

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

Monday, September 30, 2024
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Jalen Williams Press Conference



Q. When we talked in May, you were secretive, I don't know if that's the right word, or you might not have known or wanted to deal with what you were working on this summer. Can you tell us what you have prioritized this summer?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I prioritized my health and my body.

Q. (Indiscernible).

JALEN WILLIAMS: I just kind of used the playoffs and my whole season to just have some reflection on things that I think I can get better at, shots that I didn't think I shot well in certain series and just kind of went there all summer.

Kind of just used the playoffs as a pretty good detailed look at stuff that I want to get better at. You know, when you play the same team five, six times in a row, you know, they kind of scout your tendencies and stuff.

Just trying to use that as a way to gauge what I want to do this summer and hopefully during the year it will look apparent.

Q. When you talk about things you're going to get better at, we don't get to see you guys in the training facility. How much of that is you just getting out to play, just being really, really analytical and critical of your own game? How much of that is behind the scenes with coaches, video, and science and things like that?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I think with the analytics and the video, and all that stuff is really based on the player. There are certain guys that don't watch film and have a really good feel for stuff that they needed to do during the season, and that's just stuff that they work on, which is where it becomes more behind the scenes working out with coaches and stuff than it does actually watching the film.

Then I think for me it's probably a 50/50 mixture. It's understanding on the film and being realistic with myself about things that I can get better at. I think a lot of us just

as humans it's sometimes hard if you are watching yourself to maybe brush some things off. I think the more open you are with your film, the better you can be as a player. I think that's how I want to do the rest of my career and my summer.

A lot of that was just watching film, watching where I messed up, and I guess watching the lowlights, I think, of my season instead of just watching highlights and going from there, and then applying that to my workouts throughout the summer.

Q. What was the process of being like the veteran/big brother to Cody during the draft process?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Veteran? I like that.

It was really cool. Honestly I was just kind of watching more than anything and just kind of taking that all in, the experience and just kind of watching him interact with everybody and go through the same thing that I went through.

The draft is a blur and there are so many things going on that week that I don't really remember mine. I feel like I'll always remember his.

I didn't give him too much advice or things to look out for. I just wanted to be there and watch him experience it and go through that whole thing.

I kind of got to live out some of the stuff that I may not have remembered or the new stuff they did for him that year I was able to see that and do that with him.

Q. First, like the new look. Is it going to hold through the season?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Absolutely not. I can barely see (laughing).

Q. Secondly, you have gone up against both Alex and Isaiah. You guys have played their teams in the past. What stands out to you just about them and what you have had to be ready for when you have prepared to play against them?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Good question. I think AC does



everything right. He just plays the right way, which is kind of like a rare thing I would say in basketball in general. Just somebody that can understand and I don't want to say fit a role, but just whatever is asked, he's going to be very good at doing that.

Obviously defensively they both bring a lot to the table, and I think -- what do we call Isaiah? Are we calling him Isaiah or Hart or -- I think I'm going to do "I-Hart." That's the name.

I think for him just rebounding. I think offensively his IQ is something that I think goes under the radar because he is so impactful defensively, but yeah, just kind of gives us that other push for rebounding, blocking shots. He'll be able to kind of help jump-start our offense as well. Really good screener. Good touch around the rim.

I think both of them around obviously gives us another dynamic to the different line-ups and the different combinations we can play throughout the game.

Q. Basketball has become such a part of pop culture and fashion. What does it mean about the way you -- (indiscernible)?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Thanks. I'm a leading person. Nice.

I think it's cool. Any time that people notice something that you think is cool and they think is cool too, that's a very special thing because can you definitely do something and people don't like it. I think for the most part people have kind of liked what I have done. It's just me expressing myself. I think it gives people a voice to do the same thing for them.

I know that's how I felt looking up to certain athletes growing up. You know, it kind of inspires you to want to do your own thing or kind of take the same path they did. I think to kind of be one of the leaders in that right now I think is pretty cool. Something I don't take for granted.

My parents are always big on you never know who is watching, so I think a lot of times I try and keep that in the back of my mind.

Q. You guys will play with two big guys at once with Hartenstein and Chet. How do you envision that seeing and working?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I have no idea. I just think if they are out there, we'll probably get some rebounds, which hasn't happened in a while.

As far as rotation stuff, I think I kind of leave that up to the

coaches. I think kind of going back to what I said earlier, I think it will be very interesting to see how the coaches draw up different combos and just kind of different line-ups. You know, we've never had this type of versatility where we can really think about that. We've been a versatile team since I've been here so to add more to it I think is really interesting.

