

# Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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## Aaron Wiggins

### Press Conference



**Q. Wrapping up your rookie season, you've had a pretty unique journey, how much has this season meant to you and what's it like looking back on it?**

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, this has been super fun. Just being with a great group of guys, with a great organization, going in and out of games, practice, traveling. It's just been really cool just kind of getting to know guys, be able to grow with everyone, and go out and do what we love to do, just play basketball, compete, try and get wins.

It's just been fun. Crazy because like the year went by so fast. Rookie season is already done for me. It definitely went by fast, but it was super fun and super excited for the years to come.

**Q. How much was just the connectedness and kind of cohesion of the group, did that add to the fun of the year for you?**

AARON WIGGINS: It was huge. From beginning of the year, I'm thinking back to training camp, just seeing where guys have grown relationally and just like individually. I think it's been tremendous just kind of watching everybody, including myself and just kind of growing close to certain guys. Chemistry-wise on the court you see different things that guys just kind of have a feel for and have a flow of. That's just kind of been huge in terms of us getting through the season and continuing to enjoy being around everybody.

**Q. What are your plans for this off-season, and are you looking forward to having a full off-season unlike going into your rookie year?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I mean, especially in comparison to going into the rookie year, especially last year. After a college season you're so focused on it, you're just training for whatever possibilities you could have.

But knowing that I'm in OKC and having the opportunity to kind of be here and work out and know what it is that I need to work on and what's expected of me, I'm just super

excited to get in the gym, get stronger physically and continue to just add to my game on the court.

There are a lot of things that I want to work on, that I need to work on, that I plan on just kind of attacking, and I just look forward to going through the process every day.

**Q. You hear the word "culture" thrown out a lot. You just finished your rookie year; what is it maybe (indiscernible)?**

AARON WIGGINS: I lot of it for me is just like the environment. It's like the setting in which when you go to a certain place, especially like here in OKC, I think we've developed a culture where everybody works hard, everybody competes, everybody wants to push each other to get better, but at the same time you can come in here every day with no feeling of like if something happened outside of here, like you don't have to feel ashamed or embarrassed or any type of other feelings outside of here, it's all welcome, just a comfortable setting, a comfortable environment. You can be yourself, you can work at whatever it is you need to, and guys are just accepting of everybody. That's kind of how I see it.

**Q. In your opinion what is it about the Thunder that puts you guys in great positions to succeed?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I mean, the coaches, the front staff, everybody is just kind of really personable, straightforward with expectations, what they expect from you, the things that they feel like can make you a better player, and when it comes to being a better player, I think every single guy who walks through the doors every day wants to get better every day. So just knowing that we're here to push each other, the coaches are willing to push us and everyone kind of has high expectations for themselves, you kind of grow, you learn and you get better and kind of put yourself in a good situation.

**Q. Can you talk about playing for Mark.**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, he's a really good coach. He's done a really good job just kind of continuing to push everyone to the best of their abilities. I think he's getting a lot out of our players, and in terms of me, he's just been, like I said, he's really straightforward. He lets you know what it is you need to work on, what it is you need to pay



attention to. I think earlier in the season he addressed it as like homework assignments. When I was with the G-League it was like he gave some homework assignments and his straight forwardness is something you don't take for granted because you know what it is you need to work on, you know what you need to do and how you can be successful.

**Q. Does playing for a guy like him -- and every other player has called him a player's coach and everything that you just said -- does playing for a guy like that give you confidence in your game?**

AARON WIGGINS: A hundred percent because there's just nothing that -- he's not just leaving you stranded. He's telling you what it is that he expects of you and what you need to work on so that you can be successful. Definitely a player's coach, and it makes you more confident because you know when you're doing things the right way, you know what it is you can be doing, what he expects you to do and things like that.

Definitely comfortable just knowing that when you can go out there and you can play and he's given you kind of that confidence that you can do whatever.

**Q. You mentioned working on a few things over the summer. Is there anything specific that you really want to hone in on?**

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, there are so many things. I plan on just being in the weight room, kind of living in the weight room, continuing to get stronger and then on court just continuing to improve on my shooting. There are a lot of little things that I'll be working defensively, trying to get through screens and physicality or things that's kind of going to go into a lot of the things.

Those are a couple of the specifics, but it's a really broad category for me.

**Q. Obviously being a versatile guard, there's a ton of things you need to work on, but do you think it's better to work on as many things as possible and try to just get better marginally over the summer or just focus on three things, going into the weight room, getting through screens, that kind of thing, and then have that added into your game?**

AARON WIGGINS: I think there's a way that you can hone in on specific things in individual workouts while also kind of attacking the broad variety of things that I need to work on. So I'll be in here two, three times a day and one time might be weight room and then I'll go on the court and I shoot. And if I come back it might be to specifically work

on defense or something.

I'll definitely really lock in and just focus on certain things in a workout, but at the same time the mindset doesn't change to kind of improve in every category.

