

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Aaron Wiggins

Press Conference

Q. Aaron, I think we've all seen the growth for this season in this team. For you personally, what have you thought of just how far you guys have come from the start of the season to now?

AARON WIGGINS: My bad. I can't stop smiling, man. This year went by so fast. I was just here last year.

Yeah, it was incredible. Coming from the season that we had last year, and if you compare it, I think we made a huge jump just from like October to like now, and I think it was like small, just like spurts of like -- it wasn't even too noticeable. It was just you could see a little bit of an improvement here and there.

It was huge. Guys kind of bought into how we want to play and the things that we prioritize, and every individual just kind of contributed in their own way to the growth that we had. It was awesome to see.

Q. You came in here and couldn't stop smiling. How fun has this season been?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, the season was super fun. I think every guy will be able to tell you that as close-knit of a group as we are, kind of the different personalities and characteristics that everyone kind of brings to the table, it made the season super fun, and then being able to have postseason play, being able to play in that atmosphere and compete for something was super fun.

It's just crazy. It's like, I was sitting here last year as a rookie. Like this is my second year. I'm speechless.

Q. What's changed for you since sitting here last year to this year in your mind? What's changed the most?

AARON WIGGINS: I don't know, just feeling like this is a place where I'm comfortable. I feel like I can be myself.

I think the environment, kind of the setting that we're in, everyone just kind of is like -- nobody is on a pedestal. Nobody is looking down or seeing you as something any



different than anybody in the room.

Being able to walk in every day to this environment and have the mindset that I myself and everyone around me is just working hard, getting better, and trying to be their best self so that as a group we can be -- maximize our chances and our opportunities, it's something special to be a part of. I've enjoyed it.

Q. Does it specifically mean a lot to you being a later second-round pick? There's a lot of guys that were selected high in the draft, but everyone seems to be on an equal playing field once you get inside these walls. Does that mean a lot to you specifically?

AARON WIGGINS: I wouldn't say it specifically means a lot to me. It's a blessing to hear my name no matter where it was in the draft. But specifically it's special just to kind of be in this organization and have this opportunity and be around the group of guys and have this setting and the mindset and the work ethic that everyone just kind of shares.

I wouldn't say that that individually is something that stands out, but just being here just is awesome.

Q. Tre mentioned that you guys are close. What did you see from him as he battled through some struggles this year and what do you expect from him coming back next season?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I'm sure he's probably his biggest critic towards his game, and even if it wasn't the year he wanted or expected, he never changed who he was as a person, his work ethic, what he does every day, day in and day out.

I don't think that this was anything that anybody should get comfortable with. I think I've said it before, I've told him to his face, when he's going, he's almost impossible to stop.

I do think next year he'll be somebody that you can't just expect to have whatever happened this last season, but I'm not worried about him. I think he'll be fine.

Q. You went from high school and college being a guy that had the ball in his hands and being the go-to guy to being here, being the guy that does all the little

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things to make a team better. What was the key to making that transition so quick, because it doesn't really happen for young guys.

AARON WIGGINS: I think in high school and college I did all the little things, too. I think just kind of carrying that throughout my entire career, and then wanting to play, doing whatever it takes to play. I'm not going to have the ball in my hands here, so I was like, what can I do to put myself in a position to where I can prove that I can be on the court and I can play.

So doing the little things matters. I just wanted to do the little things and make them seem big. Try to do that to the best of my ability.

Q. What are some things you want to work on this summer, improve on?

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, obviously I don't want to have one specific thing that I'm just focused on, but defensively just continuing to get better, maneuvering throughout -- getting through screens, guarding the ball one-on-one.

Physically I do want to get a little bit stronger, continue to grow there. Then offensively just continue to kind of work on my shot. I think I made a big jump from last season to this season with my jump shot, so continue to touch up on that and just tie in little things here and there to add to my game.

Q. Shai made such a huge leap this year. We can see what he does in games. What can you tell us behind the scenes about the work ethic, practice, working out, everything like that that kind of goes into the improvement that he's made?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, the dude is a maniac. I saw before the season this year when we were out in LA as a team, I think his attention to detail and his focus on certain things during the off-season is something that separates him from a lot of other guys, because I think he spends a lot more time on like one specific thing and like kind of just focuses on that thing.

I don't know how to explain it, but I saw it before our season started last year, that he was going to take a huge jump. I'm not surprised by it at all. I didn't think he was going to have this great of a year. I didn't think that he could have another jump like that, because last year he was great.

Hey, I'm not surprised. He deserves everything he was awarded this year.

Q. You may have just mentioned it, but what's one thing that you're most impressed with in your game this season and then what's one thing that you're a little disappointed with that you expect to be better?

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, I was obviously happy with my increase in percentages in terms of three-point shooting this year. I wouldn't say that's the -- I don't know if there's one thing that I'm just super high on in terms of a jump from last year to this year.

