

# Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

## Derrick Favors

### Press Conference



**Q. There are a lot of young guys on this team, and it's a long season full of ups and downs, but throughout it all it seemed like this was a pretty close group, pretty tight-knit group. You could see guys encouraging guys on the sidelines. What did you think of how this group was able to come together over the course of the season?**

DERRICK FAVORS: I think it was a good season for us as far as improving every day, guys coming out ready to play. Like you said, we're a young team, a lot of young players on this team, and I think they were just out there having fun, enjoying the moment, enjoying the experience, even when losses game on some big games. Even during the losses it wasn't blowouts, it was close games, close losses, and just lost like at the end of the game. It was a great experience.

**Q. You mentioned just kind of the resilience that we saw throughout the season, all the comebacks, all the fights to the finish. What did you make of the environment that was created within these walls to allow those sort of outcomes?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Just being positive, after every loss, after every game, coming in the next day in practice it was positivity all around from the coaching staff to the players to the trainers, everybody. We watched film, went over what we did wrong, what we need to improve on. Just kept getting better. It was just a fun, positive environment.

**Q. As a veteran you have a lot to tell these young players and kind of speak wisdom to them and just your experience in the league, but is there anything that being around these young players have taught you?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Just brought back the joy, the fun. You can get caught up in the business side of things, you can get caught up in your own personal stuff, but when you're around these young guys who are just now entering the league, they're just young, having fun and don't really know what's going on, it kind of bring back the fun for.

For me personally it brought back that fun, that joy of playing basketball and not worrying about the business part, not worrying about personal life stuff, just having fun and enjoying just being around these guys and feeling that energy of being around 19-, 20-, 21-year-olds. It was just a fun experience.

**Q. What was it like for you sitting out these last couple of months? I know you were dealing with some -- a back injury, but is that something you could have played through or did you and the team sort of come to a mutual decision to just sit out?**

DERRICK FAVORS: I think it was something where I talked to the training staff and Coach and they thought it was a good idea to kind of just work on my body, just make sure my back is 100 percent, especially going into the summer, and just making sure my back was good. It wasn't anything serious, it was just a little soreness here and there. Just wanted to make sure we took care of it.

**Q. I know these are hard questions to answer now, but do you plan to pick up your player option, and do you expect to be back here next year?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Yeah, I expect to be back here next year, and I'll probably pick it up, the option.

**Q. What did you learn about Shai being a teammate of his this year?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Just how smooth his game is, how good he is. I knew coming in he was a good player. Once I got around him and just watching how he plays and watching how he conducts himself and just watching him every day, I gained a lot of respect for him. He's a good player, the way he comes out there and just controls the game offensively. He's not looking to score the ball every single time. He's looking to get his guys, his teammates involved. He's looking to go out there and just have fun. Even when he's on the bench or he's having a bad game, he's cheering on Tre, he's cheering on Baze, he's cheering on Josh. He just plays the game with a fun that I can't really explain, but it's just -- he has fun out there, and I think that kind of rubs off on everybody.

**Q. I asked Mark a bit about him earlier and he talked about how he's able to do a lot of different things,**

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**almost a maturity, to have fun but also be a leader. Did you sort of sense -- maybe it does come down to maturity --**

DERRICK FAVORS: Yeah, I did. Just the way he plays. He's got such a smooth game. He doesn't play like -- how old is he, 22, 23, somewhere around there? He plays like he's been in the league for a long time, just the way he plays. I think that rubs off on a lot of guys.

**Q. What was your overall experience of playing for Mark?**

DERRICK FAVORS: It was a great experience. I mean, he's one of those coaches where you can talk to him. He allows you to voice your opinion. He'll work with you. He's a smart coach, smart guy, a player's coach. It was a great experience playing for him.

**Q. Derrick, there's a lot of high hopes for Josh this year with the Thunder. What are your thoughts on him moving forward with this franchise?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Yeah, Josh is good. He's good. He's better than I thought he was when I first got here, and he surprised me a lot. Just a guy, when the ball is in his hands, he can just do a lot with it. Obviously he's a great passer, but he can score, he can shoot, he can actually defend, rebound. He can do a lot of stuff out there on the court. I think he has a very bright future.

**Q. How tough is this on you, all the success you've had and then come to a rebuilding situation? How do you re-acclimate to getting your arms around that kind of situation?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Just adapting to it. It was tough at first coming from a playoff team, then coming to a team that's trying to rebuild. But I came in with an open mind. I accepted the challenge. I'm glad I'm here. It opened my eyes to a lot of things. Like I said before, about that enjoyment, that fun of playing basketball.

I just enjoy watching these young guys. I enjoy watching them come out and improve every game. I enjoy talking to Mark, and I enjoy being in this atmosphere.

