

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Josh Giddey

Press Conference



Q. Josh, your first year in the NBA, what's it like looking back on it now?

JOSH GIDDEY: A lot of fun. I mean, this is every kid's dream. Every young kid wants to be in the NBA. Once you're here, it kind of -- the longer you get into it, the more you kind of come around to it that you're living your dream.

But it was everything that I expected. It was busy, a lot of travel, a lot of late nights, hotels. The 82-game schedule, I think we managed well. Me personally, I've never played anything close to that many games, but I think me, the medical team did a great job of kind of managing my body throughout and getting through the season.

Q. You were part of a team that seemed like they had a lot of fun, a lot of comebacks, showed a lot of resilience. What was it like being part of this group?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, really fun team. Obviously a really young group. Didn't probably win as many games as we would have wanted to, but whether we won, lost or whatever the result was, the environment was always a fun, positive one to be involved in, and I think that's the most important thing is with such a young group you can't get too high on wins and too low on losses, you kind of stay in that middle ground, and I think our group did a great job of that.

Q. How is your hip feeling, and do you perceive that to be something that you're going to be dealing with long term?

JOSH GIDDEY: No, it's feels good. It was just a little hiccup, but the medical team, we did a great job of navigating through that. Obviously I wanted to come back this season, but when it was time to ramp up there just wasn't that much left in the season. We made a choice to just shut it down from where it was, but they did a great job with me feeling healthy, so ready to ramp it back up this off-season and have a good summer.

Q. How tough was it sitting out for much of the last

two months and having to watch from the sidelines?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, it obviously sucks because no one wants to be injured, you want to be out there playing, helping your teammates win games. But staying healthy at this point in my career is the most important thing, and we made the right decision. But yeah, as I said, would have loved to have been out there with the guys. It always sucks when you have to sit on the sideline and not be suited up.

Q. Any surprises about this team that you didn't expect, good or bad?

JOSH GIDDEY: Not really. Nothing surprised me too much. Most of the stuff I expected happened. I guess the one thing that maybe surprised me a little bit was how little NBA teams train, I think compared to last season where we were training five times a week, scrimmaging every day, stuff like that, whereas now it's like maybe one hard session a week. I think it's just because of the 82-game season, the travel, stuff like that. But that was the one thing that surprised me a little bit.

Q. Looking back at this season for you, just as a rookie, did you expect to get to the point where you did in your rookie career that a lot of people might not have projected you to be at, at this point?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, I mean, coming in I wasn't really sure what to expect, what my role on the team was going to be, how much I was going to play, whether it was the G-League, off the bench, starting. As I got into the season I got more comfortable within my role and started to figure it out a bit more. I think each week, each game throughout the season I progressively picked up new things, got better, got more confidence.

The individual milestones never really crossed my mind throughout the year, they just occurred naturally, and I never really expected to be playing as much or having the impact that I was, but I guess this is what my role on the team was, so it was what I was asked to do and whatever the coaches and staff need me to do, that's what I'll do for the team.

Q. It seemed like you fit in from the start pretty well with the group and throughout the season we've seen

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you guys interacting with each other and having fun. Just your thoughts on how close you guys are as a group and the chemistry you have off the court?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, real close group. Being all young guys helps, as well. It's a really tight-knit group. I think the off-season is a big part of that. Obviously I wasn't here for last off-season, but especially this one, we spoke about it, just having little team stuff so we can all kind of stay connected. Obviously having a lot of international guys, guys will go their separate ways, but staying connected through the summer is going to be important for us next year so we can hit the ground running come training camp.

Q. And then in this off-season what are you particularly focusing on in your game specifically?

JOSH GIDDEY: I think shooting is a big one for me. That's going to be I think a swing factor for me next season, so I'm going to put a heavy emphasis on that. The weight room as well is going to be a strong point for me. So those two areas I'm going to put a lot of time and invest a lot of time into that.

Q. Were you thinking about rookie, Rookie of the Year?

JOSH GIDDEY: Do I spend a lot of time? Not really. If it happens, it happens, but at the end of the day I'm not worried. I'm worried about getting better, each and every day making this team better. Winning more games is more important to me than all the rookie teams or Rookie of the Year and stuff like that.

