

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Sam Presti

Press Conference

SAM PRESTI: Just a couple words before we get started, then take any questions for today.

One, we appreciate everybody joining us this afternoon. Also obviously this is our 13th season of Thunder basketball. I always think it's important at the beginning of the season to acknowledge we're still such a young franchise with respect to the league that we are 1/30th of.

I think it's fair to say that coming into this season, given everything that's going on in the country relative to COVID, the effects that's having on everybody both locally and nationally, this is going to be a pretty unique season for everybody in the NBA given the uncertainties, all the different precautions we have to take to put everybody's health and safety first and foremost.

Along with that, obviously our announcement today that we're going to be delaying having fans into our arena until further notice is another acknowledgment in our opinion of the standing that the organization, the role the organization, has to play within the community.

Obviously we've said this for years, but the Thunder stands for much more than what it is we do. Our relationships within the community, the role we play in attempting to be an ambassador for the state, both nationally and internationally, bringing people together, and of course really close to our heart is our relationship with our city and our state, the people that support the team or just live in the community in which the team resides. Putting their health and safety first is paramount.

I'm really proud of our franchise, to be a part of that, a part of that organization that put the interests of the people first. We're going to continue to do that as we move forward.

The other thing I just want to add before we head into this season obviously is we're obviously really excited about the mix of players that we have heading into the year, both the older players that we've brought in and obviously some of the younger players that we've added, as well as a group of returning younger players who we want to



continue to see evolve and grow both from the development standpoint but also within the roles that they play, the expansion of those roles and opportunities. That's going to be I think a really good thing for our organization.

We've always prided ourselves on being a place where people and players improve and get better. This is another opportunity for us to kind of embrace that identity and throw that forward.

Last thing I want to touch on is the job that Mark has done in just a few weeks here has been exceptional. I think it's extraordinarily promising for the organization and the team, just the way he has empowered different people in the building, brought people together, has just shown a tremendous curiosity for how to take in information and be extraordinarily forward thinking.

I think he's going to do an excellent job both relationally with our guys and players, but also kind of working to tap into the different resources and people in the support staff area that are player-facing staff members.

I think that's an indication of the type of person he is, but also his understanding of the priorities of our organization, the culture of our organization. We're certainly not perfect in a lot of ways, but one thing we do believe in is collaboration and teamwork, making people feel a purpose coming in every day. I think the way he approaches the job is going to put people closer to that vision that we have.

With that I'm happy to answer any and all questions that you have. Again, just noting there might be a few things that are outstanding that I can't speak to specifically from a trade standpoint, but I'll be happy to do my best any way I can.

Q. Given the condensed calendar and the speed of which everything has moved in the last couple weeks, I know this is a broad question, but starting when the trade moratorium was lifted a couple weeks ago, were you surprised or did you anticipate the pace in which everything would move and how quickly some of these deals would come together?

SAM PRESTI: That's a good question.



I think the one thing that we've learned about this entire period of time, starting March 11th, is it is a totally unique experience. So there isn't a lot of history that you can really lean on. We really didn't know. I mean, we didn't have a feel for that, kind of what the pace of decision making would be, if that would speed things up or there's an argument you could have made prior to the moratorium being lifted that things could have been really, really slowed down.

I think one thing that we've tried to do over the course of time that we've been in Oklahoma City is try to be adaptable and prepared for the different circumstances that can present themselves. We tried to do that in this case, but we didn't anticipate, we weren't expecting one thing or the other. We were just trying to stay in the moment to see what direction it ultimately went. Obviously it went probably toward more activity than less.

I also think there's a lot to learn there relative to just going into this season as well with all of the protocols and procedures, the stops and starts that we can probably anticipate. We've never been through a season like this before, no team has. The bubble is not comparable whatsoever. We were fortunate as a league to have to finish a season in the bubble, which is a completely different exercise than beginning a season like the NFL or Major League Baseball has had to do. We have the benefit of watching them.

I don't know that the bubble experience is going to be tremendous learning for us other than we know the effects of testing, that it can work if you really have a tremendous infrastructure like that. I don't think that's going to be replicable in 30 different markets.

A lot to learn. Lessons from the pandemic are, one, you've got to stick with things, you can't expect them to be perfect, you should expect them to be imperfect, control the way you react to those when things are not the way you want them to be, and be optimistic and grateful.

