

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

Monday, October 2, 2023

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Chet Holmgren

Press Conference



Q. Mark was in here and he said the first thing he needed to have this year was gratitude to be able to play after not playing. How do you feel going into a season and getting ready to play again?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, I feel great. I think gratitude is a great way to describe it. You know, thankful for this. I don't want to overlook anything or take anything for granted. I wouldn't have done that even if the injury did not happen. Been a long time away and now I'm here. Very excited.

Q. The other day, Sam said that your mindset is as unique as your game. What do you think he sort of meant by that and just maybe how do you think the game and how do you approach the tough time of going through injury rehab?

CHET HOLMGREN: He could be alluding to a couple things. Maybe a combination of things from just the way maybe I process the game, the way I think about the game. And also, like he said, gratitude, how much I appreciate the game and how much it means to me. I think he's alluded to a combination of those things.

Q. What were your conversations with him like, has he probably tried to encourage and you everything like that and talking through things last season?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, a lot of it was learning points for me. He's seen it all from the ups to the downs. He's been around great players. He knows what it takes so I was just trying to key in on what he was saying and take notes from it and try to apply it to what I was doing every day.

Q. What was the summer like for you? Being selected to Team USA, what was that process like and what have you been doing to ramp up for the season and training camp?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, just trying to take advantage of every opportunity to get better. I feel like that's always

what I try to do day-in and day-out from not only this summer but last summer as well. Because of what happened, I didn't want to shy away from opportunities to play against good players and still play even when it's not 82 regular season games. Just there has to be an understanding and an awareness of the situation, time and place and everything.

I feel like I did a really good job this summer of really calculating where I was playing and the situations and the settings, but still going out and really chasing the competition and opportunity to get better.

Q. You got some things done that helped you, was anything beneficial that you wouldn't have experienced if you had gotten to play?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah. From the moment I got hurt, I had an understanding that I could either let this one bad thing spiral into many bad things and let it accumulate to one big, bad situation. But I feel like I did a really good job of taking a bad situation and a bad moment and really making the most out of it. My whole attention and intention, I mean, throughout the last season, the last year was to really turn what could be a curse into a blessing and I feel like I did a really good job of that, really focusing in on game days of on what the routine was, on how other teams played, how other people played, how other teams played, how our guys played being in the halftime looms, pregame locker rooms film sessions, whatever it might be. Just trying to lock it in whenever I can so I can use it for moments like this.

Q. When you switch on to a guard, what are your tactics to defend a smaller, quicker player?

CHET HOLMGREN: There's a lot of that that depends on who you're playing, what other players are on the court, on our team as well as the other team. You know, really having an understanding of what that player wants to do and trying to take that away. We play in the NBA, and you know, every night, it's more great players that you're playing against. You know, great players make plays. If there was somebody who could get a stop on every single possession, they would be worth more than a match, so that's not possible. It's really about not letting dudes get to their bread and butter what they want to do, and kind of steering them toward what you want them to take. You



know, try and take away everything but at the end of the day, it's about stacking up plays throughout the course of a game to help your team win. You know, the tougher you make it on the opponent, the more chance you have to win, so it's having that understanding of not trying to win the game on one play and really thinking through things if that makes sense, as well as having some instinctual abilities, as well as athletic abilities that help but it's a combination of a lot of things.

Q. One of the things that was talked about was you wanting to add some strength over the last year or so. Did you gain weight? Looks like you put on some strength and if so, how did you go about doing that?

CHET HOLMGREN: Definitely not playing last year and having to be extremely focused on 82 games and the recovery that comes with that and the sleep that comes with that, etc., I was really able to key in on my body, not only rehab and getting healthy from my injury.

But also strengthening other areas of my body and I feel like I was able to do that really well through specific dieting and meal prep, meal plans and stuff, as well as being in the weight room and having a specific routine to help me with my weaknesses as well as strengthen my strengths. I feel like I did a good job of staying consistent with what and not waning, even on days I wasn't excited to go and move some lbs around but it definitely helps for sure.

Q. Seems like you spent a lot of time with Kevin Durant during this process. Have you guys talked at all about the organization and what to expect?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, a lot of our talks had to do with the game itself of basketball and how do we do this, how do we do that. A lot of questions being asked from me about the game because he's seen it all and done it all and knows what it takes. Just trying to learn the game from him, and I had some Thunder staff with me out there this summer and he knows a lot of people in the building. He's great. He's always spreading the love and it's all love coming from him. Somebody might tell me to tell him what's up whenever I see him, and he'll say the same back. It's all love. Kevin is a great dude and it was great being able to work with him and get better.

Q. Do you have any preference of a natural position that you prefer to be in?

CHET HOLMGREN: Whatever the game entails that night. We're going to play different teams who run different schemes with different personnel. What's going to be asked of me from the coach and the team is going to be different each flight and fluid and change. I'm looking

forward to just try and execute and do whatever we can to win the game.

Q. Watching you in Vegas, I know you can play one through five offensively, shoot from three, take the ball on the dribble. Is there any part of you at your height that likes to pin somebody down and beat them with footwork and fakes and steals and stuff like that?

CHET HOLMGREN: Depend on what my advantages are in that situation. Just trying to play my advantages. If somebody is slower than me, use my speed. If somebody is shorter than me, use my height. You know, if somebody is smaller than me and that opportunity arises, that's something I look to take advantage of but it's all about trying to make the game as easy as possible for yourself and the team as well.

You know, it's trying to stay away from those personal vendetta battles where you end up playing into the other guy's advantage. It all just depends on the situation.

Q. Looks like you were at some football games?

CHET HOLMGREN: It's great, you definitely feel that Oklahoma community when it comes to supporting the Thunder and I'm extremely grateful for our fans. I know OU and the rest of the sports are as well. It's my chance to be part of the community and support Oklahoma. I think it's great.

Q. Into this line of players, knowing what your role will be being in the back end of this defense, and also playing with two really good attack defenders, Cason and Lou, looking at your expectations for what you expect to bring defensively and some of the conversations that you've had with Coach and other players on the front court, what are some of those conversations like for and you what are your expectations and what do you expect to bring in and provide for this team that they didn't have before?

CHET HOLMGREN: Yeah, it's great. Coming into the season, there's always so many unknowns with roster changes and dudes working on so much in the off-season. There's so many unknowns. Those conversations are a way to kind of try and figure out those unknowns before we have to do it in real time. Those conversations with Coach and other players are always great. Helps build some chemistry and camaraderie with each other and start figuring each other's games out. It's great and figuring out how to play together has been great so far and it will only accelerate the season, so I'm excited.

Q. What are your expectations for yourself, things that



you looked forward to all this time having waited a year what do you expect for yourself?

CHET HOLMGREN: My expectations for myself, are to come in on day one ready to put the work in with extreme focus and determination, to figure out what it takes to help raise this team's floor and strive for the ceiling. You know, no championship's won on Game 1 or training camp. So we just have to take each game one at a time, figure out where we're at and try to put the pieces together to get to where we need to go and that's where it's going to start and we're going to continue that on throughout the season.

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