

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

Monday, September 26, 2022
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Jalen Williams Press Conference



Q. What are your initial thoughts about this city, and have you ever spent time here before being drafted?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I mean, it's been great. I'm from Arizona, so it's kind of the same vibe. It was really hot when we first got out here. But it's been really cool. The community has been super great.

I got to go to the fair and stuff and kind of just be around everybody, and everybody has been super accepting and kind of embraced me since I've been here. So it's been fun. And no, I have not been to Oklahoma before getting drafted here.

Q. During the draft process the main thing about you that scouts said you needed to work on was defense. You get into Summer League, you're one of the best defenders there at every position. Was that just something that everybody missed or do you feel like that just got overlooked?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I think my time at Santa Clara, people just really didn't give a lot into my story, just being from a smaller school. But defense for me was how I got to start my freshman year.

I think having the year that I had this past year, it kind of got overlooked, I think, a little bit, just from the standpoint of I had a bigger role offensively.

It was just motivation for me during the Summer League to kind of look forward to it, something that I kind of took personal a little bit, and just tried to give a lot of effort. And I think the Thunder also, it's kind of their identity, as well, just kind of play tough and gritty. So I just tried to bring that.

Q. What was your favorite part of the fair?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Ooh, the funnel cake. It was really good. I also had alligator corn dog thing that was pretty good.

Q. So you're willing to be a little bit adventurous with food?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm down.

Q. You had mentioned at one point that you saw some of your game in Shai. I'm curious how much you've had a chance to play with him in pickup situations, and what are you expecting or hoping to gain from being in training camp with him?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think it's a really cool opportunity. I've probably been saying that before -- like right when the draft started in April, so it's cool that he's my teammate. Just trying to learn from him. We played pickup, I'm sure it was kind of all over social media in LA, so it was cool to learn from him and see how he approaches his summer.

But yeah, I'm just really looking forward to seeing how he operates. He's been in the league for a minute now. I'm also just looking forward to being with everybody on the team, kind of picking up different things that everybody does.

Q. We saw on social media that you got to go to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. What was that experience like?

JALEN WILLIAMS: It was very humbling. I think it was really cool that we were able to kind of learn about the history.

Obviously a super unfortunate event, but I think the way that the city was able to recover and kind of come together I think was something that I really was able to take away, even in moments of tragedy I think for the city to be able to come together and kind of unite I think speaks a lot to how Oklahoma is, and you can tell by how the people are here, too.

It was a really genuine experience that I'm happy that I was able to go through and share that moment with the people that toured us around.

Q. What does a successful rookie season look like for you? Do you set any goals or expectations for yourself?



JALEN WILLIAMS: You know, it's just a day by day thing. It's really hard to give you a great answer on that with not even having a training camp. I think the one thing that's just going to be constant for me is kind of going out there and playing hard every game, something that I do every time anyway. Just going out there and competing. I'm looking forward to learning with the young group.

I think that's kind of a blessing for us that everybody is young so everybody is really eager to learn and kind of get better with each other, so I'm looking forward to that the most.

Q. (Indiscernible).

JALEN WILLIAMS: No comment on the Kobe kicks crown yet. It's hard to get your hands on a lot of Kobe Adidas. I'm with Adidas right now. But I'll have some Kobes -- I'll definitely be rotating them out. Maybe I'll custom some or something.

I'm not going to give away too much, but I'm going to be in the debate for sure. You had guys like Giddey and DeMar DeRozan where they've got closets full of Kobes, so I've got my work cut out for me.

Q. Have you broached the subject with Mark about practicing or shootaround in pajamas?

JALEN WILLIAMS: No. I think I've got to earn that one a little more. But I've definitely talked to him and pulled up to practice in pajamas, so I think he's just going to have to get used to that that will be the look around there.

Q. Your folks to my understanding are military; is that right?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah.

Q. How do you feel like their life, how that's impacted just your personality, your approach to things, having that as their background?

JALEN WILLIAMS: I think just like kind of core values, being respectful, things like that. Like my parents weren't like the typical -- I think how everybody thinks military, yelling and kind of -- they were strict, but it's like, I feel like it was like a really good strict, like being clean, being respectful to people, just core values that I still carry on with me.

I think a big one is just treat people how you want to be treated. You never know who you'll meet and stuff like that, so always try and uphold your image.

Just from that standpoint, personality-wise, I think it's kind of being more open to new situations, stuff like that, moving around a lot when I was little. I think that's just kind of something I carried with me.

Q. Does that help you transition? Being a rookie in the NBA can be hard, but does that help you at least to -- moving is not a big deal to you?

JALEN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think just even coming from Santa Clara to here, it's two completely different places. But I think, yeah, just kind of being able to adapt to certain situations I think is something that helped me out.

Q. (Indiscernible).

JALEN WILLIAMS: I did not, and I appreciate you telling me that, so now I'll be tuned in. I like the cast that's there.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.