

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Chet Holmgren

Press Conference



Q. Obviously not being able to play this season, but being able to be inside the group, inside the team, what was it like?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, obviously it looked a lot different than what was expected. But I just tried to work with what I was given and make sure that I was staying within the team, and my focus was on the team and trying to help them succeed.

Q. What did you learn the most -- you weren't playing, but what did you learn the most about the NBA and what you need to know going forward?

CHET HOLMGREN: I don't think I could sum it up to just one thing. There's a lot I learned. I was able to watch -- I had like a front-row seat to the class of getting buckets every night, watching Shai go out there, and all the other dudes, too, and other teams, as well.

It was great for me to be able to watch how other teams play different styles, different personnel, and really be able to kind of pick up as much as I can from that and kind of take down all the knowledge so I can use it going forward.

Q. Where are you at physically now, and how much are you able to do on the court?

CHET HOLMGREN: I'm pretty much past the rehab part of this journey, I guess you could say, and now I'm progressing more into the 5-on-5 stuff and kind of taking away any restrictions that I have to this point.

Q. Do you feel close to where you were pre-injury?

CHET HOLMGREN: In terms of?

Q. Just physically, athletically? Feel like you could play like you did before you got hurt?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, I feel great. I've had a great team around me. Helping me get back to a great point, and there's been a great plan in place, and I feel like I

followed that to a tee. It's got me in a great spot.

Q. In terms of being on the floor, what did you miss most about being out?

CHET HOLMGREN: What did I miss most about being --

Q. Out of the --

CHET HOLMGREN: Like not playing?

Q. Yeah.

CHET HOLMGREN: There's a lot of things. Obviously, like you said, the toughest part is just not playing. But I'm a pretty competitive guy, so not having kind of a competitive outlet that I'm accustomed to is definitely tough. Just trying to find other ways to kind of stay competitive in other areas while I'm not able to play basketball was kind of a tough thing.

Q. This may be too far out, but do you plan on playing in Summer League at all?

CHET HOLMGREN: You know, right now I'm focused on following the plan that we have in place, and when that time comes, that's part of the plan, I'll follow the plan like I have up to this point.

But right now I'm focused on the plan that I have here in the near future, and we'll figure that out as we go.

Q. You didn't get to play for him, but what's your thoughts on Mark this season?

CHET HOLMGREN: Coach of the Year, right?

Q. Finalist, yeah.

CHET HOLMGREN: I think he should be Coach of the Year. Yeah, I think that's all I've got to say. I think he should be Coach of the Year.

Q. What was it like getting to watch your fellow rookies go out there and do their thing?

CHET HOLMGREN: It was great. Being able to watch the strides that they've made over the course of the season



and all the work that they've put in, it was great to watch that pay off for them.

Not only for my fellow rookies but all my teammates. Everybody worked hard this year and made huge improvements, and it kind of paid off in the win column for us as well as just our ability as individuals and as a team. We made great strides together.

Q. Does the success of the team make you even more anxious to get out there with them knowing that you can contribute to a pretty high-level team already?

CHET HOLMGREN: I feel like that doesn't change it too much. I just feel like pretty anxious to get out there and obviously play with my teammates and do whatever I can to help them win.

Obviously it's great that this group of guys was able to exceed kind of expectations going into the year and really put together a great season, but I don't think it changes how anxious I am to get out there and play with these guys.

Q. Speaking to your eagerness of trying to get back out there, you created quite a stir with the 3-7 post. Can you explain that to us?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, that's going back to what he said, a guy that's anxious to say. We all know I love to play basketball, and that's just me thinking forward to when I'm able to play again.

Q. Speaking of Instagram captions, there's been some discussions on if Shai comes up with his Instagram captions or if Drake does or if an outside force does. What's your thoughts on that?

CHET HOLMGREN: He does do them on his own. He kind of like -- sometimes he'll just like be around the team and kind of joke around and then come up with one, and sometimes he'll just come up with one completely on his own. But yeah, maybe when he's retired he'll be like a poet or something.

Q. Do you have a favorite one this season?

CHET HOLMGREN: I don't remember them all word for word, but he's had a few good ones, so it's probably hard to pick one.

Q. What did you learn about the Thunder through this year? You kind of got to be inside the walls. What did you learn about just the team, the organization?

CHET HOLMGREN: I knew coming in that this was a great organization with great people and it was really well run, but that was kind of just reaffirmed after going through this whole season, not only the way they took care of me and helped me, but the way they handle everybody who comes through the building and the way they do business. It's all around just no issues, and they do it the right way.

Q. As you're watching the team, are there specific things that you're watching, like oh, I can help in this area, or I can really fill this gap that's kind of being left by the team on the court?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, yeah, that's part of analyzing the game as I'm watching. Just trying to understand, like I said before, how other teams are playing, how we're playing, and kind of visualizing and thinking about how I could be in there in certain situations and how I would play that situation or affect that situation. That's definitely a big part of it.

Q. Besides mentally, what do you think that you improved on? Is there anything, like any aspects on the court that you feel like you were able to improve on over the course of this year?

