

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Lu Dort

Press Conference



Q. Shai was just talking about being in competitive situations over the summer that the World Cup gave you. What do you think you got out of it that maybe you can bring back with you?

LU DORT: I want to say the competitiveness was really high because it was you lose a game and you're out. I feel like every game was like a playoff approach.

One thing I could take back from that is I approached every season game like that's at the game, like if you lose this game, you might be out, but at the same time this is a learning experience, and it was just a competitive side that you have just starting the game.

That was a big one, and just adjust to a different team and a different style of play every game, that was a big thing playing in the World Cup.

Q. You were here four years ago when every game mattered, went to the Playoffs, you played in a Game 7. Then you went through two seasons where pretty quickly games started not mattering in terms of standings and those things. You got back in that business last year. How tough were those two middle years playing when the Playoffs became out of reach pretty quickly and you knew were sort of playing for the future, the difference in attitude and competition, all those things?

LU DORT: I mean, it was definitely tough just seeing the result, playing in those play-in games that you don't win. It's not a nice feeling.

But I know my competitive side, and I felt like going into all those games, I always approach that game to try to win and do everything I could to help my team win the game.

But it was definitely two tough years, but at the same time, it spurred a process, and now we can kind of see the result from how good we got and how good we're trying to get.

Now those years are behind, past, so I've just got to keep

looking forward, and I'm looking forward for this season.

Q. What's your assessment of Cason Wallace defensively?

LU DORT: I mean, he's a pretty good defender. I watched some clips and seen him play in Summer League, so he's a strong, tough guard, and he's not easy to go by. It's going to be nice to share the floor with him and knowing and being comfortable to switch and seeing him go to work and stopping guys.

Q. We've seen Shai become a high-level scorer, and we've seen big moments from him from time to time. What was it like being on that team with him this summer and watching him be that guy game after game after game in pressure situations?

LU DORT: I was one of the only ones that was not impressed because I seen it for the past couple years. I mean, that Shai grew into that type of player just from his work ethic and how he approaches the game and how he's really comfortable in those type of situations, that's how we can trust him to give him the ball and make a play for the team.

It was great that he got to do that on the world stage, like the whole world could see that, and he's getting better every year, and I'm just happy to be on his team to see that.

Q. What's your favorite offensive matchup when you're playing defense going against? Who's your favorite player to go against and why?

LU DORT: Favorite player to go against? I don't think I have a favorite player to go against. There's a lot of tough match-ups, and in every game it's a new one, a hard one and a different one.

I approach it the same way, compete, and try to make it tough. I don't have any favorite ones.

Q. Lu, I asked Shai about incorporating more threes into his game, and he basically said he's going to continue to take what the defense gives him. Given the defensive player you are, if you're guarding him, would you be happy if he settles for a three, or if he

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could make them at a pretty good clip, does that just make him harder to guard?

LU DORT: Man, I don't know. I've seen some guys guard him and giving him three -- he was making them shots. When he says that he's just reading the defense, he's doing that, whatever he feels like the defense is doing, he's going to make the right way. When he does that, it's going in.

It's tough. Like defender doesn't know what to do. He's going to try to make him drive, don't let him get to his middie because it's over. If you want to make him shoot threes, he's going to start making them.

I really don't have an answer for you. I wish I had one, but I don't here.

Q. You were just talking about Cason, him coming in and being a defensive-minded guard, potentially being another point of attack defender for you guys. Now you guys adding Chet, a really good rim protector, what does that mean for your defensive identity?

LU DORT: It means a lot, especially for me being so aggressive for the ball, it happens sometimes that I get beat. It'll be great to trust a good rim protector behind me that's going to go and make plays. I know Chet, he's not shying away around the rim, so that will be a great adding for our defense.

But at the same time, we have a lot of guys that can guard and make good plays, but Chet protecting the rim is going to be huge for us.

Q. I think it's natural these questions about your defense. Is there anything offensively that you've worked on in the off-season that you'd like to do differently or change?

LU DORT: My main thing was just to be more efficient. I got in a little slump efficiency wise and all that around the rim, but really reading what the defense gives me, honestly, and not be in a rush, taking my time. We have a lot of guys on our team that can make plays, so I've just got to really be in the right spots and space out and be ready to make the right play.

Q. What do you think about playing a game in Montreal, and are you in charge of the ticket distribution?

LU DORT: Well, it's going to be great. I haven't played in Montreal in a long time, so it's going to be fun for friends and family to come see me that never got a chance to

travel to the States to see me play in the NBA. Now I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be a great experience. I'm happy that the team and organization gets a chance to go to Montreal and experience this beautiful city, and on the ticket side, I'm in charge of my family and friends, definitely. It's not cheap.

Q. Does this seem to feel any different for you going into it because you guys were in the play-in and people are talking about expectations for the first time in a long time? Any difference in approaching this season?

LU DORT: I don't think it'll be any different. I feel like we'll try to approach it the same way we did last year. Obviously we want some improvements. We always go into the off-season to get better.

But at the end of the day, it's just us, and it's through the team. Expectations can't win games for us. We've still got to do it and do it as a team, so it's going to be a long season. We're going to have some ups and downs. But at the same time, we've got to stay together and then to do everything we can do to get the most that we can get.

Q. You and Shai are two of the only guys on the team that remember playing in a Game 7. How much are you looking forward to getting fans back in the arena with a home-court advantage like that?

LU DORT: I'm looking forward to it. Just looking back at my first year when I was a two-way and everything was new to me, having that environment of the fans packing the arena and being so loud, that just brings so much momentum and energy for a team. I love our fans, and I feel like we'll do everything to get the arena packed, so it's definitely great to play in an environment like that. Hopefully it happens.

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