Oklahoma City Thunder
Media Conference

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Kenrich Williams

Press Conference

Q. Did you guys notice this group had seasons that kind of were building towards becoming a better team year over year? How do you feel like in the long arc of this year's journey this team got better through the season and will need to continue to get better?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: Yeah, definitely. When you take a step back and look at how far we've come as a team and an organization over the past, since I've been here, six years, just take a step back and I'm very appreciative of how far we've come.

Of course we didn't get the job done this year, but there are many things to be happy about and to build on going into next year. Definitely we'll have some motivation, not just for myself, but for every person in this building. That's players and coaches.

So we have a lot to look forward to. We can't hang our heads on that.

Q. You mentioned a few seasons ago that this is where you want to spend the rest of your career. Obviously the team option coming up. How are you approaching this off-season with that?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's no secret that I want to be here until I'm done playing. I haven't really had a chance to think about that yet. I'm just processing last night's loss. I'm pretty sure those conversations will be brought up, but I definitely want to be here.

Q. What is it about this place that makes it somewhere that could be a long term home?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: Just the environment, the culture, the people that I work with every day, like this is a job. You don't want to go into a toxic job. This is a job where I can come in and be myself, and everybody around me is just good people and a good environment. Not to mention we're really great at basketball.

Q. People talk about how professional you are, especially your team will comment about your professionalism. You'll go through a stretch of a bunch of DNPs and next thing you know you're in a Game 7. What advice do you have for players through the NBA to have that professionalism and be able to contribute when called upon?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: Great question. First and foremost, just got to have some identity of who you are. I have my identity and my faith in God, that's one. Two, in this game of basketball, our profession, you have a job to do, you have a job to be a professional, and being a professional is being a good teammate, is staying ready when your number is called. There are no excuses when you're a professional.

Any time your number is called, you can't make an excuse like, oh, man, I played all the playoffs and whatnot. It's your job, it's your responsibility to stay ready. So that will probably be my message to any person listening or anybody in kind of my singular position, like there's no excuses with this thing.

When your number's called or a guy's going out, you've got to step up and be ready for those moments. Also, you've got to put the work in behind the scenes as well.

I know it's a lot, but yeah.

Q. (Regarding changes) ...change the way the NBA gets and into what this team needs?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: No, not necessarily. I don't change who I am as a person. I think you kind of -- you may change the way that you -- how you speak to guys differently, but overall leadership-wise, as a leader, you kind of have great character even when no one's watching.

Coach always says that a leader is a person doing the right thing, so it could be anybody. It could be a rookie who can lead as long as they're doing the right thing.

Q. Chet has acknowledged he was one of the guys -- he said last night this series obviously presented such a different look that it was hard for him to sort of respond. What was your message to him throughout the series? What were your conversations with him of like as he reflects on the series?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: My message to him was just be himself. We don't need him to be anybody else but himself. He's a helluva player. I have a lot of belief in Chet. He's one of my favorite teammates that I've had since being in the league, and I believe in Chet.

I think that, not just Chet, but all of us can use this series and everything that we kind of went through as motivation this summer and off-season leading up to the next season and just go into next season with that ambition, that drive to get back here again and make it be different.

Q. You've had a lot of teammates. What makes Chet one of your favorites?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: Just, I mean, a humble guy. Humble guy. Will give you the shirt off his back. Hard worker. I mean, like he really loves the game of basketball. Good dude. Funny dude. Just a good dude overall to be around. He's just a really, really good guy, man. I'm proud to have him as a teammate and as a little brother.

Q. You've been pretty good at having a hit parade of talking to guys early before they sort of break out. A guy we haven't seen is Thomas Sorber. What's been your evaluation of him?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: I haven't seen much either. He's recovering from the ACL injury, so I haven't seen the basketball side of him on the court. Off the court, he's a good kid. Listens; asks questions. When you have those traits as a young player, you tend to have some success. There tends to be something there for that player. I think the future is going to be bright for him.

Of course he has to get healthy first, but if he just keeps his head down and keeps working to get back -- I've had injuries make sure that he recovers well. So I'm sure the future is going to be bright for him.

Q. You were with Josh Hart in New Orleans, and with the Knicks in The Finals, he's known as one of the best role players in the league. What did you see from him being teammates?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: Josh Hart?

Q. Yeah.

KENRICH WILLIAMS: He played hard. He played the same way he does now. I mean, that was so long ago. He plays hard. Good teammate. He contributes to winning. That's pretty much it.

Q. What are you seeing from Shai and players that have been around a long time? How have you seen them evolve into this two-time MVP? What are the main traits that you see carry him to that?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: I think his leadership on and off the floor. You guys see everything that goes on on the court and all the success he has on the court, but I think off the court and his leadership in the locker room is what's kind of propelled him to where he is now.

Helluva player. Helluva guy as well. The dude just shows up every day, no complaints. He could have -- he plays the most minutes on this team, and he's probably the person that guys are the most physical with.

So I'm pretty sure he's (indiscernible) like bruises and all types of injuries, but he shows up for this team and this organization. That's leadership right there, showing up even when you're hurt, and just taking pride in putting in being a leader for this team.

Off the court he keeps the room light. Win or lose, he's someone that is going to be the same every day, and those are the traits that you want out of your best player on the team and having a leader on the team.

Q. Going back to your time in New Orleans, it seems like you've been with a lot of guys you could go to for advice. Last year Chet came to your house just to watch basketball after losses. How much pride do you take in that, in this sort of making sure that you're steering him in the right direction, making sure you're not saying the wrong things?

KENRICH WILLIAMS: When I do it, I'm not doing it because I'm his leader or this is my role with the team. I do it because it's something that I genuinely just want to hang. Like if I see my teammate having a bad day, like I just want to spend time with him and kind of just bond to him and just be there for him.

I don't see it as a job. I don't see it as something that you're called to do, but I do it because I feel like it's organic. It's natural on our own. I don't force it. I just speak up when I have to, to be honest. I don't try to go out and be this leader or this person. I just be myself, and that's who I am.

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