

# Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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## Luguentz Dort

Press Conference



**Q. Obviously the series didn't end the way you guys wanted it to, but as you think about the growth you guys showed last year to this year and over the course of the year to get to the playoffs, what is the level of pride in what you guys accomplished this year?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I'm really proud of this group. We had battled all season. I have said that before, we surprised a lot of people this year, and it was big. We believed. We trust each other. We had joy just being around each other and all that. So it was great.

To make the big step that we made from last year to this season. So I can't wait to see what's coming next.

**Q. When you say you can't wait to see what's coming next, what's top of mind for you when you say that?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I just see to come back in the season and do everything all over again. Like I said, I enjoyed playing with those guys. I'm just looking forward for everybody to individually get better, and then just as a team as well get better and to see what we'll do next season.

**Q. Lu, I think a lot of the optimism behind this team and the exit yesterday, people feel like you have this long window, this is just the beginning. What do you think of buying into the idea of a window in the NBA to win a championship?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: It's like I can't think of it like that. I mean, our main thing and my main thing for me is just to get better. At the beginning of the season, we just thought about growing as far as a championship was in our head, but I think just getting better and improving. I can't give no timeline. Our goal is it's there for sure, but we've just got to do it day by day and improve as a team.

**Q. Mark was saying yesterday that after the loss he wants that pain to become an investment for this team's future. What does that look like for you? Is part of you going to hold on to that feeling from last**

**night?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: It's painful. Nobody is going to feel okay after losing a playoff series. We've got to use this as motivation and fuel. Individually, in our off-season, whatever we've got to do to get better as a player and also as a team.

It's definitely going to be in the back of my head for the rest of my career. Honestly, any time -- you can't take those times for granted. You never know when you're going to make the playoffs again. I'll remember this one, and I can't wait to be back.

**Q. How much fun was it to be a part of this group? You guys obviously seem like such a tight-knit group. How much fun is it?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: It's a lot of fun. I've been on a lot of different teams here and seen a lot of different players. That was one of the best teams, in terms of connection and all that, that we had. Everything -- everybody was happy with one another. It was just a great time and a great place, whenever we'd come to practice, it was always smiles and good vibes. I'm going to miss that for sure.

**Q. Lu, how has your summer changed playing deeper in the season and then you have the Olympics coming up as well?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: Nothing changed. I'll still find some time to get off my feet and enjoy my time, and then just get ready for Team Canada nationals and all that, it's going to be a lot of traveling. And the Olympics is something big. I can't take that for granted either. Looking forward to that getting ready with the team, and at the same time, taking care of my body.

**Q. When you were growing up in Canada, did you envision playing in the Olympics for Canada?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: (Inaudible) but I worked my way up to that point, and I'm happy and excited for it. Canada is a beautiful country for me and my family, so I'll be proud to represent them.

**Q. What are some of the things you wanted to improve on this off-season?**

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LUGUENTZ DORT: I want to just take care of my body, just knowing that it's going to be a lot, the run that we just had, then straight to the national team and coming back ready for the season. That will be the biggest one.

Just everything. When I'm going in the off-season, I'm just working everything and just trying to sharpen my game. I've been having the same game for the past five seasons. It's going to be the same. I won't turn to Shai in one off-season.

Just trying to sharpen my game up. Still trying to stay consistent and work on the stuff I need to do to help the team.

**Q. Do you have goals of being a Defensive Player of the Year?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: Definitely. It's not something that I think about when I do the job that I do, but it would be good to get rewarded for that. I've put a lot of sacrifice and a lot of time into that. I wish the world and whoever else gets to see that.

But I'm patient. I'm going to stay myself. I'm going to approach the game the same way. At the end of the day, that's my job. That's what I do. I hope I get recognized for that one day.

**Q. With that, a lot of players mention you, if not the best, top three wing defenders in the league. What do you think the rest of the NBA needs to see to recognize you as one of the best wing defenders?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: They need to watch our games really. It's exactly the same stuff every night. A lot of guys on the other teams see it, and the people (inaudible) means they're not watching enough.

We worked our way up there. We want to get to the stage where the whole world can see us play. I feel like we did that this year and it's just a matter of time until I get recognized.

**Q. Following up on that, I think it was Luka who said you were a top three primary defender in the world last year. After the series, you guys had a chance to talk, share that mutual respect. How do you feel just playing him made you better?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: He's a tough matchup. He's a big guy. He moves a lot with the ball. When you get hit with his size, he's really tall and all that and strong. So it may be that maybe I need to get stronger. He's a great player

for a reason. He's going to make a lot of tough shots.

I know that he's banged up right now after a series like that, especially how aggressive I was. But I'm pretty sure I got him better and he got me better as a defender as well. So I wish them the best. After the game, it was all love. I just told him to go get it and do everything that he can to achieve.

