

The Celtics Got Banner 18

By Jesse Almeida 7/7/24

After a game 7 loss against Miami in the 2023 Eastern Conference Finals, there was a lot of devastation. It forced Brad Stevens into a tough situation. This team could not run it back, and had to make decisions on their roster. After acquiring two all star caliber players in Kristaps Porzingis and Jrue Holiday, people had a feeling that this year was the year. The expectations heading into the season was banner 18 or bust.

The Celtics introduced a new slogan for the new team and their identity. The slogan was “It’s different here”. The meaning of it was that it’s a new team, with a new playstyle, and a different mindset. The additions of Kristaps Porzingis and Jrue Holiday were monumental additions. Kristaps Porzingis is known as a “unicorn”. The reasoning for this is because he can shoot lights from the three at 7’3” and is elite in the post. He is elite in the paint, and on the defensive end he blocks shots and cleans up the glass. He does it all at the center position.

Kristaps is one of the best bigs in today’s game and gave the Celtics a trusted 3rd option. Jrue Holiday was never supposed to happen. Damian Lillard requested a trade from Portland and ended up going to Milwaukee, which ended up involving Jrue Holiday to be a part of this deal to Portland. Jrue would want to go and play for a contender instead of being in a rebuild with Portland. Boston was at the top of his teams to go to. Brad waited no time and got another all star talent for the second time in the same offseason, Jrue’s basketball IQ is unmatched, he can score, he’s a true point guard with his playmaking ability, and he is one of the best defensive guards in the NBA. He is an upgraded Marcus Smart. People said this move is what put Boston over the top.

To start off the first half of the season up to the all star break, the Celtics were the best team in the NBA with a 43-12 record. One of the Celtics weak spots was protecting the homecourt. They started off the season 20-0 at home before their first loss at home being against the defending champion Denver Nuggets on January 19th. The Celtics offense looked better than it has ever looked, and it looked like their defensive identity from the 2021-2022 season was back in top form. JB and JT were all stars once again and the Celtics starting 5 could have all been all stars with the season JT, JB, White, KP, and Jrue was having at that time. When the trade deadline hit, the one need the Celtics had if they had one was big man depth. Just in case of a KP injury so they had someone who could slot in and bring the defensive presence the team would

miss. Brad went out and got Xavier Tillman from the Memphis Grizzlies who is known for his versatile defense. The team was set and ready for a deep run barring injuries

The Celtics finished the regular season with a 64-18 record. This was the best record the Celtics had since the 2007-2008 season. Boston was the best offensive team in basketball with the highest offensive rating at 122.2, and they were the second best defensive team in basketball with a defensive rating of 110.6. The Celtics finished as the number 1 seed in the East and the best record in the NBA. The coaches, players, and everyone who works for the organization knows that there is one goal in mind. That is banner 18.

The expectation all season long was championship or bust. Playoffs came around and you could tell that there was a different energy in the games for the Celtics. That energy was proving the haters, doubters, and the fanbases who were chanting “We want Boston” wrong. First round was against the Miami Heat who knocked off Boston last year in the Eastern Conference Finals. The Heat were without Jimmy Butler due to injuries, and Heat fans were still saying they would beat Boston. But unfortunately for Heat fans, that was never a possibility as the C’s would defeat the Heat in 5 games off of Derrick White going off in the series. Next up in round 2 was the Cleveland Cavaliers. A new round, but the same result. Cavs fans chanted “We want Boston” and it turned into Celtics in 5. Donovan Mitchell would be out in game 4 and 5 but the Celtics already beat the Cavs twice with Mitchell on the floor. On top of that the Celics would be without Porzingis for at least until the Finals due to an injury. This round Jayson Tatum turned it around, and Jaylen Brown was a true 1B for the Celtics.

In the Eastern Conference Finals around, it was the Jaylen Brown, Jayson Tatum, and Jrue Holiday show. Games 1 and 3 were the best games of the series where the Celtics faced adversity being down and found a way to win. Jaylen Brown in game 1 made a ridiculous corner three to force overtime, and then Tatum iced the game in OT with a clutch and 1, and a clutch three pointer within the 2 minute mark. In game 3 the Celtics were down by 18 and came back in the 4th to get the win ending off with a clutch steal from Jrue. In game 4 White would make the go ahead three with a minute left that would end up being the game winner to bring the Celtics back to the NBA Finals for the second time in 3 years. Jaylen Brown had a monster ECF averaging 30 points a game 5 rebounds and 3 assists to give himself the Larry Bird ECF MVP. But once again, Pacers fans before the series chanted “We want Boston” and this time it turned into a sweep.

The NBA Finals arrive and the Celtics are facing off Kyrie Irving, Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks. There were many people who predicted the Mavs to beat the Celtics, and just like the other 3 victims, Dallas fans chanted what before the series began? “We want Boston”.

Porzingis returned in game 1 and was unstoppable in this game. He came off the bench and scored 20 points with 6 rebounds and 3 blocks. Jaylen Brown was the best player on the floor with 22 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 3 steals and 3 blocks to lead the way for a game 1 victory. Game 2, the Celtics won off of 26 points, 3 assists, and 11 rebounds from Jrue Holiday. Jayson

Tatum did not shoot the ball well, but had a near triple double 18 points, 12 assists, and 9 rebounds. Game 3 was a must win for Dallas and they almost came back to win this game. But thanks to the Jays for having a combined 61 points, and a big 3rd quarter from the C’s the deficit was too large for Dallas to complete and the Celtics went up 3-0 in the Finals. The Celtics would get blown out in game 4 forcing a game 5 at TD Garden on 617 day in Boston. The script was there to clinch Banner 18 on game 5. Right from the jump ball the determination was there for the Celtics. They were not missing any wide open shots. Tatum would go off in this game with 31 points, 11 assists, and 8 rebounds. A near triple double again. JB would have 21 points, 8 rebounds, and 6 assists. But the biggest moment in the game was Payton Prichard coming into the game at the end of the first half and swishing a half court shot at the buzzer. TD Garden went ballistic. Late in the 4th after a tough layup from JT, Dallas called timeout and waved the white flag. After the benches were brought in during the final 2:30 of the game the count down was on.

Two minutes and thirty seconds later, the clock read 0.0 and it was over.

The Boston Celtics are you 2024 NBA World Champions. Jaylen Brown was the Finals MVP, and the road to Banner 18 was complete. After all of the adversity this team faced over the last few years, all the doubters and haters, and the pressure of high expectations, this team overcame all of that and accomplished their goal. They will now all live in Celtics history forever and for some cemented their legacies as Celtic greats. Not only did Boston get their 18th title in the NBA, but Boston also got the ultimate revenge beating Kyrie who promised Boston a lot back in 2018 just to break that promise. Making fun of the city afterwards and stomping on the logo as a sign of disrespect. Boston won their title against the guy that turned on them. This season will go down as one of the greatest seasons in Celtics history. The crazy part about it is this might be the beginning of a dynasty being born. The Celtics are the balls.