

# Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

## Ty Jerome

### Press Conference



**Q. We saw you guys having a lot of fun out there this year. What did you think overall of the chemistry and connectedness of this group that you guys built this season?**

TY JEROME: I think you don't see that in the NBA a lot. I think it starts with Shai. Everywhere you go, it kind of starts with your best player in terms of how coachable your team is going to be, and I think he does such a good job of making everyone feel involved on and off the court, and from there we've got a really good group of guys. We've got a deep group of guys, and we've got a close knit group of guys, and that makes playing together more fun, it makes the road trips more fun. It makes everything more enjoyable in a long season.

**Q. Shai obviously led the league in drives per game for two straight seasons, but as a group you guys look to play through the paint every single night and offensively and have that style of play. What did you think of the way you were able to build that and cultivate that throughout the season?**

TY JEROME: I think we did a good job of creating pretty good shots for the most part throughout games. I think we're going to keep improving. We're going to make some more shots over time. I think our offense is going to improve for sure. We have the pieces to do so. We have hard workers, and we've got a good staff, so it's a good recipe for improvement.

**Q. How are you feeling after your surgery, and what do you expect to ramp things back up?**

TY JEROME: I am feeling really good. I think I'll start ramping -- I've been kind of ramping up already, but I think I'll be full go in two weeks, so I'll have the full summer.

**Q. How do you approach this off-season personally when you know there's going to be some sort of roster turnover, new draft picks coming in? What's your focus going into next season?**

TY JEROME: Getting better. Getting the best shape of my life. The roster changes have nothing to do with me. I'm not saying I can't be involved with them, I'm saying it's not my job to figure those out.

Sam and the front office are one of the best in the league, and they're going to do that. Our job is to improve, and it's honestly that simple.

**Q. You've got the third best defensive rating out of all the guys that qualified. Is that something that you look to build on and something that you came into the season wanting to focus on?**

TY JEROME: Yeah, I think that was one of the question marks when I was coming out of college, can I guard at this level. I think just -- I mean, some of the defensive rating stuff is a little bit of luck, if a guy missed or makes a shot. But I think in terms of being a leader defensively and encouraging team success on defense, encouraging the game plan, encouraging everyone to execute the game plan, that's something I take pride in. Being a leader on both sides of the ball is something I take pride in, so for sure.

**Q. Typically young teams aren't good defensively, but you guys when you were healthy were one of the top 10, I believe. What do you attribute that to?**

TY JEROME: The staff, because they do a really good job of giving us the game plan, and then I attribute that a little bit to what Paris and I were talking about earlier about how close knit this group is because it allows us to bark at each other a little bit like if someone misses an assignment, if somebody is not in the right spot. We come from a place of love and everybody knows that, and that allows us to hold each other accountable. I think that's a big reason for our somewhat success defensively this past year.

**Q. Mark talks about the leader is the person doing the right thing. How much did that help cultivate that environment you're talking about of guys holding each other accountable?**

TY JEROME: A ton, a ton, and we didn't really have a seven-footer anchoring the paint blocking shots for us. But what we did have is 5s that can guard all five positions. I think once again the staff did a great job of utilizing what



we had, and players did a great job of buying in. I think when you do that and you play hard throughout the course of a whole regular season, you're going to yield pretty good results.

**Q. What are your thoughts on Tre and the progress that he made from coming in training camp until the end of the season?**

TY JEROME: Yeah, the progress he's made is unbelievable in terms of finding his role in a basketball game, his catch and shoot improved tremendously, his willingness to shoot the ball right away off the catch improved tremendously. He started to at one point get on such a good rhythm and he started playing with a flow and a confidence that is pretty impressive for a rookie.

**Q. What's the biggest thing you want to do this off-season? What are you going to work on this summer?**

TY JEROME: I already have it all planned out. I think the biggest thing for me is getting in the best shape of my life because that's going to basically be the foundation for everything I want to do. Skill-wise obviously I'm going to be working on continuing to try to improve my shooting, obviously, but that's something I've been doing all my life. I think I had an off year, but getting in the best shape of my life is going to be the foundation for everything I want to do defensively, offensively. In my position it's probably the most important thing a guard can do.

**Q. Is there anything you attribute your off year to with shooting?**

TY JEROME: No. Just got to make some more shots, and I'll do that.

**Q. What were the takeaways for you from this season and what would you like to improve and get better about the next season?**

TY JEROME: Takeaways, I think -- that's a big question. I think when we compete at a certain level, we can be a pretty good team. I think continue to build on that, understand that we're trying to build something that lasts for a long time, and we're not skipping steps. I think that's the most important thing. That's what we're all going to try to go into the summer with, the mindset of individually and collectively trying to build something that can last and not skip steps.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

