

Sixth Man of the Year Award

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Montrezl Harrell

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. We are excited to introduce the 2019-20 Kia NBA Sixth Man of the Year Montrezl Harrell. We will begin today with introductions and remarks followed by questions from the media. We would like to thank Kia Motors, our partner in Los Angeles. Say hello to Cesar Sanchez, who is our partnership manager, and we would like to introduce Greg Silvestri, who is the vice president of service and after-sales operations at Kia Motors to say a few words. Welcome, Greg.

GREG SILVESTRI: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. Good evening to everyone. It's great to be with you. You know, as fans of the game of basketball, everyone at Kia is thrilled to see the NBA Playoffs back in action because like us, the NBA players, coaches and team and league officials give it everything every day. Kia has proudly served as the league's official automotive partner for 13 seasons now, and just as Kia is recognized for excellence in performance on the road, the Kia Performance Awards celebrate the NBA's top athletes on the court.

So I wish I was there to be able to give this award in person, but on behalf of all Kia Motors employees and our dealers, it's my honor to present Montrezl Harrell of the Los Angeles Clippers with the 2019-20 Kia NBA Sixth Man of the Year award. Congratulations, Montrezl.

THE MODERATOR: And now it is my pleasure to introduce the head coach of the LA Clippers, Mr. Doc Rivers.

DOC RIVERS: Well, number one, thank you to Kia and everybody else in the NBA for sponsoring this and supporting this. Also, congratulations to all the players who were nominated.

But I'm here on behalf of one player, Montrezl. I'm just so proud of him as a coach. He epitomizes what a Sixth Man of the Year award winner is, and trust me, we're getting used to them here with Lou Williams and Jamal Crawford



in the past. To have Trez join the group is really amazing.

I feel like more than a coach watching Trez do this. I feel like a proud father. To keep it short, just congratulations, Trez. You deserve it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Doc. Now we'd like to welcome the 2019-20 winner of the Kia NBA Sixth Man of the Year, Montrezl Harrell.

MONTREZL HARRELL: How you doing?

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to open it up to any opening comments you have and then we'll take some questions.

MONTREZL HARRELL: You know, first of all, I just thank Kia for being able to put this together, our sponsor and our partner with this award and everything that's going on. I just wanted to say thank you to the NBA, everybody out there who voted for me to be in this position that I'm in now. I just want to say thank you. It's a tremendous honor, like I said.

This is for my grandmother who is not here with me today and isn't going to be able to see this. She isn't going to be able to see me do something that she instilled in me as a young child, a game that she brought to my attention as a young man and I fell in love with and worked my tail off, and thankful to a lot of people that I've been around, my manager, Terrence Taylor, my mom, my dad, my aunts, my three younger brothers.

My family is a tremendous support system for me. There's a list of coaches that I can thank that helped me get here to this day and helped better my game; my trainer, Rico Hines, who does a tremendous job, putting me in situations that I'm going to be in in in-game situations and keep pushing me to be a better player and keep expanding my game. There's a long list of thank-yous that can go a long way for a lot of people.

My kids are the most tremendous blessing in the world that I could have added to my life. I'm thankful for them, their mom and everything that she does, keeping them without a worry in the world.

I'm just a grateful person, and I'm just happy to be here and be blessed to not only be a finalist but now be a proud



winner of the Sixth Man award.

Q. Trez, obviously you're wearing Lou on your shirt today and you talked about that connection with him throughout the year. I'm curious, when you were so young, you're kind of coming off the bench, I'm sure there were times when you wanted more usage, a higher profile role. What did Lou, or did he, talk to you about kind of how to star in this certain role?

MONTREZL HARRELL: Honestly I wore this shirt just because there's a reason and I'm following the other guy who's won this award three times. He's the ideal person that you could model behind, playing the game and doing it the right way. He's been in a lot of different aspects to where he could have been on teams and actually started, but he hasn't complained once. He just excels and keeps driving it and being the best player in his nature and his role, and like I said, these are words out of his own mouth. He realized that this is not a role that he asked to be in, this was a role he was put in. By him being put in this role, he just said, why not be the best I can do at it. He's a proven legend; he's won this award numerous times. And like I said, I'm just grateful to be around him and just learn and see the type of player he's become and just learned how he was able to blossom in this role because me, I'm a player that loves to play, loves to be out there. So coming off the bench or being able to sit back and just understand like in this instance of the game it's not right for me to be in at this time. So just learning all of that, just being around him and soaking all that knowledge up has been a tremendous honor.