Q. Did you talk to other rookies on other teams and see how their experiences were going? I guess I'm kind of curious because it seems like it's a really good class of rookies around the league.

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, it is a really strong class, obviously, but I had a fair bit -- I didn't know a lot of them at Cleveland All-Star Weekend, I got to meet a fair few of them playing on the same team as them, doing Skills Challenge, whatever it was. I've gotten to know and became close with quite a few of the rookies and it's good to talk to those guys because they can relate to what you're going through, whether it's struggling, thriving, whatever it is, those guys are always good to talk to and lean on because they're going through the same thing as I am.

Q. With respect to shooting do you have any specific plans? Are you going to change anything mechanically or continue with the form that you have now? Is there any plans specifically in regards to that?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, there will be me, Mike and my trainer in California, Jordan, we'll all connect and get on the same page with that, but there will be a few tweaks we make, nothing too major.

I think a lot of it is just mental and staying confident, getting up a lot of reps. I'm going to spend a lot, a lot of time in the gym this summer getting up shots. Hopefully next season, as I said, that's a swing factor for me.

Q. It's rare that a team gets contributions from four straight draft picks, but you guys did this season. What do you think it was about the Thunder that put you guys in good positions to get contributions from each one?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, obviously I think we all knew getting drafted here that there was going to be opportunity from day one, just with the team that we had. It was a young team, a lot of new guys around, so we understood the position we're in as a group and all the rookies I think were confident in themselves coming in and knew they had the ability to make an impact. Coach Mark trusted all of us to come out and help the team win games, and I think he's a big reason for a lot of our successes. He has confidence in all of us. He lets us play freely. I give a lot of credit to him for allowing us to play our natural games and not putting too much pressure on us to go out there and exceed any expectations from outside.

Q. How has it been playing for Mark? What has your experience been?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, loved him. I don't have a single bad word to say about him. He's been awesome for me. From day one he kind of laid out how he was as a coach, we spoke a lot. So he was really good with me. He was straight up with me, told me how it was, which is exactly what I like. I think I speak for all the guys when I say we all love playing for him. He's a real player's coach, and I'm excited to continue to build the relationship with him and the rest of the guys in the group.

Q. Does that give you more confidence as a player?

JOSH GIDDEY: It does, a hundred percent. I think that's the thing he spoke to me about from day one is that he will allow me to play through mistakes and stuff like that and he did. It's like, if I turn the ball over, I'm not nervous, not looking over my shoulder at Mark to drag me out of the game. He understands my game and the way I play and I think that's what allowed me to thrive within this team.

Q. What is your summer going to look like as far as



working out here, going back home some? What are your plans?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, I'll go home in the next few days, fly back to Australia, I'll work out there maybe three weeks and then come back here. I'll be between OKC and Irvine back forth a little bit and then obviously Vegas will be there.

So it's going to be a busy summer, I've been looking forward to it for a long time now. I know there's certain things I've really got to work on, so I think summer is where players separate themselves, and I think this is what I need to do and what the rest of our guys need to do in order to make that jump individually but more importantly as a team.

Q. Are you playing Summer League?

JOSH GIDDEY: I don't know yet. I've got to speak with Mark and Sam about that, but we'll figure that out soon.

Q. Obviously you guys are still at the beginning of a rebuild sort of, but looking toward next year, what are your expectations from a team perspective?

JOSH GIDDEY: I think to be better than this year, whether that's make the Playoffs or not. I'd be lying -- everyone wants to make the Playoffs, but for our guys with such a young team, to be better than this year's is what we look to do, and I think the more we work together this summer, the better everyone gets, we can make that next jump. As I said, Playoffs or not, as long as we're better than what we were this year we're heading in that right direction.

Q. The fit between you and Shai is pretty important to this team moving forward, and you guys had kind of an interesting year where you guys played together some and then you each kind of individually got to have the team as the primary guy. What did you learn through your stint on your own when Shai was out and then whenever you were out and Shai kind of had the team? Is there anything that you learned through those two particular periods of time?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, I think it's evident to see that we both can run a team by ourselves, but I think -- as you said, it's going to be important for us to be able to do that together, and I think as the season got on, it got much better, game after game, and I think two natural ball handlers or two ball handlers isn't a natural fit together, and these things take time.

