

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

Saturday, April 15, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Jaylin Williams

Press Conference



Q. What was it like getting to compete in these last two games for you, being a starter in these two play-in games after kind of a progressive season where you kind of like started in the G-League some and then kind of progressed to being a starter?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, it was awesome. Those are the games you want to play in as a basketball player. It was fun games. We competed. Big crowds, got loud in there, and those were fun games to play in and it was awesome.

Q. Just wrapping up your rookie season, have you been able to reflect on what this year has been like for you?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Honestly, it went by quick. Like I talked to Dub and some other guys and I told them it went by fast compared to college for me. It was a fun year, it was eventful, and I felt like I learned a lot.

Q. What are some of the ways you feel like you've been able to grow the most this season?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Really just getting to know guys. The team is very connected, and when we're on the plane or when we're back here, we all go to somebody's house with our dogs or do something like that. We're connected as a team, and I feel like I grew at that level just being close with my teammates.

Q. You're going into your first ever NBA off-season. What's the focus? What advice have you gotten on how to attack that?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I'm just ready to work. I want to continue to get better, regardless of what that is, work on my body, work on everything.

Q. What are some things you want to work on or improve on in the off-season?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Shooting is something I want to

continue to work on. My body, that's another thing. I feel like I can get stronger. Also toning up. Those were really the main two things.

Q. Full year under Mark now. Everybody says he's a player's coach. Do you agree with that, and what are your overall thoughts on being coached by him?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, by far. Mark is a great coach, he's a player's coach from the beginning. On my draft day I didn't know who he was and he was just sitting on the side and I was just being nice saying hello to everybody, and we had a conversation and he ended up being the head coach.

Yeah, he's a player's coach and he's a great guy, and he's always been great to me.

Q. What were your thoughts when the Thunder signed Isaiah Joe?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: It was awesome. Actually I had my high school teammates that were also teammates with Zai at my house with me down here, and I got it on my phone. I was like hey, Zai just signed with the Thunder, and they were like, no. I was like, yeah. Look.

It was awesome being able to share the court with him and reflecting back on high school. It's bigger than basketball a lot of times. We want to give kids back where we're from the feeling that they can make it, too, and us being on the team together, us being able to go back and have a camp there, those are things we want to do.

Q. Are you pushing for Anthony Black to be drafted by the Thunder?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Man, I don't know. I want all Arkansas guys to succeed, but wherever he goes, he's going to succeed.

Q. You're a second-round pick last summer. Wildest dreams what were you hoping for your rookie season? Did you imagine starting 50 games, whatever you started? Did you ever imagine starting this many on a good team?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: My wildest dream was just playing in

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

the NBA. I was grateful for whatever happened this year and all the learning curves I went through. Starting here was incredible, playing with those guys, playing with one of the best players in the NBA. It's incredible playing every night.

Q. Kenrich said that you were the best rookie singer. Is that a hidden talent you have?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: No. I don't do singing. I don't know, I guess it's just my voice. But no, I don't do singing.

Q. Growing up I'd assume you were the tallest kid around high school, college. Was it ever weird to hear that people consider you were an undersized center?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, honestly it is. I've always been the tallest, like you said, and now it's kind of -- I feel like I play big. I try to use my strength. But it's definitely weird not being the tallest on the court.

Q. How tough was that? Valanciunas is a monster and Gobert is 7'3". How tough of a job is that to try to match up with guys that big?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Every night is tough. Those physical games, those are games I love. I love going down there and having to fight the post or box out. Those are the fun games for me, so I love it.

Q. What was it like playing for Kam Woods in his first year as a head coach, and how did playing for the Blue prepare you for this week?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: It was fun. Actually my pre-draft workout Kam was the one that was telling me how to do things. He was telling me how to do defensive stuff before I even got here.

Then going to the Blue he was the head coach and it was just fun. Me and him were going back and forth at each other. Sometimes I would get him and he would be like, all right, got five push-ups for you. So it was fun playing for him, and it was a fun learning curve in the Blue.