Q. I was wondering if you and your grandmother ever discussed winning an award like this. What does it mean to you to win this award after everything you've been through, and was this ever a goal of yours going into this season? This is a big season for you being in a contract year.

MONTREZL HARRELL: Thank you, first of all. Secondly, it's definitely something that we talked about because I was blessed to be in this conversation last year, and we seen how it unfolded. I was, like I said, tremendously grateful just being in the conversation again. We definitely talked about it, and she told me that this year was going to be my year. It's tough. It's tough. I went back to my room and contemplated having my talks one-on-one with her because we've had these talks and she told me that I was going to win it this year, that this year was going to be my year, and it just hurts that -- yes, it's a tremendous blessing that I was able to get this and be here, but it just hurts that I'm not able to take it home to her.

You know, I don't really focus my mindset on anything like

that coming into a season, man. I'm just looking to show Coach and my coaching staff and everything about our organizations that I'm locked in on what it takes for us to do to win a game, and if that's for me to score points, for me to take charges, for me to block shots, whatever my team needs for me to do that night for us to win, that's all I was focused on coming in and doing coming into the season.

It wasn't really about I'm winning the Sixth Man award or I'm going to be here or I'm going to do that because I don't plan for tomorrow because I don't know if that's something that's expected. It's one of those things that I live in everything that's happening in the moment right then and there. Whatever happens tomorrow happens. I can't control that. All I can control is what I'm doing right then and there.

Q. You're talking about your teammate Lou Williams, but from your perspective it's also really cool that you were in Houston in 2016-17 when Eric Gordon also won this award. You've been around multiple guys who have put in the work to get to where you are now. I know you're saying you stay very much in the moment, but at the same time, just from a work ethic perspective, was there a moment in time where you thought, okay, this could be me, and what did you take from the work ethic from those guys that it requires to be this guy?

MONTREZL HARRELL: Honestly, just understanding how it is being a pro really. As far as the work ethic part, I really don't think I needed to be pushed there. Like I said, my grandmother has put this game into me as a young child, playing on the little toddler goal, doing all the things being around basketball that I just fell in love with. So my work ethic is something that stands and kind of speaks behind me as a player because that's one of the things I pride myself on and one of the big things that comes to talks with guys missing me and my game.

I think that was already there, just coming from the years of me living in North Carolina, seeing my family go through the things they had to struggle and just wanting to put myself in a better situation and be able to help them and take care of them.

As far as being around guys like Eric Gordon and Lou Will, it's a tremendous honor to be around guys who have been, like I said, put in these roles, who understand how to blossom and excel in these roles to the best they know how, and that was just by going out and playing the game the right way and doing the things that their team needs them to do. Like I said, you can look at both of those guys, not even just them two, going back to Jamal, as well, who's an older guy in the game that I have a great relationship



with, man. These guys are guys that could easily at any point in their careers been on numerous careers and start big minutes for them, but their coaches didn't need them to do that in that aspect; they needed them to come off the bench and excel and just be them. That's what their coaches allowed them to do, and they excelled in it.

Just being able to be around them and just learning how to do that and carry myself as a pro at doing it, I think that's what's the most important thing and huge thing I learned from those guys.

Q. I wanted to ask you, what part of your game you feel like developed the most from last season to this season? You mentioned last year you were one of the runner-ups for Sixth Man, but to win it this season, what do you think was the biggest area of growth in your game?

MONTREZL HARRELL: Overall I would probably have to say just my game in general. Like I said, the goal is to higher praise to my trainer Rico Hines. We were at it every day in the summer at 6:00 in the morning. You could ask him these stories, I beat him to the gym multiple times, and he has a resume that speaks for itself as far as players. A guy that he had before me -- well, no, not before me, with me at the same time is a guy in Siakam. You can see how his career has blossomed and he's done tremendous things for the Raptors.

But Rico understands the game and understands guys' systems because he's been around this game for a while. He's been around this game even back in the days when Steven Jackson, Baron Davis and those guys was around. So he knows what it takes and he knows what these teams are running and he knows how your team is going to use you in their system.

To be around somebody as special as that and have him put me through these situations and know what it takes to be here, it's amazing. He's a tremendous guy, and I'm just blessed to be able to know him further than the game of basketball. I think that's one of the most special things that I can take from our relationship because even without the game of basketball, he'll still be in my corner, and that's something that's huge for me when it comes to being around people and family, because that's what it is with us. Like I said, if basketball wasn't there, we'd still be family.

