

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Shai Gilgeous Alexander

Press Conference



Q. Just wanted to ask, just about your summer, your success helping Canada finish third in the World Cup, what it meant to you, that guy in that situation, and what can you carry from that into what you're doing now?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Yeah, it was fun, first and foremost, just playing basketball with the group of guys I grew up with. Guys that have kind of done the same journey as me, being where I'm from and making it to the NBA was super fun; and then obviously accomplishing history is what we set out to do and we accomplished it, so that makes it a little bit better in the end.

As far as carrying over, just myself, trying to be the best me in every situation I'm put in. That's what I tried to do there as well as here.

Q. You talk at this time every year about kind of what you worked on the previous summer and kind of what parts of your game you fine tuned. What were some of those this summer?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: I really just try to get better at everything. Try to be a better basketball player on both ends of the floor. Try to make better decisions on both ends of the floor, really just become an overall better basketball player.

Q. Your three-point shot last year, sort of going away from that more, you were so efficient at the rim that it didn't seem like you needed to do that but going into this year, how are you sort of viewing that? Do you want to morning more threes into your game this season?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: It will always come down to taking what the defense gives me, and put their defense on their heels, I think that's how I try to attack, what it comes down to, every offensive possession is productive pressure on the defense. If that's what it calls for, that's what it calls for. I try not to think too much about it, just play my game and play comfortable, and like I said, take

what they give me.

Q. What are your first impressions of Cason Wallace, getting to know him a little bit and having another Kentucky guard in here?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Really good basketball player. Knows the game both ends of the floor. Specializes defensively, obviously, and he's a guy that will be ready to play right away.

Q. What does Chet being in the lineup mean for the group but also your game personally?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: We're excited to have Chet back. He's a big time competitor. At the end of the day, I think he just wants to win, when you add a guy like that to a group of players that want to win as well, most of the time, it goes well.

And then for myself personally, just be one of the guys out there -- Chet brings so many things to the game, block shots, he rebounds, he's versatile, especially in today's NBA, helps out a lot not only myself but the rest of the team.

Q. Micic is joining you guys, how do you know about him before he decided to come over? What did you learn about him after you heard he was joining the team, and what have you learned about him since he's gotten around you guys?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Before, I didn't know anything about him. But playing with him, I've gotten to know he's a really good basketball player and knows how to play really smart. He's obviously played at a really high level and some of the hardest basketball in the world. To play at that level and succeed like that, you've got to be pretty talented and he for sure is.

Q. Can you talk about how fun it was to compete in the World Cup? Do you feel good coming off it? Some guys, it cuts into the off-season a little bit, you play so much basketball. But on the flip side of that, what did you gain from being competitive over the summer?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Yeah, I think it will help a lot, conditioning-wise and like you said, playing in games

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that matter. I guess that's be kind of what preseason is for, and for me to play in games that are high pressure, high situations, and it's almost like study before the test. That's kind of how I saw it.

It's something that -- one of the reasons why I wanted to play Canada Basketball in the summer because it gives you a little bit more run and a little bit more bump before the preseason. In the summer I've always tried to find pickup games to do so, but there's nothing better than a real game, real rush, real opponents. Yes, it feels like it's helpful and we'll see if it will be very helpful.

Q. Last year, making it to the playoffs, do you walk into the season with benchmarks in mind, I like this statistically and I want to work on this statistically and do you have benchmarks for the team, or do you just let it play itself out?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Throughout my career, like I've gone into season with benchmarks personally and as teams and I've found it's the most success and the most fun when you take it day-by-day. I think last year especially what I tried to do and what we tried to do as a group sever day, tried to come in, get better as ourselves and as a unit and attack every game like the same way, and then we'll see where we lay.

As long as we keep getting better individually and as a group, we'll get to where we want to be eventually, but it's about being patient and staying on course.

Q. There are obviously a lot of discussions about a new arena potentially down the road. I know what you see at visiting players is different than what you see as a home player but is there anything about Paycom Center, like other place, you notice that could be better or this could stand to be improved, anything like that?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Not really for me. Honestly as long as the ball gets tossed up and our five versus our five, I'll be all right. So, yeah, I have no comments on that.

Q. What's your favorite arena to play in?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Paycom Center.

Q. How about on the road?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: I guess I'd say Toronto. But it's more about the fans than the actual arena.

Q. You've experienced a lot of change in your NBA career, but since you've come to the Thunder, kind of

one of the constants is Lug Dort, your teammate, playing with him here and also Team Canada, can you talk about what he means to you and just having something consistent here?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: Yeah, me and Luke had a little bit of history before pro level. Played against each other and played with each other growing up. So we knew each other before, had a relationship. And then to go through the journey, our dreams together, has been even more special. He's obviously one of my better friends. Yeah, he just makes everything easier; a guy to lean on; a guy you go through the fire with, and obviously he's really good with the fire, so yeah, he makes everything easier.

Q. Obviously you put a big emphasis on fashion, so what's the opening night fit going to look like?

SHAI GILGEOUS ALEXANDER: I have no clue yet. But physical be fire, I promise you.

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