2% FG) while SAS prioritizes at-rim volume (2,304 FGA, 67.9% FG).

Timeouts & ATO

- **NYK PnR Logic:** Mike Brown's half-court set relies on elite handoffs (1.05 PPP, top-of-league) and cuts (1.45 PPP) to manufacture looks for Jalen Brunson (29.6% usage).
- **SAS Drive-and-Kick:** Mitch Johnson's ATOs prioritize the drive-heavy attack (51.1 drives per game) to feed the league's most efficient roll-man game (1.26 PPP).
- **Post-Up Pivot:** NYK's post-up offense is league-worst at 0.87 PPP; look for NYK to avoid the block against SAS's 97th-percentile post defense (0.86 PPP allowed).
- **Late Clock Trust:** SAS leans on De'Aaron Fox's 10th-season experience and ball security (13.3% team TOV rate, 5th best NBA) to navigate tight possessions.

Defense & Rim

- **Paint Denial vs. Gravity:** NYK holds opponents to 43.4 paint points per game (3rd best NBA) – tonight’s central test against a SAS offense scoring 52.2 paint PPG (9th best NBA) with 43.5% of its total points coming inside.
- **Elite Rim Resistance:** SAS anchors its 110.4 DRtg (3rd best NBA) with 97th-percentile defense against both the roll-man (1.03 PPP) and the post-up (0.86 PPP).
- **Transition Choke:** SAS limits opponents to 12.8 fast-break points per game (3rd best NBA) and ranks in the 93rd percentile defending transition (1.09 PPP).
- **Putback Wall:** NYK defends putbacks in the 93rd percentile (1.04 PPP), blunting SAS’s 83rd-percentile putback offense (1.19 PPP).
- **Activity Leaders:** OG Anunoby leads NYK with 6.9 contested shots and 2.8 deflections per game; Victor Wembanyama leads the floor with 9.4 contested shots a night.

Quarters & Late Flow

- **Closing Shooting:** NYK shoots 56.0% in the clutch (score within 5, ≤5:00) against SAS’s 52.7%, with NYK committing 4 fewer turnovers (20 vs 24).
- **SAS Late Decision Maker:** De'Aaron Fox (10th season) and sophomore Dylan Harper (22.6 MIN) serve as the primary late-clock ball handlers.
- **NYK Closing Spine:** Relies on veterans Brunson (9th season), Hart (10th), Anunoby (10th), Bridges (9th), and Towns (12th).
- **Foul Budgeting:** SAS has committed 58 fouls in clutch minutes compared to 50 for NYK – a late-clock whistle edge for the Knicks.
- **Half-Court Design:** NYK operates at the 6th slowest pace in the NBA (97.7), forcing late-game possessions into the set rather than the open floor.

Clutch

- **Shooting Superiority:** NYK shoots 56.0% in the clutch (163/291) against SAS’s 52.7% (176/334).
- **Possession Discipline:** NYK is cleaner in tight windows with only 20 turnovers and 50 fouls compared to SAS’s 24 turnovers and 58 fouls.
- **Season deviation:** SAS’s 24 turnovers in the clutch represents a sharp drop from their 5th-best NBA season-long ball security (13.3% TOV rate).
- **Closing Experience:** NYK leans on a veteran spine of Towns (12th season), Hart (10th), and Anunoby (10th); SAS relies on Fox (10th) and Wembanyama (4th).

Usage & On-floor Defense

- **Usage Hubs:** Jalen Brunson (29.6%) and Victor Wembanyama (31.6%) carry the heaviest creation loads of either rotation.
- **Stretch-Defense Ratings:** OG Anunoby holds a 97.9 defensive rating over his last 5 games; Devin Vassell holds a 102.3 DRtg over his last 5.
- **SAS Chemistry Peak:** The three-man unit of Vassell-Champagnie-Wembanyama is a +25.2 net rating over 48 games.
- **NYK Chemistry Peak:** The defensive pairing of Anunoby-Robinson is a +16.7 net rating over 49 games.
- **Gravity Leaders:** Jalen Brunson leads the floor with an 8.38 gravity score, while Victor Wembanyama posts an 8.31.

Recent Form

- **Brunson Escalation:** Averaged 27.2 PPG in May (up from 26.0 season) with true shooting climbing from 57.0% in April to 60.7% in May.
- **Towns Net Impact:** Over the last 5 games, Towns holds a +31.2 net rating and 70.3% true shooting (on lighter 19.7% usage).
- **SAS Guard Surge:** Stephon Castle is averaging 19.5 PPG over the last 10 (season 16.7) on 62.7% true shooting – Dylan Harper is at 13.5 PPG over his last 10 (season 11.8).
- **Veteran Dips:** De'Aaron Fox has cooled to 11.2 PPG on 42.4% TS over his last 5 (season 18.6 / 57.8%); Harrison Barnes has plunged to 2.2 PPG and 22.5% TS over his last 5.
- **Bench Heating:** NYK’s Landry Shamet is shooting 85.1% true shooting over his last 5 (10.2 PPG).