We're very fortunate to have a good perspective on the world, the fact that the health and safety is much more important than any sport or game. As a country, we're going to get through this, but we're not through it yet. By all accounts it's probably going to be more challenging. As a sports league and organization, we're going to have to do the best we can with that but not lose sight of the big picture here.

Q. Since you started Friday, is that the busiest week you can remember as a GM? How much sleep are you getting, how much you're on the phone?

SAM PRESTI: Honestly, I'm not so sure. I think you learn a lot, for me personally. I'm always learning every year I have the privilege of doing this job. So I don't know.

I think things come in different sequences. Obviously it was busy. As I said many times, I'm the beneficiary of so many talented people that I have the privilege of working with and have worked with over the course of time here. It's certainly not, like, me here by myself. We have a great team of people that are extraordinarily talented. I rely on them heavily.

It really is a team effort. It's certainly not possible to work through all the different challenges and balls in the air that we have to juggle without a really deep roster of people in the building as a whole. Just to get the building up and running in this environment, our medical staff, our logistics team, our building operations team, they have to work like a basketball team on the court. It's a team within a team.

We've always looked at the Thunder in that way. There's a team, but there's a team of people within the building that have to operate with the same principles and values we would hope to see on a court. Those have been on display since March 11th. They're going to have to continue to be called on going forward.

As far as your question, I don't know if there's a busiest point in time or not. Certainly had a lot to juggle.

Q. In terms of what went into the decision to trade Steven Adams, based on where y'all are? What was Steven's reaction to the trade?

SAM PRESTI: Well, first and foremost, that was a really, really challenging and difficult decision for us to make. I think the number one thing for us is to recognize in these situations we have to put the best interest of the organization first. That doesn't make the decision easier by any stretch.

One of the things I do feel we were able to do, even though it was a very hard decision to make, was recognizing that where we're transitioning to as an organization after 13 years, excuse me, after 12 years of high performance, we'd be in a little bit of a denial to think at that point after that amount of time, especially after the summer of 2016, we wouldn't have to transition our team purely based on the fact we have high goals, high aspirations to one day have another long run of high performance over consecutive years.

Transitioning the team at some point is going to be a necessity unless we were to lower our expectations and our goals, which require different methodology. Making



these types of decisions is part of that process.

One thing I do feel good about is that given where Steven was going to be at the end of the year as an unrestricted free agent, the unlikelihood we would be committing or be able to commit to what his market is, finding a situation where if we couldn't do that for him, finding a situation where he would be in a really good playing situation, which I believe he is, with a great organization in New Orleans, and also in a place that he would be able to get that type of security.

The fact it was done as an extended trade is reflective of all the parties working together to find a solution that made sense for him, made sense for us, and obviously made sense for the Pelicans.

The second part of your question. I talked to Steven prior to the trade taking place. We talked for a little while. I extended my gratitude to him for everything that he's done for the organization. I've had open discussions with his agent about this potential reality. I've been very transparent about his role in the organization, how important he is.

He's left a tremendous mark on our franchise. We're extremely grateful. At the same time we also have to do what we feel is in the best interest long-term for our organization after the 12 years that we've been performing at an elite level.

In order to meet those aspirations, you're going to encounter really tough decisions. We've done that in the past. I think there's a lot of ways to talk yourself into and shy away from those types of decisions. Ultimately, like, we have to put the Thunder first.

It wasn't my best day of work, I can tell you that. But I feel passionate about relentlessly pursuing a bright future for this organization. If you're comfortable during that period of time, I don't know that you're doing anything that's going to lead you to be different.

Q. In terms of free agency, I don't know how much you can expand on this, where are y'all talking with Andre' and him potentially coming back to the team?

SAM PRESTI: Obviously Dre' is somebody we have a tremendous amount of respect for. Right now with just kind of our roster situation, we have to sort through a tremendous amount of other decisions before we can get to adding any other players.

But I've been in touch with his representation, keeping tabs on that. Right now we're pretty full. We're going to have to

make some decisions coming up here as we sort through that. Everybody knows how we feel about him. We're continuing to maintain contact with his reps.

Q. When you look at your roster, you don't really have any long-tenured Thunder players any more. I know culture and core values are so important to the organization. Without those links to the past any more, if Andre' doesn't return, don't have Steven, how do you maintain the culture you established with those links to the past, Nick Collison to Steven, now you don't have anybody? I don't know if that question makes sense. How do you maintain the culture?

SAM PRESTI: I think it's a great question.