**Q. You're relatively quiet. I don't know if you talk a lot of trash on the court, but it doesn't feel like you do. How did it feel like becoming a villain within the fan base for the first time in your career?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I don't know. At the end of the day, I just go out there and do my job and do what I have to do to help my teammates. Like you said, I don't really talk when I play. I hope I'm not being seen as a really, really bad villain. (Laughter).

My main thing is to go out there and make everything tough.

**Q. Is this something you notice while playing, you hear what the players are saying to you? How do you cope with it?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I was actually being surprised when I got a foul called and the whole crowd was cheering. That was a little weird. I guess it's a good thing because they want to see me out of the game.

I don't really pay attention to that. I'm still trying to play my game and stay aggressive. If the fans are happy when I get called a foul, it's whatever.

**Q. Shai says he tries to lead by example. How do you describe his leadership and how much he contributes to the team?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: He's been huge, especially for me as a player, just what he's doing on the court and off the court. It's amazing to see his preparation, how he gets ready for games, and then he never shies away from the big moments. As a teammate and a brother, it's big to see that, and also it gives me confidence to go out there and be like, yo, I got your back. You're doing all that for us defensively and even offensively as well, I've got to get out on the floor to get the stop for our team and for him.

I'll do it, and I'll sacrifice a lot for the team and him because all the stuff that he's doing. Then his leadership from my first season here to now has been huge, you know what I mean? Just the way that he's getting the team ready. He's getting himself ready. Big games, small games, whatever,

it's still the same approach, and he's been great all season about that, just having a great presence in the locker room.

I would say the Shai that the world sees and the Shai in the locker room is two different guys, which we love him for that. He's been great for us this year.

**Q. How is he different?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: He talks more (laughter). Yeah, he talks more, a joke guy. He's a funny dude. You know like you feel his presence in the locker room.

**Q. I have to ask you about that. I'm Japanese, and my Japanese friends are also talking about that. Does Chet and J Dub also wear that? Where did you get it?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: It's a designer, styling guy from New York. He's been doing good. He's doing -- that's his brand actually. We feel like we're the most silent team in the NBA. He got us a couple of his (inaudible) and I think him for that.

**Q. Lu, for many, this was the first playoff run. You got ten games under your belt. How big is this going to be for the team moving forward?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: It was huge. It was a first for a lot of guys on the team. It was my second playoff experience. You prepare a whole season for that type of moment, and it's good for the guys on our team. It's good for the young guys to experience that early in their career. They know what it feels like. They know what it takes to get to that.

From that, it's just going to be another learning experience, and the goal is always to get to that point. So it's good that they got to experience that and they know what it takes to get there.

**Q. (Inaudible).**

LUGUENTZ DORT: Always. That's my main thing to run track. It's a good way to work on my conditioning. I've done a lot of different things, boxing, Jujitsu, and all that. I don't think I'll do that this summer. Anything I can do to work on my conditioning outside of basketball, I'll do it because it's fun and at the same time I'm getting my work done.

**Q. What are you running?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I'm actually fast. Like the sprints and stuff, when I get to compete against my friends, I beat them all the time. I usually do a couple laps, and then we do some sprints sometimes, but like the 100 and the 200, I'm

hardly beaten.

**Q. Are you a big track guy? Do you follow the sport?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I don't follow the sport like that to be honest. I did track when I was young just for fun, but I don't really follow it.

**Q. There's been a lot of talk about how close you guys are as a team. You've been five years together with Shai and together on Team Canada too. Do you guys ever get sick of each other?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: Not really. No, that's my dog. I mean, nah, it's always good vibes. He's a great guy. You can't get sick of this guy because the dude is always smiling, you know what I mean? He's always joking around. Every time I'm around the dude, it's always jokes. We always laugh.

**Q. I guess you may have heard, I think Pat Mahomes said you could play football. Did you ever play football?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I actually didn't play football in my life, but if I trained to play football, maybe. Based on my body type and how quick I am with my feet and all that, maybe. But I watch football a little bit, but I'm not the biggest football guy. So I couldn't tell you that.

I feel like, if I put some time to work on it, maybe I could.

**Q. Would you be offense, catching it?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: I'd rather be offense, but I heard a lot of people think no (laughter).

**Q. What about boxing?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: No, no, no. I fought one time against a professional boxer. I got mad. I was bigger than him, but he was way more skilled. He was a professional. At the end, I was just wrestling. I was like nah.

I didn't get knocked out, no. I started wrestling, and I'm like you're not going to punch me no more.

**Q. He's a boxer?**

LUGUENTZ DORT: Yeah. His name is Junior Ulysse. He's from Montreal. He's retired now.

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