

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Aaron Wiggins

Press Conference



Q. Aaron, this team in its build has had so many different challenges and things that they've just learned over the course of time. Where did you feel like helped this team have the season that it had for all the different things, injuries to guys that popped up at different points of the year? To be able to win 64 games and go to Game 7 of the Western Conference Finals?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I don't think we ever flinched at whatever the season threw at us, whether that was injuries, different scheduling issues, changing things. I don't think our team flinched.

Guys kind of understood that season is going to be long and there's going to be a lot of things that aren't always perfect, and guys just remained ready and with a sense of confidence and just urgency of being our best selves.

We were still able to have a really good season. Obviously it didn't end how we wanted, but our level of just kind of confidence in each other and unwavering kind of focus and intensity was still big time.

Q. Guys have come back individually better each summer, but it does seem like there have been ways in which the team as a whole has gotten better at something over the course of a summer. I feel like three years ago it was physicality. A couple years after that it was passing was a big focus, rebounding. Do you guys even internally already view some opportunities where collectively as a group there can be a focus on improvement?

AARON WIGGINS: No, I don't think there's a rhyme and a reason to that. I'd say that there's a partial just kind of camaraderie and togetherness that exists over time, and you start to see things just flow differently.

But with that, yeah, every off-season, I think every individual tries to go wherever they're going to train and come back better as a player. When you have guys with the mindset as the ones in our locker room that want to get

better as individuals for themselves and for the team, the team obviously gets better.

We've had good success with that.

Q. Obviously you didn't have the season you wanted to have individually. How tough was that to deal with, especially after last year being such a big part of the championships?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, nothing is permanent. A lot of things change from day to day, and obviously year to year. As the end of the season and that last stretch, I wasn't my best self, and I obviously wasn't seeing the minutes that I might be capable of seeing.

But from a team perspective, still being a professional, buying into the team and being around guys who I love supporting and being with, it makes it easy to come in and embrace the togetherness of the team first.

I wouldn't say it was overly difficult to look past whatever my individual circumstance looked like, especially when you're competing for something big.

Q. What were those things that kept you engaged outside of wanting to be a team player, that kept your spirits up?

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, it's still basketball. I love basketball. So coming in here being able to put forth what I could to the game every day, and then my teammates -- I've got great teammates, guys who compete and are selfless every single day and try to give their best foot forward to the game and to the team. Why wouldn't I do it?

Q. Where will you work on this summer?

AARON WIGGINS: Basketball. Everything. Everything. I don't have a specific, man. Obviously I wasn't playing a lot in the Playoffs and down the stretch of the season. There's a hunger, and I think everybody probably has that same hunger right now.

But for me, there's a drive and just the feeling of spending time with the basketball a little bit more right now.

Q. Mark has talked about how this is a group of guys

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that take accountability. How important is it to have that mindset during the off-season, being willing to look within at maybe some shortcomings and address that?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I think there's the opportunity to look within for all of us as individuals and as a team. We've got to come back better. Came up short this year.

And it shows that the NBA is getting better also. We can't come back and be the same team, and while I thought we got better, we also have to take care of our bodies. We have to get better in that sense, also.

There's a lot of things that all of us will look in the mirror and take a look within and try to improve on coming into next season.

Q. (Indiscernible) most of us learn something about ourselves that we did not know previous to that. Is there anything about yourself that you just learned this year through a rough second half of the year for you that you didn't know before?

AARON WIGGINS: I wouldn't say there's anything that I learned that I didn't already know. But there were probably just the idea of -- there was a thing of just how much I love the game that kind of was reinforced.

When you're healthy and not playing, there's a different perspective to it. Obviously when you're injured and you have the game taken away from you, there's that feeling.

But just my love for the game was kind of put on a platform for me every single day when I wasn't playing, and that's the drive going into the off-season.

Q. What's something that you're proud of, just yourself, from this year?

AARON WIGGINS: I'm proud of my professionalism, my ability to still be who I am and not waver and not flinch. I don't know, my growth as a person and even as a player, I think that's something that I'm continuing to grow on and learn and find things out. I'm proud of that journey.

Q. The depth on the team is an obvious strength, but also not everybody is playing. How do you pull the team together in those moments where things like selfishness could --

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah. Like I said, I think this is a very unique group just because of the understanding of what it takes to be a high-level team, and it takes a sense of selflessness and a sense of sacrifice and a sense of

understanding that we have a really good team, a really deep team. Everything is not going to go perfect for everybody. There's going to be things that everybody goes through in a season that they may not have expected or may not want.

That understanding, and then just the kind of familiarity feeling that exists within this building, guys are close. The entire team, I think 1 through 17, 18, everybody has unique and special relationships with one another that continues to drive and put forth just a positive energy in the building that I think guys like to be a part of.

Q. (Indiscernible) what were some of the positives throughout the season? How do you think about the totality of the season?

AARON WIGGINS: By looking at the totality of the season. I think I got off to a really great start individually and had some small injuries, had some injuries that kept me out for some games. Came back and had some more good games, and then had some bad stretches, maybe wasn't my best self all the time.

But in that was an opportunity for me to learn, an opportunity for me to grow. It's created just more room and reason for me to go into my off-season knowing the things I need to work on and the things that need to be looked at.

Still looking at it as the totality of the season. It's just harder at the end of the season when you're coming off of a loss like we did, and the next day you have to sit and address the media. Everybody is going to be emotional, and in that sense, ready to express that.

But I still try to look at the totality of the season, and I think both as an individual for myself and then as a team, I think we all grew, and we have things to learn from it.

Q. You mentioned not being yourself a few times. Not to get too personal, but was there something that knocked you off from being yourself? And then like how do you try and make sure you're getting back to yourself throughout the season?

AARON WIGGINS: I'm not sure there's something specifically I could point to to say -- kept me from being -- I don't want to say myself, but my best self. Being in a really good rhythm and feeling comfortable in every part of the game where I've been before. That's kind of what I was really trying to get at.

No, there's things that I'll look at. I'll go back and I'll look at some games and I'll watch some film, and there's a lot of things that my team will look at just to kind of make sure

that we're addressing, and we'll build from there.

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