Q. Can I ask you to sort of describe the experience of learning that you won this today at practice?

MONTREZL HARRELL: Thank you, first off. It was amazing for your teammate, a guy that you look at as a mentor, a vet in this game who you would love to have

your career go as long as his. Like I said, a guy who was the carbon copy that could be presented as this could be his award, man. He's won three of them. For him to come out and just hand me the trophy, it was special. It was a huge surprise. I didn't know what they was doing because when Doc first had started talking he was talking about a tech, and you get teched, it's a fine. So when he was talking about he needed help from Lou, I didn't know what was coming next. To see that trophy come out from the back and actually coming towards me, it was a tremendous honor and just a complete, complete tremendous thank you to my teammates, to Doc and Lou, everybody.

Like I told my teammates in practice, man, this award is because of them. These guys trusted me to be the player that I am, and they let me be it, no matter through the ups, through the downs. They always have been there and had my back, and you can't do nothing but cherish things like that.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the impact Doc Rivers had on you coming over in the trade. Obviously you did have a big role in Houston, but the belief he put in you. He talked a lot about when you came back from this five months off, he was really happy to see you play and play well. What impact has Doc had on you in terms of winning this award and your development?

MONTREZL HARRELL: Once again, thank you. Coach has had a tremendous upside to my career in general. You know, coming over in the trade was one of those things where I was hearing one thing from a team saying I wasn't going to be in the trade, and then when it actually hits you see that you're in it.

From day one, Coach told me that this is not one of those things that we kind of just did to package this. No, we want you here. We've seen you play. We know the type of intensity and motor that you bring to the game. This isn't one of those things that you're going to be coming here and leaving back out. We want you here.

Just to hear those words from a coach and who in my aspect hasn't played hardly any games like that, my rookie year I rarely played games like that and then my second season I was only playing in back-to-back. So to hear the head coach of an organization say you don't have anything to worry about, you can get comfortable here, and this is a team that wants you, it means a lot.

You know, from there it's been that, and I can't describe it any other way because Coach gave me my first opportunity, man, with this team. When I got my opportunity I took it and didn't look back. That's all I wanted since I came to this league was just an opportunity

to prove that I could be out there and help my team do anything and everything I could to be in position to win, and Coach Rivers did that, and I'm extremely, extremely honored to be able to play under him, a guy who's been in the league, a guy who's won it on the coaching level, a championship, and knows what it takes. Just to be around somebody like that in the game, and then he still gives you such a high praise and a lot of freedom to be able to grow as a player in his system is one of the most amazing things you would ask for really.

Q. I'd like to ask you about -- could you expound on your personal growth that you've been through this season, new clothing line, new shoe deal? I know you've got bigger things on the horizon, but just talk about right up to now what this trophy means to you and the growth you personally went through this season.

MONTREZL HARRELL: It's just another stepping-stone to being a better person, a better man, a better father. I look at as many different aspects outside of basketball to better myself as a person, and I'm always one of those people that I like to learn and I like to be able to do multiple things. Like I try to learn as much as the outside world outside of basketball that I can.

This game isn't going to be around for me always, man, no matter how hard it hurts for me to say that. I'm not going to be able to dribble this ball for the rest of my life. But I still want to be able to have a brand, have longevity, have wealth for my kids, for their kids, for the kids after that. That's what it's about for me. Being able to play the game of basketball is a tremendous honor and I'm blessed to do it, and like I tell people all the time, I'm blessed to call it my job, but at the same time I'm using my job to be able to brand me off the court, to have a life once this game is over with, because at the end of the day, like I say, no matter how many of us don't want to believe it or don't want those days to come around, man, the ball, we're going to have to put it down at some time. Everything I'm doing off the court is not just for me but it's for my kids, for their kids, for my family, for our legacy. That's what it's about with me.

Q. Lou has been a vocal supporter of you all year saying if he's not going to win it he wants you to win it, he wants you guys to share it, and he's always said you guys have had a brotherhood deeper than basketball. Can you talk about that brotherhood with you and Lou?

MONTREZL HARRELL: It's exactly what he said, man. It's a brotherhood because it goes back to, like I said about my trainer, I think if the game of basketball wasn't here for

one of us, I think our paths still would cross because just our upbringing and the work we know that it takes to be looked at as the underdog, to be looked at as the person that's overlooked in different situations. It's amazing, man.

I was able to link with Lou probably like my second year in the league down in Atlanta playing in the ABL, and that was probably one of the best relationships that I ever could have had with a player or person in general because this man has so many accomplishments, not only in the basketball world but off the court that people don't know about, and it's not my place to put his business out there, but I'm just tremendously honored just to be able to be around him and just watch him do those things, and then just to be able to learn from him is just extra icing on the cake, man.

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