**Q. We saw a lot of guys take a lot of developmental strides this season from an individual standpoint. From your perspective seeing the growth from the young guys from where they started the season to where they are now, how much optimism does that give you?**

DERRICK FAVORS: I'm excited about next season

because I want to see how these guys come back from this year into summer how much they can improve going into next year, so I'm excited about it.

Like I said, I was seeing it throughout the year, these guys just kept getting better, kept getting better every game, and I'm excited about the future of this team.

**Q. Jeremiah in particular, just what you saw from him in terms of growth throughout the course of the season.**

DERRICK FAVORS: I think he's a real mature player. I know at the beginning of the year he was struggling a little bit. I can remember a game when I don't think he made a shot the whole game, and I don't think it really got to him mentally. He just kept shooting, kept working through it, and I think the next game he had a really good game.

I told him, and I was like, it happens in the NBA. You have a game where you miss every shot, you look like you're just trash, and then the next game you go out there and look like you're an All-Star. That's just how this NBA stuff work. He's a good player. He can do a lot of things on the court, he can shoot, dribble, can play the small ball 5, can come in and play the 4, can play the 3 a little bit. He's a talented player.

**Q. On the rebuild, is that something that -- Mark talked about being transparent with players, staff, everyone. Is that something that you're aware of the plan, you know what's going on, and being a vet, like the front office gives you transparency on what the plan is?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Yeah, I think everybody knew what the plan was. Like I say, I just came in with an open mind. We talked a lot, me, Mark, Sam, we talked a lot, especially before the season started, and I wanted to be a part of it. Any way that I can help, I told them I would, whether that's being a leader on the team or helping guys out, whatever y'all need from me, I would do it, I would accept that challenge. I think it worked out for me, it worked out for the team, and everybody is happy.

**Q. Chris Paul, they said that playing with all the young guys gave him a lot more energy, is that something --**

DERRICK FAVORS: Yeah, it definitely did. The way these guys play, you've got to be able to get up and down the court, you've got to be able to have that energy all game. It's not like I'm playing with a bunch of old guys out here. These young guys, they're just full of energy. I think that's what helped me out because like I said before, it's all about that fun, that enjoyment. Just a lot of energy, a lot of fun.

**Q. Derrick, the way things went there at the end of the year, there were a lot of you guys on the bench in street clothes at the end. I'm sure that some of those moments were more lighthearted and kind of fun, but what were those conversations like as you're over there, Lu, Shai, Josh? What were you guys -- can you take us inside what those moments were?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Well, for the most part we were supporting the guys that was out there because those guys, they played really good, the guys that was out there.

Just sitting over there on the bench, well, for me personally, I can't speak for them, I don't know what they was doing, but for me personally I was just enjoying the moment, cheering on the teammates. Had a couple of guys sitting next to me who were just talking about the game, and really just enjoying the moment, just living in the moment.

I mean, I don't know what they was doing on the bench. They was sitting further down from me, so I don't know what they was doing.

**Q. Do you try to share with some of those guys, because I assume most of them would have been younger guys, unless it was Mike sitting by you, but more younger guys, did you find yourself talking about situations or things that happened from a veteran perspective with some of those guys?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Yeah, I was. I mean, we were talking about a lot of things. When you sit on the bench, conversations can go from basketball to personal life to clothes to jewelry to all kind of stuff, so it depends on what we're talking about at the moment. I try to share some basketball knowledge whenever I can, whenever I see something on the court or if they ask me or if I have something to say to them, whoever sitting next to me, I'm just going to go ahead and say it to them. Like I said, when you're sitting on that bench it could be any conversation going on.

**Q. Typically young teams aren't that good on defense but when you guys were at full strength you guys were really good. What do you think was the reason for that?**

DERRICK FAVORS: Being good on defense? Talking, communication, just getting better throughout the year, playing hard, playing together, and it also helps when you have players like Lu, when you've got players like Baze who can guard multiple positions, guys who are willing to play defense, guys like Wiggs coming out there and really

play hard defensively and can guard multiple positions. So it kind of helps when you have players like that. And really just playing together.

**Q. As one of the veterans of this group, what makes you confident about the future and the growth this team can show next season?**

DERRICK FAVORS: What makes me comfortable? I've been in this situation before. A couple years ago I was in a rebuild situation with Utah, and we kind of went through the same process. Obviously we got better every year until we became a playoff team.

I can see the same thing happening here. A lot of young guys that's eager to get better, that want to get better, and very talented. They're just hardworking, hard playing type players. I can just see the improvement, like I said, after every game.

I'm pretty sure coming into next year and the years after that, it's going to be a real special team because it's a real special group here, and I'm pretty sure that in the next however many years it's going to be a really good team.

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