CHET HOLMGREN: Oh, yeah, yeah. Obviously, like you said, mentally watching a lot of game. You're able to pick up on a lot of things. But I never really had the time to just kind of rework my shot and really have the time and the focus to put into it.

I've taken pride in my ability to shoot the basketball, and I feel like I've done it pretty well up to this point in my career, but I'm kind of on the journey of trying to be an elite shooter, so I was able to really put in a lot of work with my shot and make it even more effective.

Q. Coming off this injury, how do you find a balance between ramping up and staying safe throughout this injury process? Obviously you're not going to bubble wrap yourself over the summer, but at the same time you can't be out there reckless and doing whatever.

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, that comes down to a conversation between not only myself, but also the team of people here from the coaches to the medical staff and putting together a good plan of what's going to be effective and what's going to be smart.

That's going to be a conversation that we'll have and we'll figure out what's best.

Q. Where do you plan to spend most of this off-season? Are you going to stay here and work and

follow that plan or --

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, I'll be working out here. I'll probably also be working out in LA, as well.

Q. Your teammates are all excited about you joining the team next season. What do you think you can bring to the team next season that will change the dynamics of the team based on what you saw this season?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, that's something that's hard to go into detail on six months out from our first game. That's something that's going to be evolving throughout the season as we play more games and figure things out.

Things are going to change game to game based on personnel on the other team and game plan how they play, how we play. That's going to be something that we kind of figure out as we go.

Q. You may not have been able to be on the floor but you got to spend a lot of time with your teammates on and off the floor. What's that camaraderie like with this group and how much did that help you in your journey and your recovery?

CHET HOLMGREN: It was definitely helpful being around a group of guys that's like the group of guys we have. We're obviously a very young team, so it almost feels more like a college team sometimes than like a team of grown men, which we all are.

I have two teammates now with a kid for the first time in my life, which is pretty crazy. But being around a group of young guys, it's always jokes, it's always laughing. Definitely picks up the mood wherever you're at, and it's a lot of fun.

Q. They said that you were bad at cards; do you have a response to that?

CHET HOLMGREN: I'm bad at cards.

Q. You haven't gotten to play yet but you have gotten to be in this community and see this fan base. What's it been like living here and getting to know Oklahoma City?

CHET HOLMGREN: It's great. It's great. I had never been here before showing up the day after the draft. But since being here, it's been a great experience. Southern hospitality is definitely a real thing here. Everybody I've run into has been nothing but nice, and it's a great community around here and I'm glad to be a part of it.

Q. Do you have any favorite restaurants?

CHET HOLMGREN: I don't know if I should give out the free advertisement here, but I've got a few. There's a few good places that are some go-tos.

Q. What's your favorite type of food I should ask?

CHET HOLMGREN: That's probably a tougher question, honestly. I'm a pretty exploratory eater. Wide palate. I kind of eat whatever really.

Q. I'm not really a silver lining type of guy, but I do believe that there's positives in every negative. As far as your injury goes, what's a positive that's come out of all of this?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, I mean, when I got hurt, I could have either let this be a blessing or a curse. Kind of from day one I decided it's in my best interest to turn it into a blessing. Kind of just woke up every day with the same goal in mind, and like I said before, tried to execute the plan to a tee.

I feel like because of that I've been able to get really good quality work in and really follow that plan on the court, in the weight room, with my nutrition, with film, with working with the coaches. I feel like I've been able to work on a lot.

Q. I asked you earlier, I feel like it's hard for the average person to block out outside noise. You being a top draft pick, a lot of people talking about you when you went down, that all amplified. How hard is it for you or was it for you to block out that noise, and what kind of is your coping mechanism there?

CHET HOLMGREN: I just put my phone in my pocket and kind of just -- if there's something that's not going to be productive to what I'm trying to accomplish, I try not to pay attention to it.

I've got 24 hours in the day, and I don't see why it would be effective for me to put time into worrying about, one, what I can't control, and two, people who I probably won't ever even meet in real life.

Just try to focus on what I can do to be a better me at the end of each day.

Q. Were there any specific teammates that kind of helped you throughout the season?

CHET HOLMGREN: It's kind of been a collective effort. All the guys have been great to me. Mike is not here, but

early on, I was working out with him last summer back in Minnesota and he was helpful even before I got hurt with just kind of teaching me the ropes and just kind of telling me what to expect.

Same thing with K-Rich and Rio and all these other vets like Shai -- he's 24 but he's a vet to us. All the other guys, too, all the way down to my rookie class, as well. Everybody has been helpful. They've really helped me in kind of any way they could.

Q. Where is your confidence level in this team moving forward?

CHET HOLMGREN: I mean, I have extreme confidence in this team because of the way things are run around here, and two, the quality of the characters that we have in this building, not only on our roster but on the coaching staff all the way to our analytical department.

If you're a bad person, you don't really end up in this building. Things are done the right way, and I believe that pays off in the end.

Q. You said in preseason that you talked to Joel Embiid and Blake Griffin to learn how to cope with losing your first rookie season. Have you talked with them any more or any other players who have been through this to learn how to handle this?

CHET HOLMGREN: Not recently, no.

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