

Oklahoma City Thunder

Media Conference

Monday, September 28, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

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Press Conference



Q. Seeing your teammates in the off-season, what kind of made you want to prioritize doing that this summer, working out with all your teammates?

JARED McCAIN: I think part of being in OKC is having those relationships, being able to be connected -- sorry if I'm out of breath. I just filmed a TikTok. A little out of breath right now.

Q. You have experience with that, though.

JARED McCAIN: I do, it's okay. But I think just having those relationships has been really cool, and just trying to build on those. Anytime you can get chemistry with the team, it helps on the court. And so being able to see Chet in the off-season and go see Shai in Canada was awesome. Just to see everybody, majority of everybody throughout the off-season, has been really cool.

Q. There was already really good chemistry before you got here, but you seem to have added to that. When guys talk about your personality and how easy it is to get along with you, what does that mean to you?

JARED McCAIN: It means a lot. Everywhere I go, I try and bring a positive energy. And they have done a great job of allowing me to be myself. I talk about it all the time, in every interview almost.

We are really good friends, and I think that's part of being good on the court is being able to have those relationships, like I said. They have accepted me, and it's been really cool to just get to know everybody and be comfortable around everybody.

Q. At exit interviews, you talked about the value of having a fully healthy off-season. What was that sort of like?

JARED McCAIN: It was so amazing. I thank God every day for the healthy off-season. It was awesome to be able to focus on my craft and focus on getting better at stuff that I want to, sharpening stuff that I want to, instead of trying to

get back to where I was at a certain point for last off-season.

It was amazing, and I woke up grateful every day. No matter what type of day it was in the training -- in the training session, it was always a great day to be healthy.

Q. And we know you're a big Drake fan. We know Shai and him are friends. Have you tried to figure anything out, get his number, have Shai link you guys up or anything like that?

JARED McCAIN: When we were in Toronto, I got to do some, like -- for Shai's birthday, we got to do some karaoke vibes with Drake. So that was pretty awesome. It was really cool. Me and my friends were out there as well. Definitely an awesome time. I wouldn't consider us friends or anything, but I think if I saw Drake, I think we'd say what's up.

Q. Did you do a Drake song on karaoke in front of him?

JARED McCAIN: I did. I did. Iceman was playing. I pretty much had the mic the whole night. Pretty much had the mic the whole night singing. It was awesome.

Q. Obviously you developed a really good connection with your teammates, but also with the community, it seems like. What has that meant to you? I saw you donated to teachers and their classroom wish lists. What does it mean to give back to the community? Seems like you've been here forever.

JARED McCAIN: It's really awesome. I really love giving back. It definitely feels better than receiving stuff. So anytime I can, I really think whatever energy you put out, you get it right back.

And so being when I was younger, teachers had such a huge effect on me, and I'm so grateful for all my teachers growing up. And, you know, I saw the school season was starting, and I just, you know, posted on my stories, like random, right before a workout: Just help some teachers out.

It was really cool because I just -- I really -- like I saw some of the stories that they wrote to me, and it was just a

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beautiful thing to help out OKC teachers and be any help I can to clear some wish lists.

Q. Seems like you've been using TikTok social media as a way to connect with people. How has that been like with the reception of people seeing you singing and dancing and ranking Disney Channel shows? Great list, by the way.

JARED McCAIN: Yeah, I got a lot of slack for that. I didn't know "Cheetah Girls" was a movie. I thought it was a show. That's on me. It was a long time ago.

It's been cool to be able to connect with people on social media, and whether I'm driving and I see people dancing on the sidewalk when they notice me in the car or singing whatever song that I've been singing on TikTok, it's one of those things that you feel -- like when it happens in person, it feels so -- it's almost inspiring to me.

Like the way you're able to affect people in a positive way, it makes you want to do it even more. So that kind of all leads into giving back and to all that stuff that I do outside of basketball. So it's really cool to connect.

Q. Could we see the Thunder nails for today?

JARED McCAIN: Yeah, today, we went with some gold vibes. You know, gold is the standard. We're trying to win a championship here. So anything like that, I like to put on my nails.

Q. Going back a little bit to the Drake thing, a lot of new music this summer, three albums, the FOMO thing a few weeks ago. Overall thoughts on the stuff that came out?

JARED McCAIN: He's so tough, isn't he. You know, he just does a great job of just being consistent. You know, I think that's why him and Shai are friends. The consistency is there.

With Iceman, with Habibti, with Maid of Honour, with the FOMO, I'm a big R&B guy, and I almost put myself in a sad breakup mood to listen to those songs. So when I'm in that mood, I'm listening to (singing) "What if I go broke and I got no more racks to spend on you." That puts me in that mode to go out to the court and be my best self. Shout out to Drake for releasing great music this summer.

Q. We've seen a lot from you in the past year, Oklahoma welcoming you in. Where do you feel like you've grown the most since joining Oklahoma City?

JARED McCAIN: I think, because when I got traded, there

was just a lot of unknown with everything in my life. And so being able to have people when I go out to eat or go out, even when I first got traded and even my first game and the standing ovation that I got, that helped me a lot in a lot of things I was going through.

It just means a lot to me to be in this community. So anytime I can give back, anytime I can smile at somebody or just be respectful to everybody around me, it definitely helps out a lot.

And I just try to do that everywhere I go. So being in Oklahoma, they treated me like family, and they still do, and it's been awesome to be a part of it.

Q. Anybody that's talked about you this off-season has talked about your work ethic. Do you feel like you've had an off-season? How do you balance such hard work with needing actual rest and an off-season and stuff?

JARED McCAIN: I've talked about this with my brother and my trainer. I think I've always like tried to work as hard as I can. I think in the off-season, I try and -- like the word of the summer for me and my group was "adversity" and how can you recreate the adversity of a playoff series or how can you recreate the pressure of going into a playoff game.

And so any way I could, whether it was like randomly -- Nate back there knows -- we would randomly stay up and randomly go to the gym earlier so I didn't have enough sleep because sometimes on a back-to-back we don't get enough sleep.

So I tried to recreate that adversity as much as I could, and I think it just helps, and it helps -- it humbles you in those moments when you're trying to make shots and you're tired.

Throughout the NBA season, there's a lot of humbling moments, and trying to stay even throughout those moments is huge. And that's what I've learned a lot from Shai, of course, from doing that. This off-season was definitely huge for me, and I definitely took advantage of it, I felt, and worked as hard as I could.

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