

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Jack White

Press Conference



Q. Being around Denver last season, anything you took away as it relates to building a championship team or doing the little things every day to win at the highest level?

JACK WHITE: Yeah, I think -- I've said it before in a couple of other stations, but I think the biggest thing that I realized probably straightaway, too, when I got to Denver was I guess the culture and the camaraderie that the team had.

Obviously it came from having really high-quality vets with Jeff and DJ and Ish and Reggie coming in, but like immediately when I came here and even just spending time with the team in Summer League in Vegas and in Utah, you definitely get a sense of that sort of culture and that camaraderie and relationships guys have with each other off the court.

And obviously it's a long year and 82 games and there's going to be ups and downs throughout, but I think if you have that to fall back on through the good and the bad and you're in a good spot, I think, again, that's probably a big reason why Miami found themselves in the Finals, being able to deal with the ups and downs in the Playoffs.

But you see it all the time, they have that connection off the court, and I think it goes a long way.

Q. Your countryman was in here a little while ago and gave us a scouting report, dirty work guy, does the little things that don't show up. How much of that is accurate in terms of your game and maybe a little bit about your relationship with Josh?

JACK WHITE: Yeah, I think it's pretty accurate. I take pride in of doing sort of the one percenters, playing hard all the time, trying to get boards, defending, talking, trying to spread the floor for my teammates, get out in transition.

I think the beauty of my game is I like to keep it simple. I don't need to do anything too crazy. I come in here and I'm trying to work out the system and how I can fit in with the

group. Obviously we've already got our fair share of superstars and guys that are really good with the ball, but I think for me coming in with my role it's thinking about how I can make their lives easier, both on and off the court, and how I can be a good teammate, how I can defend, how I can talk, how I can sort of plug the gaps with other facets of the game.

I'd say it's pretty accurate. I definitely take pride in playing hard and being tough and doing one percenters and getting on the floor or getting a loose ball and doing things like that. I think they contribute to winning at a high level, and whatever I can do to help my team win, I'm going to do.

Q. What's your mindset heading into this training camp? Obviously the Thunder has a full roster, 21 players. What made you gravitate towards signing here?

JACK WHITE: Yeah, I think there's a great opportunity for me here to contribute and play, first of all. I love the culture of the team, and it's something that I've experienced since being here and certainly gotten a taste of firsthand is how they go about things and the emphasis on how we want to play and the direction that we're headed into the future.

Also a big fan of the build of our group. Have a lot of young guys that are super talented and coming through, and obviously Chet coming back from injury is going to be part of that.

But regardless, just meeting the new guys, the rookies, obviously Davis and Vasa coming in, as well. I'm just a big fan of the direction and the potential this team has, and yet with that, just super excited to get to camp tomorrow and see it all on the floor.

Q. You spent a lot of time with Vasa at Summer League, being around him and around the team. What did you know about him from everything he's done in Europe and what have you kind of gotten to know him since you guys have been teammates together?

JACK WHITE: Yeah, funnily enough like I pretty much knew everything about him, what he'd done in Europe. I enjoy watching Euroleague, and seeing what he had done with FS and with the national team with Serbia, as well.



He's been performing at a very high level for a long time over there, both in Euroleague, domestically, and Eurobasket's major tournaments with FIBA.

I've always known his game. He's super talented, being able to play with him and see it on the court firsthand has been really cool, as well.

But yeah, obviously we're going to be teammates. We're sort of both stepping into a similar situation being new guys on a team. For me obviously he hasn't spent any time in the U.S., so just trying to make him feel comfortable, and if he had any questions about life over here, then he could hit me. I've been in that boat before.

But yeah, I feel like we have a good relationship. We've spent some time out together at the hospital during the week, and yeah, I think we're building a good relationship.

Q. What was the first contact you had with the Thunder, conversations with Sam to sort of end up here and have this as your next home?

JACK WHITE: Yeah, a lot of it obviously went through my agent. The conversations started -- I couldn't even give you an exact date, but started pretty shortly after all that sort of started going on. Was trying to sort of work out the situation with Denver and what they were putting forward and things like that.

But obviously I was confident with the year I had last year, both in the G-League, obviously playing significant minutes there, and then hopefully moving forward trying to prove that I can be a real contributor on an NBA court on a consistent basis.

I think the opportunity to do that here was really good, and being able to come into a young team and being a bit more of a leader and I guess having that experience of being a part of a championship-winning team and trying to bring those experiences to this group, trying to see if I could do that at a high level.

And yeah, just -- I think I was just excited for a new opportunity to step into something fresh, and again, I said it before, really just excited about the direction of this organization and team is headed.

Q. I think one of the most fascinating things about team sports is when you join a team, you'll see some guys who are kind of kindred spirits. When you look at this team, Kenrich Williams is a dirty work kind of guy. Aaron Wiggins is one of those kind of guys. J-Will is one of those kind of guys. Have you gravitated toward guys that play the game the way you do?

JACK WHITE: Yeah, for sure. I have great respect for those guys, and obviously I've seen it first hand, with J-Will and sort of the idea -- him taking charges is like a huge strength, and that's really something that's not talked about at a high level within the league, but that's something that he's embraced and he's great at.

Like again, stuff that brings real value to winning. I think guys that can make those plays like Wiggs and Kenrich and you see it throughout the year, guys that play that way for extra possessions go about the game the right way and they make the lives of the superstars so much easier.

I think if I can try and emulate what those guys have done I think we'll be in a good spot. But in saying that, I think they just work hand in hand with the skills that everyone else brings. I think there's a good balance between guys that can sort of do that and guys that are really good with the ball in their hand, really good at coming off pick-and-rolls with Josh and Shai and being able to create offense.

I think we have a really good balance there of guys that are willing to do the dirty work, guys that have sort of -- more sort of that skill and facilitation about themselves, and everyone else in between. I think there's a good balance there.

Q. How big of a deal is Josh back in Australia, and do you ever hear any White Stripes jokes?

JACK WHITE: Josh is definitely a big deal in Australia. I'm sure he probably told you about when he was on the cover of GQ, which I'm sure he would have been pretty happy about. No, he's a big deal in Australia. Kids love him, what he's done for the sport already, playing in the NBL and coming over here and representing Australia in such a good way.

Obviously I'm sure you guys saw what he just did in the World Cup, as well, for his first time was nothing short of amazing. But yeah, what he does and how he carries himself more importantly I think is so big-time for Australian basketball, and the beauty of it is he's just being himself.

White Stripes jokes, yeah, I'm not a huge Twitter guy but I'll look on Twitter and I'll just be tagged in music posts from obviously Jack White the musician and be like, yeah, Jack White is a top 10 guitarist of all time. I'm getting these tags and like, yeah. Hearing that for sure.

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