

Oklahoma City Thunder

Media Conference

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Ajay Mitchell

Press Conference



Q. Ajay, first off you had a good rookie year until you got hurt. You came back and played a little bit towards the playoffs. How much did that help going forward on a roster that's pretty deep (indiscernible)?

AJAY MITCHELL: Yeah. The injury was tough, but I think, for me, it was a good setback. I think it really helped me just take care of my body, get better in the training room, but also get better like watching film, being able to be around the guys, like, 24/7 and just learning from them.

So I think it was a good setback for me. And obviously that time that I missed was tough, but really excited to be back healthy and be able to go out there and compete.

Q. What do you think you got better at?

AJAY MITCHELL: I think just my IQ, learning the NBA, learning the game on the sideline. And then just my body getting stronger and then getting into league shape.

Q. And obviously this offseason, not even offseason but during summer you kind of reached that "too good for Summer League," kind of winter play. What was it like going through that? And seeing the way that you played and how do you kind of carry that confidence into this upcoming season?

AJAY MITCHELL: Yeah. I think Summer League is always fun to play in. For me especially my second Summer League being able to compare my first and my second one. It's an opportunity to compete and I love competing. So I was really excited being able to play Summer League. I think it helps me to keep that confidence up for this season. So it was a great experience for me.

Q. You talk about kind of the difference between that first year Summer League and the second year and the comparison. What you think do the biggest differences are for you as a player? And why do you think you were able to build off your first season and become one of the best players (indiscernible)?

AJAY MITCHELL: I think just kind of the game slowing down for me. I think when you go into your first Summer League, it's like everything is really new to you. And then just being more comfortable, knowing the game a lot more. And obviously just going out there and competing, knowing that you gotta show that leadership role with the Summer League team. And that's really what I wanted to do.

Q. (Indiscernible) at the top Summer League, it's been a year people are really excited to watch Topic play for the first time here. You're a guy who's played with him in the Summer League. What can the fans expect and what did you learn more playing with him?

AJAY MITCHELL: Yeah. It was great playing with Nikola. He's a high IQ guard, can run the team. And really excited for him. I know it's been a tough year with the injury, but he handled it great and he got back healthy.

And playing with him in the Summer League was really fun. I think we connected really well. And seeing how we're able to play on the court at the same time, with me being off the ball, with him being off the ball and then just kind of playing off that. So it was a great learning experience for both of us, and it was a lot of fun.

Q. This team obviously coming off the championship has so many different types of players and guys that can do different things. But it really doesn't have anyone like Nikola that played last year. What does he bring to this team that you think can make a difference on a team that's already really deep?

AJAY MITCHELL: I mean, high IQ guard, really good play maker, can do a little bit of everything. So I am really excited for everyone to see him play and see him out there healthy. So I'm excited for him.

Q. What was your experience with the trophy like this summer and the parade, too?

AJAY MITCHELL: Man, it was a fun experience. Obviously the parade, I think just seeing our fans, our community really excited about us. And then just them really feeling a part of it because they're a big part of that championship. So it was really fun. It was a lot of fun.



But, yeah, gotta turn the page now, get ready for this next season and be ready to go out there and compete.

Q. Ajay, you got to get in the Finals and play some key minutes and just watching the whole Finals run. What do you take from that as it applies to your game?

AJAY MITCHELL: I mean, it was a great experience for me, I think. As a rookie being able to play in the Finals was really huge for me. I think it's a whole other level. And for me it was a great learning experience.

And I think now it kind of made me want to have more of that. So all I'm focused on is keeping my head down, working hard and helping this team win and do what we have to do to get back there.

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