As like anything else, any environment or culture is constantly evolving. I don't think you're trying to recreate anything. Especially for us, the period of time you're referring to, the '08 season through really just recently, that's a very unique period of time. I think rather than holding on to that, fearing that you're losing something, it's changing all the time no matter what.

You look to the past for inspiration, but you're certainly having to create something new going forward. I think that's kind of the exciting thing about sports in general, it's always evolving.

I do think the people you referred to have changed over 12 years. I think that we always talk about leaving a legacy. Those players have left a tremendous legacy here. They have left behind a certain set of standards that we're certainly going to try to work by.

We're not trying to recreate something. 2008 was a really long time ago. In today's day and age with where we are now, 2018 seems like a really long time ago.

I think it's having a set of values, having a vision for the organization, one that we really do believe we're trying to build a legacy in real-time for our organization, a very young organization at that.

Second, we are relentlessly trying to improve and pursue progress each and every day in every way that we come to the office or take the floor. Then how do we create the optimal conditions where people get better, both players and staff, everyone together as a larger whole.

From there I think the individuals have to come together, be themselves, and carry that on, carry that forward. But we're not trying to replicate anything. We need to breathe. I think players like Shai and Lu and Baze, these younger guys, they've been here, been in the building. We're

putting a lot of faith in them, a lot of responsibility on them to recognize there's a legacy of a way you show up every day.

We average 50 plus wins a year or so, winning percentage, over the last 10 years. It's probably unlikely we're going to do that over the next 10 years. I don't think that's been done before.

But I do believe the way we show up to work every day, the professionalism we treat one another, the way we conduct ourselves in the community, the fact that in this particular city we want to stand for more than what we do, I think those are expectations that we can continue to work with going forward.

Q. I was curious about how you selected Poku. Obviously you identified him, valued him quite a bit in trading. The scouting process for him versus other players, he played in a lower league over in Europe, how did you identify him as the guy that you wanted in the draft? What do you see for him this year?

SAM PRESTI: Again, we have to give credit to our scouting group, our evaluating group, led by Will Dawkins. Poku was a player over last summer, I'm getting all the time mixed up, I think it was last summer, normal schedule at that point, sometime in I guess July or August playing in some I think it may have been an under-18 tournament. We scout those things ferociously, the FIBA events. I may have mentioned those in the past presser I did. Those are such great events to be at. He was a player that caught the attention of the group just based on his mobility and his basketball IQ, feel for the game, overall skill level.

We tracked him from that point on and tried to stay as connected as we could to all the international players, but to him. I was able to get over to see him play in I think it was October. I actually saw him and Maledon on the same trip, as a matter of fact. There were plenty other NBA people at those games as well. It wasn't like we were there by ourselves or anything like that.

I just think our evaluators felt like he was a pretty unique player on the mere fact that he's the youngest player in the draft. He has a rare combination of attributes. Does that mean he's going to equate into being a very good NBA player or an effective NBA player? We don't know the answer to that.

Again, we took Darius Bazley and we moved back to get him the last draft prior. I think we moved back three spots to get him. We moved up to get Pokusevski. All that is kind of irrelevant. You asked me about Bazley, whoever did, I don't know. We're doing the best we can. We don't

have the answers. We're just trying to shift the odds a little bit to see if we can find somebody in that range of the draft.

You guys have got 12 years of covering an NBA team now, so you know the odds of picking in the 20s or in the 10 to 20 range. Just trying to find an NBA player that can be in the league for more than three or four years.

I wouldn't have predicted Bazley would have been on this path. Same thing about Sabonis. Everyone asked about Sabonis, or Ferg when we had Ferg. I didn't know he would be playing at first.

A lot of it depends on Pokusevski, how much he's willing to work, buy into the plan for him. I have no reason to think he won't. But working with Mark and his coaching staff, you just can't skip steps in development. There's no way around it. You're going to need some opportunity.

The reason why the opportunity I think is important is because opportunity is where you learn where your deficiencies are, limitations are, and where you experience failure. Failure is the engine to improvement. If you don't get a chance to fail, get feedback as to what's not working, it's really, really hard to get better.

That's why I think some of the players that we've had over the last 12 years have really grown, irrespective of their age, so to speak. In general, players have improved here. Have done so through really challenging circumstances and through a lot of rough nights, rough outings.

The one thing they have in common is they have resiliency. They have the ability to take in the information that they're not getting it done in the moment, but understand the work they're doing is going to benefit them in the long run.