Q. Isaiah compared this a lot to Arkansas, living here. What's it been like for you living in this community for almost a year?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's the exact same. The fans are incredible. It's one big family. My neighbors, they all love me. I'm like the grandchild of my neighborhood. They all treat me great, and yeah, it's incredible here.

Q. You led the league in charges by quite a bit, and

you played the least amount of games. Kevin Love played 62 games and had 33; you had 43. Did you anticipate that being such a huge part of your game once you got here?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I mean, I've kind of just done it, and I wasn't going to just change up my game because somebody said I couldn't do it. I just went out there and played my game and it happened to work for me.

Q. I've got to ask you, where did you get your smile?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I mean, my dad --

Q. Have you always smiled like this?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, I've always been a smiler. That's usually my nickname is Smilie. I'm always smiling, just having fun.

Q. Does your mom or dad have a smile like that?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: They both smile, yeah.

Q. Do you get tired of the Jalen Williams/Jaylin Williams jokes?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: No. Sometimes it's funny. It's fun. Me and Dub always joke about it and it's fun being able to be the only one that can call him Jalen and he knows who's talking.

Q. Auburn has got a Jaylin Williams who's a pretty good prospect --

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yep. Played against him.

Q. Thumbs up or down on the Thunder taking him in the draft?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I got no comment on that, but I want all Jalen/Jaylin Williamses to succeed. (Laughter.)

Q. What are some non-basketball related things that you're looking forward to doing in the off-season?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I'm going fishing tomorrow. As soon as I get home I'm going fishing with my cousins and I can't wait for that, but I can't wait to see my family and just have some time with them.

Q. Big fisherman?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I wouldn't say crazy big, but it's relaxing and I haven't got to since I've been here. I used to



go all the time back in Arkansas, but I'm excited to go tomorrow.

Q. Where are you going, lake or river?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: A pond. One of my friends' grandparents' ponds, something like that.

Q. As late as you guys got in last night, showing up at 3:00, 4:00 a.m., the fans showing up to support you guys, did you expect that, and how much does it mean to have that support?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Yeah, we kind of talked about it on the plane that we were expecting them to be there just because we knew what type of fans we have, and seeing them there, the support they gave us and banging on the window and we were sitting there waiting on our bags and doing heart signs, it's incredible.

It shows you how much they care about us, and we want to do it just as much for them.

Q. Does getting so close add fuel to the fire for next year to get to the post season?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: We just want to continue to get better, regardless of what it is. Getting a taste of the Playoffs and that environment, of course everybody loves those type of games, so we just want to continue to get better.

Q. Leading the league in charges, I'm sure you have a reputation around the league for stuff. Do you ever hear guys talking to you after you draw a charge like they can't believe they fell for it?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Not in the league. Honestly nobody has said anything to me about it. Actually my teammates do. Sometimes they say stuff to me about it, but nobody on the other teams.

Q. What do they say?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: Wiggs will tell me that I'm weird for taking charges sometimes. He'll tell me that. But we'll joke around. Me and K-Rich, of course we have that competition going trying to get the most charges.

Zai, he takes charges, everybody. It's just a fun thing. And I joke around with Shai all the time that he's the worst charge taker I've ever seen and he tries to take charges, and it's just fun talking to those guys.

Q. Speaking of Shai, Tre has this theory that he does not come up with his Instagram captions, that it's

actually Drake. The players are split on it, that Shai does it or a ghostwriter does it. Where do you fall on that?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I'm going to say Shai does it, and I'm going to need him to get in the studio and make a song.

Q. Do you anticipate playing with Chet, playing next to him next year as a big?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I'm ready for whatever. Chet is a great competitor. We played against each other in college and then we played against each other when we first got here, and we always talk about the college game, smack talking to each other.

I know what a competitor he is, and I'm ready to share the court with him.

Q. Do you anticipate playing in the Summer League at all?

JAYLIN WILLIAMS: I'm not sure.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports