

# Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

## Isaiah Roby

Press Conference



**Q. You obviously had a lot of minutes and opportunities towards the end of the season. How much do you feel like that gave you momentum heading into the off-season?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, that was definitely a big confidence builder, especially at the beginning of the year, my minutes were a little bit more sporadic, so obviously at the end of the year we had some guys that were injured and whatnot, so being able to finish the year strong was definitely a confidence builder going into the summer.

**Q. Coach has given you a lot of credit for your professionalism in different situations throughout the year. How did your teammates kind of support you through all the different situations you were in this season?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, it's easy with this team. We have a really good group of guys. We have a young group of guys who we're all still trying to find our footing in the league and we're trying to establish ourselves in our different roles, so I think for me, being the versatile player I am, that's just another bonus to my game.

**Q. Talk about being versatile, I think you might have been the player on the Thunder that had the experience with the most different lineups in this entire year. What does it mean to be inserted into so many lineups and take on the role of being the most consistent player on the floor?**

ISAIAH ROBY: You know, that's huge. I think that was one thing for me coming into this season was to be more consistent as well as other goals like shooting the ball more, shooting the ball better. But overall just being a more efficient player, more consistent player. So the think the fact that I was able to do that in so many different lineups was definitely encouraging, especially on a team where -- a lot of teams are established playoff teams or whatnot, they might have their established five-, six-, seven-guy rotation, and obviously with a young team we're trying to figure that out still. I think being able to play with

different guys was a huge bonus.

**Q. How much has your game grown?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Man, it's grown a lot. Like you said, even talking to Sam just a little bit ago, from the day I got here when I got traded from the Mavericks, I think my game is just -- it's done -- I don't know the right word for it. It's grown a lot, I'll say that. I think even from last season, statistically it's grown a lot, physically I've grown a lot, being able to guard multiple positions and being able to be confident in that. So I think -- but the thing is this year being my second year really playing, I think I have a lot of room to still grow, so I'm excited for that.

**Q. Did you think you had this in you? Has it surprised you?**

ISAIAH ROBY: I mean, my time at Nebraska I didn't end up going -- I didn't pick Nebraska to make it to the NBA. Even my freshman year I wasn't starting at Nebraska. The NBA was never really on my radar until I started doing things that NBA players do and I was doing them consistently in college. I think my skill was exceeded where I thought I could be when I was in college, but I think now going up against MVP-caliber players and playing really well against them and just seeing what I can do in the NBA, I think my confidence is just growing and growing. I don't know what my ceiling is. I'm excited to find it, though.

**Q. Is there something specific that you want to work on in the off-season?**

ISAIAH ROBY: I wouldn't say specific. I would say just -- I would say that I've learned a lot in these first three years in the league, and I think that just taking those experiences into the summertime is going to allow me to come back an even better player.

I think that I've always had a really good work ethic, so I think that my work ethic is never questioned, but I think just learning what to work on, not wasting time in the summertime, working on things I'm not going to use. I think I have a really good idea of what my role is on this team especially and what I can do to help this team win.

**Q. This is going to be your first legit full off-season.**

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## **How much are you looking forward to that?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, I'm really excited. I'm really excited to be able to have my home base and just consistently work. I think one thing that, like you said, it's my first real full off-season. My rookie year I had surgery and last year was kind of sporadic as far as where I was at, who I was working out with. I think this year is going to be really big to just be consistent in what I'm doing and I have my plan already set out, so I'm looking forward to that.

**Q. You talked about your personal development. Assuming other guys would have maybe similar stories about how they feel like they've developed, Lu was in here a second ago talking about how you guys committed to the team to compete all year. Is that individual development, the excitement that creates within each of you, does that dovetail into why we saw this team still competing and playing hard throughout the whole year?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I think the competition comes from -- I think the group of guys we have, although we're really young and really inexperienced, just the fact that coming back from -- I think we led the league in double-digit comeback wins, that's just a testament to our resilience and our competitiveness.

I think that in many cases, a team full of young guys who might not be as competitive, they might have folded a lot easier. It could have been really easy for a young team to use that as an example, we don't have the experiences in coming back or we might not have the physicality to come back. But I think that was one thing I loved about this team is just the amount of fight we have and the competitiveness we have and just the fight.