**Q. You're obviously a pretty big role player on the defensive end this year and that was an area where this group has been really strong. What did you learn about the defensive end this year?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, we're a team that kind of relies on each other, both defensively and offensively. You've got to be in the right spots. You've got to be able to trust your teammate. It kind of plays into chemistry and the culture that we've kind of built as a team, which is to kind of be together, to be together, be on the same page and trust one another. It was awesome kind of being able to learn the different schemes and strategies that we kind of have to be on the same page defensively and then the defense translates to offense, so it creates a lot of opportunities when we're all on the same page and playing together.

**Q. Back to the mindset of just competing together. How much did that play into the resilience and stuff that we saw this season with all the comebacks that you guys had?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, it just kind of shows the toughness and the grit of our team. We've got a lot of guys who obviously can compete with the best of them, and when we're all on the same page and competing together and playing like that, any deficit we face we can come back from. And I know we had multiple comebacks this season. Hopefully you don't consistently get yourself like facing those deficits, but just the toughness, the grit and the mindset to kind of keep fighting and understanding that these are long games that we're playing, so we've got to be able to kind of trust the process, stick to our game plan and trust one another.

**Q. Knowing there's four players coming in or multiple players coming in, does that motivate you at all? How does that motivate you or how do you view that?**

AARON WIGGINS: That's how teams get better. You bring in guys that are good, and it kind of increases the competitive level within the organization, within the group. I mean, obviously that's going to be a big motivation behind not only myself but for a lot of other players to kind of push themselves a little bit harder.

And then when those guys, whoever gets drafted, whoever ends up here, when they come in it'll be a really competitive environment, and that's how a team really gets



better, that's how teams grow together, that's how chemistry is built. It's in the fire pits. It's kind of going through it all and fighting one another, and then putting that into the season where you're going up against other guys, other teams, and fighting with each other.

**Q. Are there specific things that you saw this season where you thought, I'd like to take that from their game?**

AARON WIGGINS: There are a lot of guys who I've kind of seen similarities between. I don't watch like film on specific guys and just try and take things from them. I try and learn a lot from my own individual film just to kind of see my own habits and the situations that I'm placed in. But there are a lot of guys who kind of play similar styles to the way that I've played. I definitely will kind of look at different things and kind of compare and contrast to see what things I can add into my game or things I need to fix or just kind of continue to build and grow on the things that have been successful for other guys. That's something that I'll look at, but there aren't a ton of guys that I just consistently watch or try and take note of.

**Q. When you started the season with a little bit of an injury, then you came in and had some success, then got injured again, came back and then got injured again. How difficult was that to navigate in your first year, and then did the fun environment that you talked about help get you through during your low time?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, for sure. Injuries is not a part of my history, honestly. I haven't had an injury since like my junior year of high school, like a sprained ankle or something. So it was tough because I just wanted to be able to play. I wanted to be on the court.

But the environment, the guys that we have and our training staff, our medical staff and those guys, they did a really good job just kind of giving me a timeline, helping me to recover, to rehab and get back to full strength so that I could be out on the court and do what I love to do.

If it wasn't for my teammates, for the training staff, the medical staff and coaching staff, just kind of telling me, like get back to full strength, make you're sure healthy and when you're ready to come back we're ready for you. If it wasn't for them it definitely would have been a lot tougher, but I kind of had the mindset to just recover, to do whatever it takes to get myself back out on the court as soon as possible and at full strength.

**Q. What are the things you learned about your game during those times?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, it was definitely a time for me to sit back, to watch some of the games that I missed and also to watch film on myself and just kind of see things that I could learn, things that I could just kind of take note of. I mean, it definitely helped just being able to look at it from outside, watching at home on the TV and stuff like that. It was just a different perspective, for sure.

**Q. It's been asked of other players, who do you think is the best dressed guy on the team?**

AARON WIGGINS: The best dressed guy on the team? Tre Mann. The dude is drippy. Shai is going to be so mad. My boy Tre, Tre, drippy.

**Q. Jerry said himself.**

AARON WIGGINS: Jerry? Yeah, he's put on a couple nice fits. K-Rich, I've got a running joke with K-Rich. Kenrich is funny. He's got some good fits, too.

**Q. Where would you put yourself?**

AARON WIGGINS: Where would I put myself? I wouldn't put myself in a category. I'm not going to because they'll flame me if I try. I'm going to leave it at that.

**Q. What did you learn during your rookie season, and how excited are you about next season fighting for wins, fighting for more wins and getting better as a player overall next season?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I'm super excited. From my rookie season I learned a lot just in terms of schedule, the amount of games, the traveling.

And when it comes to looking at next season and everything, I'm just super excited. This off-season is going to be huge for our team, for individuals, just to kind of get better, to kind of grow and get stronger and when we come back together we're going to definitely be a group that's really competitive and ready to kind of go at it.

I'm super excited for next season and just looking forward to being back with the guys and kind of continuing to build on everything that we've started.

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