I think that was actually I think something I learned quickly. I think Kevin Durant for me as a young general manager in 2007, I've never seen anybody that understood the process of improving more so than him. He was probably 19. His mindset, it was that of like a 50-year-old person. It really opened my eyes.

Doesn't really matter your age, if you have a growth mindset, you really understand the benefits of putting in the time, the process of improving, versus just immediate gratification, you can really gain a huge advantage on the field.

I don't know if Poku has that. We're going to find that out. I think with a lot of our players, for that matter. With Shai, I mean, we're really kind of clearing the way for him to expand his game, to be on the ball full-time. We're putting a lot of faith in him and really kind of showing him, like, he's

a central figure to a lot of the things that we ultimately want to be.

But that's not going to be linear. A lot of the other guys that have been in a situation like him over the course of time have done so through adversity. That's how you know how good they are. They bounce through things. Their talent shines through difficult times. They experience even being overwhelmed at different points in time, but they bounce back from that because they have a competitiveness that allows their talent to move up a notch beyond what it is naturally.

With Pokusevski, he has to prove that he has that. He has a lot of physical tools, but there's going to be a lot more to it than that.

Q. Do you know how difficult it's been for him? He's being thrust into training camp. Do you know how difficult that transition has been for him thus far?

SAM PRESTI: Considering I've never been an NBA player, even being confused with one, I really can't say how difficult it is. I can go off my experience of being around players.

What I will say is I think for every rookie in this league this season, it's not going to be a normal year. Let's think about for a second what we're really missing here. Number one, the guys haven't played five-on-five, all the guys in the draft, since like March or whatever. Going through the draft process, one of the big things that people are trying to avoid is getting injured. A lot of it is one-on-one workouts.

When you get drafted, you generally have a summer league, you have a whole summer of development, one-on-one work, you learn terminology, you're in an NBA environment. In the case of Pokusevski and Theo, those guys, they are also going through a massive transition just culturally. You cannot underestimate that either.

You're losing summer league, losing training camp, you're losing that month of September which is generally kind of an open gym format. For us that's been a big factor. Again, back to the previous question, we have a lot of standards, people have laid the groundwork for 10 years, whether it was Kevin or Russell or James. Those guys lived in the gym here. When you bring in a Steven Adams or Sabonis or whomever those guys are, Reggie Jackson, there was a level of expectation that September or most of the summer you're going to be in Oklahoma City sweating it out, sometimes over the by the dog food in the blue building, or in the Ion here. Those guys haven't gotten the benefit of that. Then you're going right into a training

camp.

I think it's going to be a rough transition for a lot of young players, there's no question about it. But that's for everybody. I think there will be a transition for all the international guys especially, culturally there always is. From a basketball standpoint, all the first-year players are going to be without the benefit of summer league, one-on-one time.

One thing for us also is, I mean, we like to kind of get to know the players personally, what they're about, where they're from on a personal level. This is one of Mark's greatest strengths as well. We see the player as a person first. There's relationship building that needs to take place, too, we really haven't had the opportunity to do that as well.

This is just the times we're in. We're going to have to make the most of the situation. That's why the mindset of the player, the tradition, expectations internally of the work capacity that's expected, but also the mentality of a growth mindset and a commitment to development, those things are going to be even more important.

Q. How critical is it that the young guys who are holdovers, primarily Shai and Bazley and Lu Dort, had that playoff experience last season? How do you see that playing into what you're trying to build going forward?

SAM PRESTI: I think with any young player, I think any experience is critical. You're really not going to find, history is not going to show a lot of players that have gone on to become effective NBA players at a high level that don't get to play, don't get opportunity that is small that leads into bigger opportunity.

Shoot, we saw Serge get two minutes in Detroit maybe the third or fourth game of the season. Turned that two minutes in to 10 minutes into 12 minutes. Next thing you know he's blocking shots in the playoff series against the Lakers. If you didn't get those two minutes, it doesn't happen.

Lu is another great example. I wish we could take a lot of credit for knowing that Lu Dort was going to be a guy that was starting at the end of the season.

Lu Dort, he's playing because we had some injuries and we didn't have anybody really to play in that position without really I guess jumbling up the rotation. Playing Utah or Portland, he got thrown out there and didn't fail. Next thing you know, he's Lu Dort.

These things come down to opportunity, they come down

to preparation. I think it does come down to creativity, thinking outside the box, recognizing that you have to invest in the short-term to get the benefits long-term. Sometimes you stumble onto a few things and get lucky. More than not, that's where a lot of things happen in the NBA, mostly good fortune, things falling your way.

