

# Emirates NBA Cup

Friday, December 12, 2025

Oklahoma Thunder

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

Semifinal Practice Day



**Q. This might sound a little silly since you won everything there is to win last year in '24 and won this year, the MVPs, but this is the one you didn't get. How nice would it be to come back and get it this time?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it would be phenomenal. Every game I play, we play as a team, we wake up in the morning and before the game starts we want to win the game.

When I played basketball, novice and OBAs when I was 9 years old, I wanted to win a championship. Whenever you get a chance to play for something and win, it's always the goal to win. It's always the same feeling. So it would be phenomenal to win, that's for sure.

**Q. I know winning is the most important, but you sitting out all these fourth quarters, it's definitely the right move to make, but I wonder if you ever think about what you can do or what your numbers will look like if you play four quarters like everybody else? Do you ever wonder or think of the possibility?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Well, now I am because you asked the question. But genuinely, no. It's such a long season, and I guess you could say like steal those minutes and get that rest, I think that wear and tear on my body will add up and be beneficial in the end, especially through the run that we did last year. And physically knowing how tiring that is, I think every minute that I can steal out there and save my body for the bigger and the best moments, that's all I really think about, for sure.

**Q. Now that this is your second Cup, you know part of the discussion is the prize money. Going through this before, you got some prize money last year, so curious what you did with it, and curious about the discussion with the younger teammates not on the big contract yet, how much this means to them, and if you have any plans yet for the prize money this year?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: My wife donated the money last year. I have no plans this year, but I'll figure it out. I'll do something in the holiday spirit with it, though, for

sure.

**Q. Do you know what the donation was?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I'd have to ask her. No. I don't want to lie.

**Q. You guys are chasing history with the winning streak and record and all of that, but the other thing is obviously teams want to stop that. How do you feel being the hunted team?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I don't really know. It doesn't feel a certain way. We go out there with, I think, a hunter's mentality ourselves. And honestly, we go out there to just better ourself.

I'm sure you guys have heard the stories about some of my teammates competing against each other during the games to get steals and things like that. That's where our mind is. We are trying to be a better version of ourselves every night we go out there, and we like to hunt in that form.

If we didn't get better tonight, then we wasted an opportunity. That's kind of how we see it.

**Q. Along with that, does the regular-season record mean something to you guys? Is that something that you guys want to check off, and would that be notable to achieve that?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Absolutely. Winning matters. And no matter what form it looks like to me. So absolutely.

**Q. Toronto Tempo season tickets just sold out. How important is it for the development of Toronto basketball, and would you be going to one of those Toronto Tempo games?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, it's very important. I think the culture back home has grown tremendously, and that trickles down from the talent before us -- the coaches that showed us how to play and the kids that keep dreaming and believing in themselves.

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Yeah, I will definitely try to go catch one of those. Yeah, excited for that, I guess, grand opening.

**Q. You guys are almost halfway to the NBA record for a winning streak. Do you allow your mind to wander at all to the possibility of making history with a streak like that?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: We're halfway, so a team won like 30 in a row?

**Q. So you don't even know the winning-streak record?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Nah.

**Q. '71-72 Lakers won 33 games straight.**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Wow, that's a lot more games to win. Yeah, we are so far from that -- it's like you said, I didn't even know, so that hasn't even come close to creeping in my mind. But hopefully we get there. That's the goal.

**Q. You don't know at this time whether Wemby is in tomorrow, but they do have a stable of really quick, athletic guards. How do they challenge your defense as you project into the matchup tomorrow night?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: Yeah, they are, like you said, a really good team, whether he is playing or not. I think the record is better with him out. So regardless, they are a really good basketball team -- young, athletic, play the right way, talented.

It's going to come down to the things it usually does when you play really good teams -- the X's and O's, the attention to detail, the 50/50 balls, being physical, being smart out there. It should be a good matchup for us. Good test.

**Q. There's always conversations about the young generations taking over the league, and now with the four teams, the average age is 27-something. As the face of the young generation, do you feel like you already have that responsibility to put a statement showing that the young generation is already taken over the league?**

SHAI GILGEOUS-ALEXANDER: I don't know. I don't know. I've never thought about it in that way. Like, I picked up a basketball, I go out there, I try to be the best version of Shai every night, every chance I get.

And hopefully that inspires the next generation to be better themselves. Be better on and off the court. That's really

the only way I see it. The guys in the generation before me have done that, and the game has grown. I'm this player today because they have done that. So for me, it's just to pass that along and continue, I guess, take the torch.

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