Q. With respect to what position you play in the absence of Josh, do you feel like you need to step up and be more of a distributor than you have in years past? Obviously you played that role a bit more in college. Do you think you'll have to lean back into that with this roster?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I don't know. I think that's the beauty of basketball is not knowing. Like you said before, it's not something that would be like relatively new to me.

But, you know, whatever the coaches need me to play at, that's something that I'm comfortable doing. At the end of the day I'm trying to win games, so whatever the team needs me to fill in as far as a role, that's just something I'm going to do.

Yeah, I think losing Josh, obviously one of the most dynamic creators,, passers that we have right now, it will be interesting to see how we combat that and figure out different roles to do.

Q. Were you disappointed the Thunder didn't sign Auburn's Jaylin Williams?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I hadn't even really heard about that being a thing until closer to the draft. I thought it would be pretty cool. That would have been very confusing. Media day would have been very difficult especially when we added the two Zays as well. All the best to him.

Q. Do you think social media has changed the way players (indiscernible) on and off the court?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Social media has such a wider reach I think than it did before. I think athletes are able to express themselves, and I think more people are able to see it because of social media.

I think that kind of changes the persona of a lot of guys. I know it has for me for sure. It just makes me more open to posting or doing something that I've always kind of wanted to do to see if people like it or see what the vibe is.

I think a lot of people draw inspiration from people on social media. I think it's definitely -- it's even changed the way we play basketball and do the whole thing right now.

Obviously you look at the TV deal and just the stuff we're doing out there right now. There's a lot of social networks and stuff kind of coming out of the rise. It definitely has influenced that for sure.

Q. You talk about the way you watch film kind of changing and watching your lowlights. How would you describe yourself as your own critic? Who is maybe in your ear most when you are looking at improvement?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I think I'm really technical. That was something that I had to move through during the summer. I think navigating not trying to be perfect because when you are watching yourself mess up or struggle doing a certain thing, you can be really critical and down on yourself.

I think that was a big hurdle that I overcame was being able to watch it instead of knocking myself trying to figure out ways that I can actually move around that certain thing and get better at it.

What was the second part of your question?

Q. Who is in your ear the most when you are looking at what you want to improve?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I work with Eric Maynor. I work with him, and he works with my trainer Packie Turner. Both of them. I can't really listen to my dad. He is critical.

Even my dad helped me out. It's one of those things. I have good people in my corner, so nobody that I'm not worried about. I'm cool listening to all of them.

Q. How would you describe your dad as a critic?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I'll say both my parents. They just know what I'm capable of I feel like. It's your parents. I feel like everybody has that. Your parents can push button that is nobody else can.

Q. You mentioned social media and fashion and getting inspiration from people. What players do you get inspiration from -- (indiscernible)?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I don't know. I don't think I take, like -- I feel like I just watch certain players, and if they do a certain thing, I try and twist that into how it would fit in my game.

So if I'm trying to watch -- let's say I wasn't in the NBA, and I'm watching Shai, it wouldn't be, oh, how does he get to his midrange? It would be more what am I good at to get

to the spots that I like shooting at and then how he goes about doing that.

If you look at guys just over the course of the NBA that have shot a lot of twos, I would watch that and be, like, okay, well, he got there, and then I watched my game, and I try and find a middle ground to how I can get to certain spots that are comfortable.

So I don't really model my game after anybody. I feel like I do so many different things throughout the course of the season that it's hard to, like -- I don't think I want to, like, put a cap and just be, like, this is my identity the whole time when I can kind of branch out and do a bunch of things. I try and just steal little small parts of people's game and just kind of make it my own thing.

Q. Have you thought about how playing next to a screen setter like Isaiah Hartenstein can open up your game as an offensive player?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I haven't thought about it. We've been playing in open gym, and he has been on my team. And I've been hit by his screens before, so I know that it opens up just a lot of space. Then that's what I was saying earlier. He opens up that different dimension to be able to short-roll, to be able to step out and create. He's a good passer.

I think when you are able to screen and then obviously he's a role threat, so he kind of opens up the game for all of us, and we shoot the ball really well. He'll be able to find guys on cuts and threes.

Q. You mentioned I think your exact words were navigating not being perfect. Have you spent much of your career trying to be perfect?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, for sure. I don't think it would be unhealthy. I think every player probably wants to be perfect, but it's also one of those things where you know you can't be.

So I think just trying to drill that constantly and you have to give yourself some type of grace while you're going through changes and trying to get better at certain things in order to kind of maximize whatever your potential is.

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