The playoff experience in the bubble, I don't know if I remember that playoff experience because there's no crowd. There's no travel. It's just a very unique experience. I don't know if we'll ever be back in that again, but I would tell you that it has great value. It's not, like, true playoff experience because there just wasn't the atmosphere and environment that we generally know to be the playoffs. Still it was extremely competitive. The best teams advanced and won by all means. It was a little bit different.

The one thing I do think that all three of those guys have benefited from is those guys were forced into different situations. Baze was starting because Gallinari didn't play some back-to-backs. Just kind of sometimes being over your head a little bit, as I said before, that can really kind of, like, pull or expose your resiliency factor and your optimism, your humility, what's kind of driving you day in, day out.

I had dinner with Baze down in the bubble a couple different times. I just loved his mentality. He was just learning and taking every game, good or bad, and throwing it into his experience, realizing that it's all a path for him to figure out how good a player he's ultimately going to be. I think he's got a great mind for that.

I think Diallo has a great mind for that, too. I may have said this before, Diallo is a guy, he's come into every camp and carved out a role on the team. He was starting on the team due to some injuries, but was in the rotation with P.G. Russell, Carmelo, that team. That team turned into Dennis, Jeremy and Steven, Russell, P.G., he was in the rotation there. He lost his spot due to injuries. Got down to the bubble during the training camp, he won a spot in that rotation. We shortened the rotation in the playoffs, and he lost a spot there.

He's going to be ready to go. He's another guy that will be ready to go.

I think all those guys have been pushed to limits in which they're uncomfortable. They've shown the ability to bounce back from setbacks. That's a big part of our organization. It's the reason why I think we've had success with some younger players over time, the resiliency they've shown.

I think also as an organization we've prided ourselves on

being resilient. Looking at things that have happened over the course of time, whether it's injuries or players leaving or some tough luck with the CBA, we have to respond to this, how are we going to respond. It's all about what we can control from here. I think that's the mindset we want to hold. I think we have to have that.

That's also very much what runs through the blood of people in Oklahoma. We want to represent that. Resiliency, commitment. Look, we're happy being David to Goliath. We want to own that. That's what we're built on. We're not looking for half measures around here. We want to strive to see if we can be great. We're willing to take the paths that require extreme competitiveness to do that.

Q. You were asked about the young core of guys you have coming back. You could tell that those guys enjoyed being teammates with Chris and Dennis and Steven, guys that are no longer Thunder. I'm curious what your conversations have been about now being those guys. They've essentially transitioned into those roles. What have you heard from them about sort of how that's all come to be at this point?

SAM PRESTI: Well, I think one thing as a young player working to establish yourself in the NBA, a first, second, third, fourth year player, we have a lot of experience with those guys over time. They're hungry for opportunity, they're hungry for responsibility, they're hungry to develop and expand their games, they're hungry to lead and learn to lead.

As much as I think those guys, rightfully so, are going to miss those players, we all are. I loved Chris Paul, learned so much from that experience. Gallo, as well. Change is part of this industry. If you're not changing, you're standing still.

As I said earlier, after 12 years, to think we're going to be above or beyond transitioning is probably a little bit ignorant. We know that's eventually going to happen. We obviously wanted to get in front of that the way we did things this off-season.

But what that does is it opens up a ton of opportunity and responsibility for a group of guys that have an unbelievable opportunity in front of them. It's not going to be easy because a lot is going to be expected of them. Clearly we're giving them the opportunity to expand their games and to establish themselves in a very, very difficult league.

I hope they recognize that we're putting some faith in them both on and off the court. There's a lot of responsibility that comes with that. As a young player, I think you want that, you want that challenge, the opportunity to prove yourself.

They're going to get that opportunity.

Q. You mentioned earlier how rough a road this year is likely to be for rookies. It may be a little harder to judge their development. What about these guys that have been in the league a little bit longer? What do you hope to see? What does Mark hope to see a year from now out of these guys? What would be considered a positive year for your more veteran guys?

SAM PRESTI: I mean, that's a great question. I don't think I could give you a specific answer right now other than to say we do want to make sure that we don't skip any steps in terms of their development as professionals. We want to make sure that one of the things we always want to do is when players move on from here, that they have some professional habits, certain expectations they have of themselves that are going to carry them through, irrespective of where they go.

I do think even though we've had a lot of change, obviously people over a 10-year period of time, people are going to come and go, just the nature of sports. You've had people here probably longer than most. I would say I feel like we've put an emphasis on trying to develop and grow professionals, irrespective of their age.

