

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Bennett Stirtz

Press Conference



Q. Starting off, you're able to get some first impressions of your fellow rookies during Summer League. What strikes you about this class?

BENNETT STIRTZ: First off, fun to be around off the court. We are pretty close already, and we're going to continue to get close.

Also, they are good basketball players on the court. It's fun to be with them. They are unselfish, just like everyone else on this roster. And we're just -- all of us are going to have the best interests in our mind to win as much games as we can.

Q. You mentioned off the court, I know you were at an OU game recently, and one of the guys you were with was Jared. Talking to guys so far today, they have said he's the ultimate teammate. What makes it so easy to get along with him?

BENNETT STIRTZ: Always a smile on his face. Never has a bad day. Always brings energy on the court. Super great to talk to and funny overall. Great teammate. Been with him for maybe a month, and he's already been a great teammate. So looking forward to this season.

Q. In college, you were the alpha and omega of the offense in terms of everybody trying to get the ball out of your hands. How excited are you to get open shots with playing off an MVP and All-NBA player?

BENNETT STIRTZ: Super excited. Never got the ability to let others make the game easier for me. So I'm excited to do that. Excited to catch-and-shoot.

So it's going to be something different, and I'm going to have to get used to it, but I'm willing to do it, and just excited to do it as well.

Q. How have you been sort of working on that over the off-season, I guess, of doing more stuff off the ball, which you were good at in college, but you had the ball the majority of the time in your hands?

BENNETT STIRTZ: I think it just comes to getting reps and talking to either teammates like K-Rich, Caruso, telling them whenever I have an open shot, just shoot it and be confident in that mindset. And then, also, just comes with the reps and letting that thing fly.

Q. Caruso spoke pretty high of the early runs he's had with you, high feel for the game, good shooter. What's it like to hear that from a two-time champ and great role player, and how excited are you to play with him and the other guys in the upcoming season?

BENNETT STIRTZ: It's pretty cool. I think I've played two pickup games with him. There's not much; I have a long way to go. That dude is going to make it easier for me. He's so smart. The two games I played with him, he just makes the game easier, getting me shots, getting everyone else shots. Plays super hard.

Definitely got a lot of things to learn from him.

Q. Who in your life, with the team or outside of the team, have you been leaning on most as you transition into being a pro athlete and I imagine learning a new system for the first time?

BENNETT STIRTZ: I just got married in the off-season, so definitely leaning on my wife. Going to be away from home for a while this season. Definitely leaning on her with that.

And then, yeah, like you said, I was in the same system for four years in college. Back then I knew what practices were going to be like. Now I don't. It's going to be something new.

So honestly, everybody I can go to and ask a question, they are always an open book. So that's pretty cool. So definitely going to have to ask a lot of questions. But pretty much anyone. K-Rich comes to mind.

Q. This organization has a track record of developing young players and letting players play early. Does that give you confidence heading into this season knowing that you're going to have a chance?

BENNETT STIRTZ: Not really. I think you just have to go out there and do it. It's just basketball at the end of the

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day. You're playing against humans. Everyone is humans out there. You're going to make mistakes. There's going to be ups and downs throughout the season. I have to be willing to fail and always get back up because my teammates are going to help me out with that.

Q. Do you see yourself as a poster boy for what a Division II athlete can potentially become?

BENNETT STIRTZ: I don't know. I've never thought about that. I don't know about poster boy, but hopefully it's just something that people can look at and say it's possible.

But just going back to the D-II days, like I never really thought that I was going to play in the NBA. I was always where my feet were. Never had a big head. Stayed working and kept being humble, and I think that's what helped me with my mindset.

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