

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Mike Muscala

Press Conference



Q. With Chet not being able to play this season, where do you think he can improve from the bench or off the court as he transitions into his rookie year next year?

MIKE MUSCALA: Just to be around the team and be around the practices and the games. He's a really smart guy and has a high level of awareness. I think just to soak it all in, watching film, being in the weight room, getting good rehab work done, all that stuff.

Q. You guys are the second youngest team in NBA history after being the first youngest last year. You being one of the older guys, you've got some teenagers in the locker room. What's that like?

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, it's a different generation. But it's fun. They keep me feeling young in a basketball sense, and they're great guys. Just you can tell they love the game, and they're nice people, and they're competitive and they work hard. They're younger, but they're just still fun teammates to be around.

I'll learn a lot from them, which I already have, and I'm sure they'll learn a lot from me and Fave and the older guys, too.

Q. Since you first got here, you've been so willing to come back, just immediately from the time Sam brought you in. What is it about the team or the organization or Oklahoma City that makes it such a (inaudible) in the off-season?

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, there's a lot of things. I think primarily it's the people in the organization and the city that make it for me, just I feel like the people within the Thunder organization are smart and hardworking and just like nice, creative people that are fun to go to work with.

The fans and the people in the city just seem really nice. That reminds me a lot of home. I tell people that a lot. I'm from Minnesota, but it kind of feels like that but just warmer here. I like it.

Q. It seems like you've been a great contributor since you've gotten here on the court. You got shut down the last couple years at the end. Are you looking forward to maybe going the whole year this year?

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, for sure that's a goal of mine. I had ankle surgery about six months ago, so spent the whole summer rehabbing, training, trying to get that right. Yeah, that's been the goal, just to have a full healthy season. Obviously take it one day at a time, but yeah, it's definitely a goal.

Q. Before Chet's injury, did you have in your mind what your role was going to be on the team with him, and did that change when the injury happened?

MIKE MUSCALA: Perhaps. I don't know, I haven't thought about it too much. I think we've been able to connect and relate a bit, just because I had my surgery six months ago and he had his recently. Different injuries but kind of similar parts of the body, if you will. So being able to just like talk about what I've gone through with it and being able to be a sounding board for him just to kind of discuss that.

But yeah, obviously we're going to miss him a lot this year. Obviously we all saw what he could do in the Summer League and I got a chance to work out with him back in Minnesota for a week. That was really fun, over the summer.

We'll miss him a lot, but we'll all step in to help in his presence, and when he's back ready to go, it'll be fun.

Q. When you first got to the league you were being mentored by guys like Al Horford and all those guys from that Hawks team. Could you have envisioned yourself being that mentor? I know you're only 31 --

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, yeah. Back then could I have? No. Not at all.

Q. Did you envision yourself doing that eventually?

MIKE MUSCALA: Oh, not then. I mean, no. Back then I could have never thought about it. To be honest, I was just like -- the game was going fast and I was just -- like you said, I was blessed to play with a lot of really good veterans, Al Horford, Elton Brand, Kyle Korver, some guys



that -- great coach in Mike Budenholzer in Atlanta. I would have never envisioned it, but now that I'm here going into think 10th year I'm grateful to play be playing basketball for a living, so it's fun.

Q. You know what it's like to be wide-eyed, your heart is being fast. Can you clearly see that when young guys who are new to the league, you can see they're having that moment that you've experienced before?

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, I feel like you see that a lot like in training camp, for example. It comes from a good place. Everyone wants to be in the right spot, and they want to do the right thing. But sometimes you've got to slow it down a bit. Everyone is going too fast.

Just watching some of the really great players, they play at a slow pace almost and a good change of pace.

Yeah, that's definitely something that just comes with experience.

Q. Do the young guys know that you're the oldest guy on the team and do they treat you --

MIKE MUSCALA: Not that I can tell, I guess. I don't know. Not so far. I try to do my best to look young, shave and all that.

Q. You want to Lu Dort's camp in Canada this summer. How did you end up there and how was that whole experience?

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, I was on a golf trip in Nova Scotia with a few of my buddies. We planned it like a year ago. One of my buddies suggested we could go to Montreal for a few days after since we would be in the area somewhat.

Went over there, and my girlfriend met me, and beautiful city, and it was so cool to see Lu doing his camp there. He had a bunch of young players and he had music playing. He got a chance to introduce me and talk a little bit to the kids. They're all speaking French primarily there, so I don't know what he was saying at first. But it was really cool to see that, and the gym he did it at was where he played AAU growing up or as a youngster, so it was cool to see that.

Q. Just talk about being from Minnesota and Chet is from Minnesota. You've got a little bit of a generation gap, but is that a bond you guys have from being up north?

MIKE MUSCALA: Oh, yeah, for sure, yeah. You know, you just kind of feel it. Obviously being from the same

place as him, just a lot of memories. I was able to spend a lot of time back in Minnesota this summer, which was nice, and to work out with him there -- obviously I had heard so much about him being a great young player through social media and everything, but just to be able to work out with him and be back home, yeah, it's fun to share that with him.

Q. All the other guys I asked said that they thought this off-season was really long, but they're younger. How do you feel this off-season was? Obviously this was the longest one in two years.

MIKE MUSCALA: Yeah, it's a good question. It did feel really long, especially because I had my surgery in March, so I was back home since then watching the guys on TV back with my cast on. It felt even longer for me.

Yeah, I'm definitely excited to get things going and just to go out and play basketball again. I did a lot over those months just to get back on the court, so I'm just grateful.

Q. They didn't have anything to compare it to, but you do. Do you prefer a shorter or longer off-season?

MIKE MUSCALA: Probably somewhere in the middle I would say. You know, I think -- I've had short off-seasons, too, and that can be tough, but you stay in good shape from it. So you want that mix of just having a good mental break, but it's a game we all love, so it's all good at the end of the day. We get to play basketball.

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