Poku is going to be maybe the youngest player in the NBA. I don't know that. It's kind of a reach maybe to say that, but I think he might be. Our expectations for him as a professional are going to be absolutely the same that we have for George Hill and Mike Muscala. Having those guys is going to help us provide a roadmap of sorts, but I also think this is a real strength of Mark, some of the guys he has worked with over the course of time, with the Blue, also the Thunder in terms of instilling professional habits.

The other thing with respect to those guys is resiliency. Having an optimistic mindset, coming into work every single day with a focus on improving, getting better, not just the things that maybe garner the most attention.

In Shai's case defensively, taking a big step defensively is going to catapult him into another level of player. I think he's got a tremendous amount of potential, enough potential for us to say we want you to have a ball, we want you to be in this position. You're going to struggle a little bit with it because you haven't done it full-time, but we're going to walk with you every step of the way.

Same thing with Baze, Lu. Those guys are all going to have to fight, scratch and claw. I think that's a good thing. I don't think Mark has anybody penciled in to one position or another. The good thing is we can play a lot of these

guys a lot of different places. Obviously other than Shai, we know how he factors into things.

I think the ability to show you can stick, that you can fight, you're competitive, and that you can improve, you have what it takes to improve. The wind is not always at your back all the time in this league. The people that last, the organizations that last, the teams that last, have a resiliency to them and they have a commitment to a central set of themes that they don't waver from what it's good or when it's bad.

Q. In your kind of discussion of opening up the runway for some of these guys, letting them expand their games, how do you strike that balance when you are evaluating what they're able to do as they expand their games in addition to what their identities are as players up to this point, what you maybe project them to be in the future?

SAM PRESTI: I think that's a question for Mark. When I'm using the term 'giving the guys the opportunity to expand their games', that's coming directly from the coach. I think he has a vision for each player. I don't necessarily think when people hear that, that doesn't mean, like, roll the balls out reckless, do whatever you want. It's expanding your game through having some freedom to make decisions, but having an accountability to make good decisions with that freedom.

I think Mark, as I said earlier, has a good way about him in terms of building a trust with the guys, having a vision for each individual player. How they fit into the framework of what he's trying to do with the team, however.

I think that is probably the best way to describe it. Mark will have an idea of what he expects from each guy, but I also think he's looking for not who they are today but where they can be over time, investing in them, giving the opportunity to them to prove that they have the freedom to expand their game.

I think that's coming down to the way he views development. That's one of the reasons I think he's going to do an excellent job for us.

Q. I want to talk about two trades you made. TJ Leaf and Justin Jackson. First-round picks 2017. Maybe they didn't get the playing time they were hoping for. How can they help you out?

SAM PRESTI: First thing is both guys we followed for some time. We're probably going to get to learn a lot about them obviously coming into camp, getting a chance to see them play. I wish I could tell you we've seen them a great

deal recently. We haven't because obviously all the restrictions and everything.

Like anybody else, with us, the one thing we've never done, I think to our benefit, we've never judged people on the way in. We've let people declare themselves within our walls. Because of that approach, as I said before, we've been able to see people for who they can be, not just who they are on arrival. How do they fit here? How can we help them grow? How can we invest in them? Do they fit? We'll go through that process with both those guys.

Obviously they're talented. I don't think they've been selected in the spots they were if they weren't. As we've learned many a time over, opportunity, fit, circumstance plays a huge role in people's development.

A player could really thrive here that maybe didn't in another situation. That doesn't mean anything about the other situation other than it might not have been the right time in the timeline for that particular player. Sometimes people learn from situations they've been in and they approach a second situation differently. That happens with our players a lot, too, where Jeremy Lamb is a great example of that. He didn't really get off the ground here. As talented as we felt he was, he just never really got off the ground. When he got to Charlotte, things changed a little bit for him.

Every one of these players is on a journey. Our job is to kind of, I think, partner with them, usher them through the journey within the framework of what we're trying to do as an organization, community and a team. That doesn't mean they're going to be here forever, as we've learned. While they're here, can we help them help us reach our goals and at the same time help them uncap their potential.

Potentially maybe both those guys, this could be the right time and the right place for that to happen for them. We won't know until we get out there, until we get to know them a little better. But we're excited to work with both of them.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Sam. Appreciate your time today.

SAM PRESTI: Thank you, everybody. Be safe.

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