

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Aaron Wiggins

Press Conference



Q. Aaron, you've been dubbed by Thunder Nation that you literally have saved basketball. What things have you done this summer to continue saving basketball?

AARON WIGGINS: Put a lot of work in this summer, just to improve my game, so just looking forward to carrying on that motto. Just trying to take it one day at a time, saving more and more basketball every day.

Q. I want to talk to you about last season because every time you get on the floor you produce. Then when you get more minutes you score more. There might be a couple games where you don't get on the floor. What's it like from a player standpoint where you know, I succeed when I play, but I'm going to have to accept this role?

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, it's part of the game. In this league there's a lot of talented guys, and there's only so much that you can control as a player. So for me, I just try to make sure when I get the opportunity, I'm ready to go. Whether it's 30 minutes one night or five the next night, just try to contribute what I can and help put my team in the best situation in the moments that I'm in.

Q. This team has a lot of playmakers and you thrive as kind of a play finisher, cutting, moving off ball. What's it like playing on a team that has so many guys that can distribute?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, playing with guys especially like Giddey who can pass the ball really well makes the game so much easier for players like me who might play a little bit off ball and have to find ways to get involved.

So being able to cut and find open seams and having someone who's really good instinctively like Giddey who can pass the ball, and then every guard on our team is really well rounded and can do a little bit of everything.

With the amount of focus that Shai draws from defensive teams and stuff, just makes the game easy for myself and for the team, just kind of getting open lay-ups, open threes.

I think that contributes to a team's efficiency and success.

Q. Aaron, what did the run to the play-in experience do for you guys in the off-season as a group, collectively as you head into training camp?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I think it was big for us, just kind of getting a feel for both the environment, the stakes that you're playing for, because in a regular season game there are times where you may find yourself not as pumped for certain games, and you should be pumped for every game because it's a blessing to play in the NBA.

But the play-in game you're playing for stakes. If you lose, you go home. If you win, you advance.

Just the environment, the fans, the atmosphere of it all I think was good, especially for most of our guys have never been in postseason play. So having that experience was good for us, and I think it's something that we can all kind of learn and just understand going forward.

Q. You talk about playing for stakes. Are you excited about the new in-season tournament?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, for sure. That'll be a fun part of the game. I think from a competitive nature it'll make the game a lot more competitive, and I think guys will come to play. I'm looking forward to it. It'll be fun to be a part of it.

Q. You've seen Kenrich, Lindy, and now you debut new headbands this year. Is that orchestrated? Is that a good look? Are you going to keep it during the season?

AARON WIGGINS: I'm not sure right now. I've got it on right now. I've got the new brace, too. Kind of feeling it out still, going with it, but it's a look for now.

Q. Have you made the switch from cotton to Dri-FIT so it doesn't squeeze the head as much?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, it definitely feels a little bit different. I've got the same one, so it works.

Q. You mentioned what the play-in did for you guys. You come with expectations. How is that different? Are you guys ready for that?

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AARON WIGGINS: Like I said, as a team we've just got to make sure that we have a goal in mind, and that's something that we collectively have to work towards. We'll come in and we'll work hard one day at a time, and if we improve the way we want to and continue to kind of grow in the ways that we see ourselves growing, we'll reach the goals that we have.

It'll just be about taking it one game at a time and kind of understanding that you've got to get better throughout the season to have postseason play and make those goals that you have.

We've got to make sure we're locked in throughout the season and improving every day.

Q. You also mentioned being ready to play when your number is called. Which is tougher, is that more mental or a physical thing?

AARON WIGGINS: It's definitely more of a policemen thing because you have to understand sometimes that it's not a shot towards you as a player. Sometimes it's not about your talent or your game. There's just some things that you can't control, and you've got to be ready to go when you get your chance to step on the floor.

From a physical aspect if you see me on the bench, I have the muscle gun on and I'm just massaging my legs and I'm staying loose at all times just to kind of be ready because you never know when you might be called on the floor for whatever possession or what point of the game you might need to be ready to go.

From a physical standpoint, I don't think that's anything that is too hindering. It's just a matter of you mentally accepting that you've got to stay physically ready so when your number is called, you're ready to go.

Q. You spoke a lot about being prepared, hopping into game play. This off-season for you heading into the season, what were some of the things that you did this summer to improve in, and what do you like to see yourself in the third year, what are things that you have expectations for yourself?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, there are a lot of things that I worked on in the off-season. Everybody goes home and works on everything. You work on ball handling, you work on shooting, you work on finishing. So I continued just to touch up on all those little things. On the defensive end I locked in and I kind of set goals for myself as a defensive player so I could come in and be a better defender and help contribute in that aspect.

In terms of expectations, I don't really set goals individually or expectations because it's easy to find yourself thinking about them, and if that's on your mind, you're thinking too much, and I like to play free. Just going out there, trying to improve season by season, and looking forward to having a good season this year.

Q. You just mentioned a minute ago about hunting crevices in the defense moving without the ball. That was something that was clear last year was a big part of your game, and Josh did a whole bunch of it last year, too. Is that a film thing? Is it a feel when you're on the floor? Is it something you're talking to your teammates about? Or is it a combination of all those things?

AARON WIGGINS: Like you said, a combination of all those things. I think our team is built with a lot of high-IQ guys, and I think they all have a really good feel for the game. And at the same time, OKC does a really good job of just kind of showing us film and showing us opportunities that each individual may have to make the game simpler for themselves as an individual.

Everybody does a really good job just kind of taking advice and anything that they can kind of help to better their game. It's just a little bit of everything. Everybody has a really good feel for the game and understands if you can make the game easy for yourself, why wouldn't you?

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