I think if you look at all the great duos around the league they wouldn't have started off as one of the best in the league, they had to work and it took years of experience, and I think me and him are both really unselfish players,

want to make guys around us better.

I love Shai. He's a great guy, unselfish, makes players better. The chemistry between us is only growing. I think the best game we had together was the one right after the All-Star break against Phoenix. We had a meeting, me, Shai and Mark, sat down, spoke about some things and the next day we played Phoenix and I think that was the best it felt out there and then obviously I didn't play again rest of the season. Just knowing from there things picked up the way it did makes me excited for next season.

Q. Was there anything specific in that meeting that you can share?

JOSH GIDDEY: I mean, it was nothing too over the top. It was more just little things, what we can do to make each other better. We're both obviously better with the ball in our hands, that's not a secret, but finding ways to impact off the ball, whether that's cutting, screening, whatever it may be. I think that Phoenix game it was evident we really started to figure it out, and I think going forward it's only going to get better.

Q. You're a unique player. There's been things written about you this season where they try to comp all the rookies to a player in the past, and your comp was nobody. They couldn't figure one out. With that said, is there anybody that you look at either from the past or even currently in the NBA to say, Oh, I want to take those things from this guy and I want to play like this?

JOSH GIDDEY: I mean, before I was in the NBA my favorite player was always Luka Doncic. I can't really say that now being a competitor of his, but he's someone that I love to watch. I studied a lot of his game during the pre-draft and stuff like that. He's obviously one of the best players in the world, so it's hard to compare myself to him at this stage. But little parts of his game, Chris Paul I watch a lot, those guys are playing a lot of pick-and-rolls, just the way they see the floor, stuff like that.

But I wouldn't compare myself to anybody. As you said, I'm pretty unique in the way I play the game. But just taking little parts from other guys' games is going to be important for me.

Q. Will you watch the Playoffs?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, I'll be tuned in.

Q. You came in with Tre Mann, obviously. He's really progressed as the season went on. Just your thoughts on playing with him this year and seeing where he started to where he is now?



JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, he's made a huge jump. From the start of the year he was kind of in and out of the rotation a little bit with the G-League, but then the back half of the season he showed what he's capable of doing. 30-point games, the way he creates for himself, for other guys, his shot-making ability. He's a really special player and I think he grew in confidence over the year, and as I said, it was really evident towards the back half of the year how good of a player he's going to be.

Q. This is your first off-season where you get to watch the draft as actually a player in the NBA and how that's going to impact your team possibly. Are you going to be tuning in to that at all?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, I'll be tuned in. Yeah, yeah.

Q. Is there anyone you have watched at all that you're curious about or maybe intrigued that if it could possibly happen what it would be like to play with them?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, there's a few guys. Obviously the top five are obviously pretty locked in. Everyone knows who they're going to be. But yeah, I mean, there's a few in that category I'd love to play with, but whoever we get we'll integrate them into the team and be ready to move forward.

Q. Give us a name?

JOSH GIDDEY: I won't say anything, but there's definitely a few guys --

Q. Are you friends with Dyson Daniels?

JOSH GIDDEY: Exactly. That would be one I'd love to play with.

Q. Do you pay attention to the draft lottery at all?

JOSH GIDDEY: Not really. I know a little bit about it, but not too much.

Q. When you said you were working your shot with Mike, is this Mike Wilks?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah.

Q. What has he done to help you?

JOSH GIDDEY: He's great. Obviously as a guard in the NBA he understands certain little things that I can work on to be better. As I said, it helps having someone who's

been in my shoes as a guard in the league, and he's been great. I spend a lot, a lot of time with him working on different things. So he's going to be a big part of my off-season this summer and moving forward me and Mike have -- we've got a great relationship, so it's only getting stronger and the things we need to work on I know I can always rely on Mike to get that done.

Q. It's clear that the front office communicates with everybody what the plan is. No one seems to be in the dark or confused about any of this. What's your take on the current plan for the Thunder and the rebuilding process?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, that's right. I've got a good relationship with Sam and Mark. We speak a lot, and I guess as you said, they're pretty open with it all. There's no secrets within our organization. But I think the direction we're headed is really positive. The guys, the front office, the coaches, everyone, we're all kind of in that same mindset of where we're heading as a team and we understand where we're at now as a young group, but I think everyone wants to win, and I think the sooner that can start the better, I guess, and we're all within that same realm and headed in that same direction.

