

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Aleksej Pokusevski

Press Conference



Q. How is the ankle and how are you feeling health-wise?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: Good, pretty good. I'm in the weight room, doing more things than I did before a week. It's getting pretty quick, better. So I feel pretty good.

Q. You're still so young but in your fourth NBA season now. How frustrating have some of these injuries been that it's kind of stalled your progress from time to time?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: I mean, I play basketball so I'm going to get injured at some point, but I'm trying to protect myself as best I can, just doing everything that I can in the weight room before I get out on the court. Some unfortunate things happen.

But it could be worse; I'm happy that I didn't have any surgeries or something like that, so I'll be back pretty fast.

Q. What can you tell us about Vasilije Micic, and what did you know about him before you came here?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: I didn't know him personally, but I know how good of a player he is. He had two back-to-back seasons back in Euroleague. I'm happy to have him here. Just having someone that I can speak in my native language. I think he's going to help us as a player, too.

Q. Are you going to show him around Oklahoma City, the spots --

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: I'll try to, but there's not a lot of things to show him around. But I just told him the people here are great in the community.

Q. How big of a deal is Micic in Serbia? Is he a national hero?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: He's not a national hero, but he's one of the best players we have and probably we're

going to have in history because of what he did in the Euroleague, two championships in an MVP in his final season, and I think with the national team he also had some good games and tournaments. He's still 29, 30, but he has plenty of time in front of him to take some more space and build that history.

Q. 34 games last year, not being in training camp, how much does this set back your development going forward?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: Not really because it's a long season, and I had some good few months during the summer.

I think, like I said, injuries happen. Unfortunately this happened before training camp. I can't control that really.

But I feel pretty comfortable in myself that I got better and I'm going to keep getting better. During the season there's a lot of -- there's plenty of space for me as a player, for everybody else to get better and to play the game. I'm 21, my fourth season. I have pretty much a lot of time in front of me as a player to grow.

Q. You were playing pretty good before you got hurt the first time. From just a mental standpoint, does that bug you? I'm sure it does.

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: I mean, I was frustrated because I had some good games and it happened at a bad time, but I was thinking like that's when you can see your character, like how strong you are, and I was trying just to get back mentally first and then take care of myself.

But I think once I get out on the court, I'm going to try to play my best and show myself that I can play the same way I used to play and better.

Q. What do you see as your biggest gains? Is it overall play making, your skill set, dribbling, mental aspects of the game?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: I think everything is growing together, getting better, shooting, decisions are better. I think the game is slowing down.

Physically I see the biggest improvement, like my legs, my



lower body is getting stronger, and I can do some of the things that I couldn't be able to do a year ago. I think I'm going to keep improving there.

Q. It's been a while since there's been two seven-footers at the same time. Fans are excited about Chet and Poku taking the floor. Can you give us a preview of some of your workouts?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: Yeah, we work out -- we played some 5-on-5 together with the same lineup. It looks good. I hope it's going to look good on the court when we play a game. He's a great player. He's going to get better. Obviously he's young. I think he's going to bring some good things to the team. I can't wait to play with him on the court.

Q. What do you miss the most about your home country?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: Food.

Q. What are the challenges that you have here, living here?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: Food, food, food. My mom is here right now. She's cooking some good stuff for me. But when she leaves, my girlfriend, she's trying to, also. Food is something that I miss because I'm attached like emotionally to the food from home.

Q. Did you watch the World Cup?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: Yeah, for sure. I'm really happy that they played the way they played. I couldn't be there. I was just trying to get back from injury. I hope next year for the Olympics I'll be ready.

Q. What's your mom's specialty?

ALEKSEJ POKUSEVSKI: I can't really translate it. There's a lot of -- you've got to try it out. Some kind of cakes. I may bring to you sometime after a game if you want to. But I think you're going to like it if you try it.

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