

Oklahoma City Thunder

Media Conference

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Jalen Williams

Press Conference



Q. First off, when did you get totally healthy with the hamstring, and how are you feeling going to camp?

JALEN WILLIAMS: When did I get totally healthy? I don't remember, to be honest. Somewhere, sometime in the summer, pretty early on. When did we stop playing, like end of May? So maybe middle of June. A little earlier than that. I was going pretty -- pretty much seamless by like the middle of June.

Q. Do you look at camp any different? More anxious because you missed so much time? Played 33 games, I think, last season. Looking forward to camp even more so this season?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm not anxious about it, but I am looking forward to camp just because I haven't played in so long. I'm more looking forward to just playing throughout the whole season.

But yeah, I wouldn't say -- I don't think "anxious" is the right word. I'm just excited to play again and grateful to be able to be healthy and do that whole thing. But other than that, yeah, same kind of thing.

Q. What's it like not having Lu and Isaiah and Wiggs around?

JALEN WILLIAMS: It's the weirdest thing ever. And I've been part of trades before. It's just very weird. Lu was my locker mate, and then Wiggs is across from me, and Isaiah is over there like kind of far end.

It's just like a very -- I don't even know how to describe it. It's just worried. Me and Shai were talking about it yesterday, and it's like I'm picturing Lu going to our team picnic. In my head I'm like, all right, I'm going to see Lu there or Wiggs there or what am I going to say to Isaiah.

It's very weird, and I feel like it's one of those things where like when you win championships with people, and those are guys that have been there the whole time I've been there, you grow like a really deep connection.

It has been weird, but I'm also excited about what our team looks like and just our new look. I'm really excited to have other guys fill those shoes and do really well in that role. So I'm excited. But it is very weird.

Q. How frustrating is it and how do you deal with it mentally to know you had a great team, great chance, get to the end, and you're not even available to play? How does a guy with only so many chances in his lifetime deal with that kind of setback?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I don't look at anything as a setback because it's more like -- for me, it sucks more so that I work really hard at what I do, and so for me to not even be able to play just because of injury kind of sucks.

But at the same time, what's meant for you will come back. All I can do is control my attitude, my effort going into it and what I do to respond to it, and that's kind of it. And that's kind of -- yeah, I just let life do its thing and move on from there.

Like I don't really have too much of like regrets or look back on last year and worry about it. It's more how can I avoid doing that last year -- how do I get my body to a point where it won't happen and play and be available for this year.

Q. What did you do different from summers past, and are there adjustments you have to make day to day, week to week, game to game during the season?

JALEN WILLIAMS: That was one of the big things, I had never really had any injuries that set me back. Looking back on my hamstring injury, for people that don't know, it's a touch-and-go thing. It's not like I'm pulling my hamstring in December where I can take all this time. It's like I'm pulling my hamstring sometimes in the middle of the playoffs.

So then, you know, my first game back from a hamstring, we go into, what is it, double overtime, triple overtime, something like that, you know what I mean? So it's just a lot of other things that go into that.

So it's more just about like rest and understanding like my body and like some of the cues to like let me know that my

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hamstrings are going to get tight or like understanding that it's not just like my hamstring, like trying to open up my hips a little more and do stuff that I've been doing throughout my whole year, just understanding my body and more and more every year so that if I have signs during the year, I can address them right away and know what to do.

Q. Out of sight, out of mind, I know you're excited to get back and playing. But is there any excitement of reminding people of how good you are, and do you at all feel underrated?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Remind people of how good I am? I guess, yeah. Yeah, I would definitely say that, but it's also more just I'm more excited to remind myself that I play basketball, if that makes sense. I've never sat out that long.

So I'm more just excited to go hoop again. I know what I am, so I'm not too concerned about trying to prove to somebody -- we've all seen it. I'm just excited to prove that I can play healthy and do that whole thing and move on. I'm just excited to get going, bro.

Q. Talking to Sam last week and he was talking about Jared McCain, and he said one of the things he's most excited is to see him play with you because that hasn't happened yet. What's your perspective on that?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, we haven't had a lot of minutes logged in. He's just a really good player. Obviously you saw what he's done in the playoffs, which was dope. To be able to come into a new situation and play with as much confidence as he did is -- it gives you a lot to look forward to, and I definitely commend him for that.

But yeah, I'm excited. Anytime you can shoot the ball and get your own shot off, it's always good. I'm a very willing passer, so I think we'll have a lot of good chemistry going throughout the year. Obviously the more you learn about players you're playing with, the better your team will be. It is exciting. I never even thought about that.

Q. What are you most looking forward to with this new look in the lineup? How will you contribute there?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I'm just doing me as far as like contributing goes. When you try and get too specific about where guys need to be or what he brings to the table, it moves away the basketball aspect of it. You kind of want to go out there and not know what guys are going to do for the first part of the season. So you get to learn each other. That's how you become a team. That's how you mesh.

But yeah, I'm just excited to see what lineups that get

thrown out there and how we adjust. I think what makes teams really good is, one, adjustments you make, and just like the response to adversity. Like we are going to have so many ups and downs during the year, it's like how can we remain steady through all that. And that's what I'm most excited about with this team.

Q. Dub, obviously the last two or three years, you've been going out of the country, Asia, for Adidas and everything. I know throughout that tour, the YouTube channel documented by JoJo. What has he meant to your production over the past few years and your production crew, and what has been the biggest -- for your creativity style, how has it been having him a part of this?

JALEN WILLIAMS: JoJo, I'm about to give you your flowers, so record.

So people that don't know, how the YouTube even came about was we were joking around in Santa Barbara while I was "testing the waters" for the Draft, and we like joked around, made this funny YouTube intro, and then it kind of caught some wind.

And yeah, we used to, like, stay in the same, like, I don't even know what you would call it, little like apartment kind of thing. Like W and me couldn't pay for our stuff, so my parents had to. He used to sleep on my couch, and then like we'd have like -- like we'd split Chipotle with each other because I was a normal college student back then. We didn't have NIL and stuff. We were cooking and splitting meals.

From then on, now to be able to go around the world where I want to and be able to record and document that stuff just kind of shows, one, how close we are; two, just like -- it's just crazy, the evolution that life takes you through basketball. So it's been a very cool journey. He's obviously documented that.

But more importantly, that's one of my best friends. So it's also you get to have like a best friend aspect to that as well.

It's been really fun. He's super creative, I'm super creative, and it works and it blends really well. Obviously we'll continue to do that as long as possible.

Obviously the Thunder have been a helping hand in that, like being able to help him, like, record and obviously be behind the scenes for stuff like that and be at NBA games here. There's a lot that goes into it. It's been really fun. That's my dawg.



Q. We're obviously a ways away from it, but with Cody getting traded to the Wolves, how cool is it going to be to not only play against your brother on Christmas but get to spend that time together with your family?

JALEN WILLIAMS: If I'm not mistaken, we play each other right before Thanksgiving, too, if I'm correct. I don't ever look at the NBA schedule.

But it is crazy. God works in mysterious ways. So that will be cool we'll get to spend Christmas together. I'm excited for him and his new opportunity. The Wolves is a great organization. It's also a team that we have also been battling with the past couple years. So my parents are going to be in a dilemma on who to cheer for. He's the youngest, so I kind of know what that will take; they will probably be in Wolves gear.

I'm just excited for him, and that new journey is so young. It's crazy to see. I think this is year three for him, which is wild because he's 22. So I'm just super excited for him. I hope he's happy there, and I hope he's prepared to be extremely cold for a lot of the year.

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