Q. Does that give you a sign of relief for the future, like, yeah, we're not winning as much as we want now, but I see the direction and they're open with the direction, so it's not as bad as it could be?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, for sure. I guess coming into the year I was aware of the situation the team was in, just being so young and the position that we're in, but I wanted to come in and impact winning, and I think next year hopefully we can win more games than we did this year, then the next year win more games in that year and so on.

As long as we keep building each year and each year as a team individually. As I said, in the summer, the better we can get individually and the better we can get collectively it's going to help us moving forward.

Q. How can Shai help you become the best player you can be?

JOSH GIDDEY: That's a great question. I mean, Shai is -- as I said, we're both better with the ball in our hands, but I think a lot of the time when I am handling the ball it's to get Shai the ball back, whether I'm running the 1 or the 2. Let's say, for instance, I'm running the 1, I'm going to run something for Shai so he can get the ball, because that's the guy whose hands we want the ball in. He's dangerous with it, he draws so much attention, he's so unselfish that if he does get that attention he's going to hit shooters, hit big

men under the rim. A lot of the times if I'm handling I'm trying to get him the ball back, but if not being able to space and I think working on my shooting is a big part of that because when he does draw that crowd being ready to knock down catch and shoot threes or play off the bounce or whatever it is. The more we can play off the ball and learn to play like that, the better it's going to be for us as a pair but more importantly for this team.

Q. Do you have a preference of the type of big man that you like to play with? Either a big that shoots it like Mike or a big that rolls to the rim? Do you have a preference?

JOSH GIDDEY: Not really. It's good to have a mix of both, I think, because it means the defense has to play multiple coverages. If we've got pick-and-pop guys like Mike, Roby, J-Rob, it stretches the defense out. But if it's someone like Fave who's on the ring a lot of the time it's a different look. I don't mind either one. It's go to have bigs that can do both, keeps defense honest. But no, not really any preference. Yeah, I like playing with all the bigs we've got.

Q. Spending a season here do you think Oklahoma is starting to feel like home at all?

JOSH GIDDEY: It did really quickly. I love the people in the city, no traffic, everywhere is quick to get around, which is the best part, but I love it here.

Q. Coming from Australia and having a full season what have you learned the most about your game?

JOSH GIDDEY: I think it's not about my game. I think it'll be more having a short-term memory, kind of mindset and having a next game mentality. Whereas, playing so many games, it's like you can't dwell on the past. You can't dwell on one possession. You miss a shot, you turn it over, just onto the next thing. That's biggest thing for me because early in the season I had a bad game I let it kind of steam roll over me, but once I got out of that mindset and put the game in the past it helped me going forward. That was the big thing for me, just playing so many games you can't get caught up on one of them.

Q. You said you wanted to wear jersey 6 but it wasn't available. It's available now. So?

JOSH GIDDEY: I haven't thought about it. I'm happy with 3 so I might just stay there.

Q. Lu Dort mentioned before and Kenrich Williams mentioned the goal next year is the Playoffs. How confident are you about next season about that goal, and how excited are you fighting for wins, fighting for

the Playoffs with this team?

JOSH GIDDEY: Yeah, I'm confident. We've got a great group. I'm confident in the guys we've got to make that happen, but as I said, we just want to be better from what we were this year going into next year. The Playoffs are obviously the goal for every team, but it's not the be-all end-all. As long as we're progressing and heading in that right direction, that's all we can really ask for.

Q. Who's somebody that you went to for advice or wisdom during the highs and the lows of your rookie season? Who's somebody that you really leaned on?

JOSH GIDDEY: I think Mike Wilks was one of them as a former player. He was always good to talk to, get advice from. He was great in that regard. Earlier on in the season just when I was struggling a little bit, he was great to lean on and talk to. My parents were always good sounding boards. I've got a good group of people around me that I can talk to, rant to, vent to. So it's good to have those people in your circle that listen with no opinions and nothing like that.

Had a lot of people to lean on this year which was important for me because I needed it. Mentally 82 games is draining, so having those people to talk to and get through those tough times with, it's really important.

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