**Q. Do you think that's something that is learned, can be learned? Can competitiveness be learned, or is it more guys bringing that on an individual basis?**

ISAIAH ROBY: I think it definitely can be learned and worked on. It's definitely a skill. I think that sometimes anybody can be discouraged, but I think it's definitely a skill to have that fight in you and that competitiveness, and I think the coaches did a really good job of instilling that in our team this year.

**Q. Lu mentioned that one of the goals was to be a playoff team next year or maybe in the future. When you look back on this season and you see that you've come back from double-digit losses, how much do you think a season like this is actually going to propel you into maybe the next season when you could be having a playoff contending type of season and you have**

**those type of comebacks to fall back on and know you have experience winning those games?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, obviously the comebacks are really encouraging. Something that's even more encouraging is just the experiences that we all gained from this year and hopefully not having to come back in as many games. That would be an even better situation for us.

I think that we all learned a lot about ourselves, and I think going into next season, I'm not sure exactly what -- obviously everybody wants to make the Playoffs, and that's a goal -- that's something that we all want to experience. Coach Daigneault talks about that a lot and how he's been a part of a lot of playoff series as an assistant.

Every time he speaks about it you can tell it's special, it means a lot, and that's something we all want to experience. I would say that's the ultimate goal, and that's something that we're all working towards, but it's not going to come easy, and we know that.

So I think that's more of -- that's the goal, but I think the process is what excites me the most.

**Q. You had an interesting last week. You played with three guys that just got called up. Your games were more than all their combined. What was that like playing with new faces, new guys and such inexperience?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, it was definitely a fun experience. Obviously I played with those guys in the G-League, so I had a small sample size of playing with them already, and those guys, they loved the opportunity. It was fun to be out there with them. They kind of took on the character of our team. There was no back-down, there was no -- they weren't out there playing timid. They were out there attacking the game, and those guys are great players, also.

It was definitely fun. It was exciting to see those guys play 40 minutes. I don't think they saw that happening earlier this year.

But it's always fun to play with those guys. They earned that opportunity, playing with the G-League, how they responded to adversity throughout the whole season. They earned the opportunity, so it was good get out there with those guys.

**Q. The consensus on Mark is that he's a player's coach, but two years in how has the experience been?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, he's been -- obviously I've only been a part of two organizations, but great coach. In my eyes he



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is a coach who -- he lets us explore our games. Especially with such a young team I think that's really important. He's not the type of coach that you're going to be out there scared to play for. He encourages you to make mistakes, he encourages you to learn from your mistakes, and I think that's a great quality of a coach of a young team.

I love playing for Mark. He's a great coach, and he's a great leader for our team.

**Q. How are you approaching this off-season knowing that there's going to be some sort of roster turnover, more draft picks are going to be coming in? How do you sort of handle that personally and just using it as motivation going into next year?**

ISAIAH ROBY: Yeah, I mean, there's always external motivation from that sense. The NBA is one of the most competitive -- it's a competitive job, obviously. There's however many basketball players in the world, there's only 450 spots. There's always that pressure.

The one thing I've learned, it never really goes away. As a rookie, you're trying to get your feet wet in the league and you're trying to make your spot. That pressure is still there in my fourth year now, and even guys who are veterans who have been around the league for nine, ten seasons, they feel that pressure, as well.

I don't think you can really think about that too much. You can't really think about what you can't control. I think you can only focus on what you can control, and for me that's getting better this summer.

**Q. What would you like to carry over from this season to next season, speaking about your game, thinking about the effort and the approach that you brought the game this season?**

ISAIAH ROBY: I mean, I don't know. I think this season I did a really good job of shooting the ball. I shot the ball really well from three. I think that my attempts could be higher, but that's the one thing I want to just continue to work on.

That's the one thing that's going to set me apart most at my position, being a small ball center, having the other team's seven-footers come out and guard me on the perimeter, continuing to use my three-point shot as a weapon and open up the drive for myself, and once I'm able to do that, I think that my offensive game really opens up and I'm able to help the team out a lot.

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