

Oklahoma City Thunder

Media Conference

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Isaiah Hartenstein

Press Conference



Q. Just starting off, signing a new deal this summer, what was that like for you to find out you're staying here for another couple years?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: It was great. Just being able to be with the organization that I've done so much with I think is really cool. I mean, just being able to be with the team, be in an organization that has a winning culture is something really great.

Q. You guys have a lot of skill in the front court, but with Aday and Sorber getting healthy, as you look around at that group, what excites you about the different things that these guys can do?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I think, again, it gives you more depth. And so just having those guys, my job is just helping them out throughout the season so they can get prepared for whenever their name is called on. I'm excited for them.

Q. What's it like? I know you've been on several teams, had plenty of new teammates come and go. But losing guys like Lu and Wiggs and Isaiah who have been here a long time, what's that been like?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: It's definitely hard. I think you're with them so much during these last two years, and they have done so much for the organization, and so it's always, just from a human standpoint, hard. We kind of just know what the business thing is, and that just kind of comes with the NBA. So we wish them the best of luck.

But again, we are really grateful for what they all did for our organization.

Q. I asked you during the playoffs about at one point you guys were talking about we're not sure if this double big thing is going to work. How crazy has it been now to see how many double bigs you guys are -- lineups you're likely going to have with all these guys on the roster?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: When we started the first three games, we were like, this might not work at all. But I think we have gotten to the point where it's actually one of our strengths.

Again, when you have a coach like Mark, you give him different ways where he can operate, different lineups he can put in. And again, we just have to be ready for whatever lineup he puts out there.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think you were here when Russ had his first game back in Oklahoma City. What was he like as a teammate as you learned about him retiring?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: For me, he was a great teammate. He was a person that it didn't matter if you were the number one guy on the team or the number -- the last guy on the roster. He always treated you the right way. He always treated you the same.

I think that's something I always really appreciated when I got in the league. I think it was my second year, and I was trying to earn minutes, and he didn't look at me any different. If I had any questions, he was always there.

So just really appreciative, first of all, what he's done as a player, but then just for my career, what he's done as a person.

Q. What was it like seeing your old teammates win a championship last year?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: Yeah, it was great. Again, I played with so many of those guys. You're with them for so long, you go through so many different things. It was just great to see that they won and great to see that the work they put in has all worked out. I talk a lot with OG. So it's cool for me to see him have those big plays and be able to win a championship.

Q. At a previous stop in your career, you were involved in a midseason trade. Last year, Jared came in, dealt with a similar thing and was able to make a big contribution in the playoffs. How impressed were you by that, and then just what has he brought to the team in his short time here?



ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: Yeah, it was great. I think he came in, gave us a big lift. He's a really confident player, and I think he just fit in right away.

I'm really excited just to have him in training camp because, like you say, it's never easy to get traded, doesn't matter what kind of player you are. Just to come to a new team in the middle of the season and to try to find your way, find your role. So we're just really excited for him, what he brings, especially just shooting-wise, offensive confidence, and also off the court, just a great, great human being.

Q. You mentioned the new guys earlier, the bigs. What's your impression of Aday so far?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I haven't seen much, to be honest, but I'm excited just to have a guy that I can just kind of help out throughout the process. Again, I wouldn't be where I'm at without other people helping me out to get to where I'm at.

And so that's kind of just my approach to it. I don't really see it as like a -- I don't know, say a competition. I see it more as like what can we do to help win, what can we do to help get him ready so whenever he's needed he can play his best. Just try to help him out as much as I can.

Q. Speaking of your former Knicks teammates, but what do you think of Brunson on Saturday Night Live?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I was impressed. I didn't know he could act like that, to be honest. It was impressive.

Q. Along the lines of watching your former teammates, the Knicks, and given the way things ended in Game 7 against the Spurs, how did you process that loss going into the off-season, and was there anything about that loss that changed your approach throughout the summer in terms of gearing up for this upcoming season?

ISAIAH HARTENSTEIN: I don't think anything really changed. I approach each summer trying to figure out how to get better to help the team win. Again, we don't really want to make any excuses why stuff happened. I mean, they won.

And so we just want to come in, like we say, start from 0-0 and approach each day like that and get better and better each day.

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