

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Bismack Biyombo

Press Conference



Q. You obviously got a chance to be here as part of such a young and special group. What was it like to be a part of this team as they went along?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: It was great. I was just telling coach, as a player, you lose sight of things, being kids. I think it's always a reminder to be kids and be curious and enjoy life a little bit and spend some time with your team.

We stress a lot on things that we obviously can and cannot control, but I think these guys really reminded me to enjoy life a little bit while playing basketball. It was a great group of young guys, super talented, and focused. They have an incredible level of focus, dedication to their craft that makes it even more enjoyable when you get in a gym with people that really want to work. I love working, so when I'm with people that work as hard as I do, it makes my life even fun.

It was great to be around the guys. Obviously not a fortunate ending, but you control what you can control.

Q. Is there a moment that stands out to you being around and knowing or seeing these young guys that are maybe more focused than other young guys you've been around in your career?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: Obviously going through the first series, you can kind of see that, the commitments. The level of focus. Shai, having a newborn in the mix of all that, and decided to still make himself available. That shows the amount of, one, maturity and understanding of responsibilities that he carries for the team.

But overall, I think for a season, they were able to put together at this young age says a lot about their character. We can sit here and go moment by moment, but you have to also look at the season and the playoffs, the situations they were put in, how well they were able to execute things and lift up one another.

I think that's the most important thing. I don't think it's just one moment that can define that. It's probably the sum of everything, the whole season, how things unfold.

But it doesn't feel well, it doesn't stick well, where everybody is right now, but you've got to take this moment, go get better, and come back next year and do it better.

Q. Just curious, what does this (inaudible)?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: It was handed to me by Coach, so probably summer program and things we need to improve and how we can get better.

Again, at the same time, just things about the organization.

Q. You've been in the league a while and have been on different teams. Outside looking in, did you think this young group would be that way, that committed to -- that sometimes people would associate you with immaturity? What did you think when you first got here?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: Just from watching them and competing against them, I knew they were mature enough. When you kind of observe the beginning of the season, everybody at a starting point, and by December some deviate from it and some stay on track by All-Star break, some are giving up, some have the vision, the passion.

I think the maturity level of each and every one of them in the locker room helps the coach to coach them. Helps the front office to keep adding. That's the reason some of us were added after the All-Star break.

At the same time, the beauty of the journey is you've got to face ups and downs. Even though they're all mature, I think they all went through the process, and we're still going through it, to be able to -- I think sometimes it's how quick can you turn it around, and that's where you're really going to find how mature people are in challenges. Challenges bring something out of you.

I think it's either going to make every single person, which I think it will make them, or break. Obviously you've got to deal with. Also, having great success, I think your biggest challenge is your last success. So if they can -- and we can all go into summertime saying we know what happened and this is how we can fix it, and now we've got to go and get better.

And come back next season and do it again and do it at a high level.

Q. What did you think about Chet before you got to that team and kind of that change as you began to see that?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: I think about him the same way as since I became his teammate. When I go into every game, there's a team that gives me a scouting report, and I do my own scouting. I study players. I tend to understand players. I think that Chet is a great, talented young guy that's extremely focused on getting better.

I mean, he played every game this season. For a rookie, this is difficult. I played my full season -- I think I was on my fifth season in the league, and my body was hurt. So I can only imagine what he's going through.

But at the same time, in order for you to do that takes commitment and sacrifice because there's days you don't want to -- your body doesn't feel right. You can't get on the floor, or you're dealing with injuries. But for him as a rookie to be able to be committed enough to say no matter what, I'm going to get on the floor, and I'm going to compete with these guys says a lot about him.

I don't need to sit here and say, oh, this and that. I think what he has done for himself deserves the respect that we must give him. I'm a believer, and I think, as a believer, when you're in the room full of people that just don't have wishes, they have a will, they go out there and they make it, and he's a believer with a will. He got out there and made it happen, not just for himself, but for the team.

I don't think the team could have been at that level without each and every person in that starting lineup and then that second unit. So everybody has contributed. But I think Chet played a big role in the team's success, and I'm really, really happy for him to be able to miss his last season and come into this season and play a full season. A lot of respect for him.

Q. As you talk some about Shai, but just being around him, being his teammate, what did you learn from him that you maybe didn't see from the outside?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: Shai? He doesn't listen (laughter). No, Shai is like my little brother. I love him. (Inaudible) go way back.

I think one of the things about him that I really find interesting is that, when there's such a high demand of you on the team, I think at night he's coming back in, and I'll see him at night still working, and the commitment that he

has to just continue to get better even though he's playing at that level, it says a lot about him.

I think you see some people, they're at the level and they're having conversation, but are they working hard enough? I don't know. I've been around guys that are just that good. But he's a hard worker, and he's fun to watch. He's going to be MVP of the league soon, maybe next year. So look forward to that. He should have been this year anyway.

Q. Do you see any similarities of parts of Chris Paul's game with Shai?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: No, two different players. There's no similarity. Shai is Shai. CP is CP. I wouldn't want to mix the two. But I do think that passing on the knowledge and information you have is always useful for young guys. Somebody passed it on to me. Somebody passed it on to CP, and I'm sure CP passed it on to Shai.

As you spend time with him, I think guys feel, I don't know if it's part of them, but he does not separate himself like I'm this guy, I'm this MVP guy, and this is how I'm going to treat everybody. He treats all his teammates equally. He laugh with all of them the same way.

There's no similarity, but Shai is Shai. You've got to let him be his own man. He's turning into a beast that we're going to see for years, so enjoy the show.

Q. You talk about the nights you come in and see Shai working. What do you remember, any of those moments stand out for you in those nights?

BISMACK BIYOMBO: There's no moments, man. Being in the gym at night and other teammates in the gym at night, I love it. I love it. It's the only thing I can say.

There's no words you can put to that except somebody just trying to get better and never stop trying to get better.

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