In terms of disappointments, I wasn't really disappointed with anything. I thought I put myself in a position to take advantage of my opportunities and to play to the best of my ability. I control what I can control.

But outside of that, I'm happy with how our team improved throughout the season and how we kind of came together and just kind of, I think, beat expectations throughout the season.

I thought that was huge, especially for us to be as young as we were. That's probably the one thing that I'm like most -- outside of myself.

Q. Do you have any non-basketball related off-season plans, any fun vacations, any hobbies you're going to delve into, anything?

AARON WIGGINS: I haven't planned anything, not one thing. I'll definitely spend some time with my family, my mom, my dad, my brothers and sisters, just kind of see them.

But a lot of my focus will be on getting better and improving my game. I'll be in the gym a lot.

Q. What's it been like to play for Mark these past two years?

AARON WIGGINS: It's been a unique experience. He has his own coaching style and he's a great coach. I saw he was in the finalists for Coach of the Year this year. He deserves it. He's done a good job just kind of bringing us together and leading us.

He's really good with pregame, like just kind of finding ways to motivate guys because it's a long season, and there are a lot of different opportunities for guys to kind of not have it on certain nights, and he does a good job just making you realize that in life there are days where you don't have it, but things could be a lot worse, situations could be a lot worse, and you've got to bring your best effort night in and night out if we want to maximize our team opportunities.

It's been an experience. I've enjoyed it, and you know I look forward to more time with him, hopefully.

Q. Can you give an example of what those motivating things are like?

AARON WIGGINS: There's one specifically. When LeBron passed the scoring record, we won that night. He had a really good pregame speech, just kind of telling us to not be distracted by what guys, what famous people might be in the arena or the idea of him passing it, but to kind of be in the moment, keep our feet on the ground, don't allow social media or anything to affect us.

I think guys kind of responded to that, and we went out there, we played basketball. It was awesome to be a part of that game and kind of recognize history. But at the same time, I think we got the outcome we wanted, which was a win.

Yeah, there's one example.

Q. I don't know how online you are, seeing stuff on social media, but I wanted to get your perspective on the meme going around the last couple years about Aaron Wiggins saved basketball.

AARON WIGGINS: That's been going since I was in college. Yeah, I don't know. I'm literally just Aaron Wiggins. That's all. There is a meme like that, too. I don't know, I just go out there and try and hoop. It's funny. I like it.

Q. What's the experience been like for you to become one of the fan favorites here?

AARON WIGGINS: I'm a fan favorite?

Q. You're one of them, yeah.

AARON WIGGINS: Geez, that's awesome. I don't know. It's been super fun. I've enjoyed the little interactions that I've had with fans. The support is unreal. The way that people come out last night at 3:00 a.m., just to kind of show love, and after our last road game they were out there.

Their love is felt. When they fill the stands and -- I used to call it loud city. Still call it loud city. When they're in there and they're bringing energy, they're a huge part of both our success this season and just the little games. Every little game that may not seem to be going our way, they make a big difference.

I think not only myself, but I think the entire team really appreciates their love and their energy day in and day out.

Q. Tre floated a theory that Drake is sending Shai some of the lyrics that he has --

AARON WIGGINS: He has to be. He has to be. They're both from Toronto. Come on, dude. Shai's captions are like -- it doesn't make sense.

Q. Shai is not bringing that kind of creativity --

AARON WIGGINS: Come on, dude. On the court he's super creative. He can have it. But like -- like he's half a model. Like he does all the like -- come on, dude. You can't be that well-rounded. It doesn't make sense.

Q. Have you guys given him a hard time about that?

AARON WIGGINS: Nobody has given him a hard time. Guys kind of joke about it. I told him I was going to ask him for a caption one day, but his captions, it doesn't fit me. I can't do it. I need simple stuff. Shai is Shai. Different human being.

Q. Which of his captions was your favorite?

AARON WIGGINS: Probably the one in D.C. After he hit that game winner, Shai for president. That's how I felt after that game. I forget what it was specifically, but that one was funny.

Q. Mahemi Carter?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, super tough.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

AARON WIGGINS: Or him and Timothee Chalamet. Josh Giddey. You guys are funny.

Q. What are your thoughts on playing with J-Dub this year, not only on the court but off the court what's it been like?

AARON WIGGINS: Talking about personality, he's got a personality of his own. He's a good dude. Very funny. On the court it speaks for itself. He's super talented, hard to stop. To have the rookie year he had speaks volumes. Him and Josh Giddey had incredible rookie years. It's been fun. He's been a big part of just the youth within our team and like the different personalities and characteristics that contribute to why the environment is so fun to be a part of. Both him and J-Will together as a pair, I think immediately like when they first stepped foot in here after

they got drafted. I mean, I remember this Spiderman meme where they had the same name.

It was an immediate effect where they were going to bring a fun way about themselves to the group, so it's been awesome being able to play with him.

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