

Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

Sunday, May 19, 2024

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Aaron Wiggins

Press Conference



Q. The first playoffs, that kind of intensity level of playoff basketball and still trying to make it feel like a normal game, how did you feel about how that whole playoff run went?

AARON WIGGINS: It was an experience, super fun. I think for our group being young, guys haven't had much of postseason play. It was definitely something that guys, I think, enjoyed and liked being a part of.

For me individually, like I said, it was fun. Just fun playing at that level of play. When you're playing for something, every team's putting their all on the floor, physicality's up, each possession has a lot more weight. It was a great time, great experience.

Q. How fun is it to be a part of this group this season? You guys seemed so connected with the post-game interviews and all of that. How fun has this been?

AARON WIGGINS: Super fun. I've got to give a shout out to J-Dub and J-Will. Those two guys helped to kind of add to both the fire and the fun behind our team with the barking and stuff like that.

It was a super fun year. Being with a group of guys who kind of buy into each other's personalities and get along with each other the way we did, I don't think that's something you come by a lot, regardless of what level you play at.

We just all kind of accepted each other for who we are as individuals. We tied it into how we can help each other on the court. It's fun to be a part of.

Q. Every time the media talked about your team, they talked about how young this person is and so forth and so on. Did that play a role in the playoffs, your youth?

AARON WIGGINS: I don't think our youth played any part in our success or our playoff play. I think our connectedness and togetherness and understanding of

what it takes to be a team that gets better and to be a team that can win games helped us get to where we were.

There were probably times throughout the playoffs where there were situations that we could have handled better. Through experiences and through growth, you kind of find the opportunity to get better with those things. I wouldn't say that's youthful. I'd say that's more just experience and kind of understanding of every part of the game.

As we continue -- like as we continue to grow and be together, we'll get better with those things. I wouldn't say the youthfulness played any part in it.

Q. As the playoffs went on, what instances did you see that maybe could have used more experience?

AARON WIGGINS: I can't say there was particularly any like specific instances. I just think there were like times on the court where we might have had a certain number of turnovers or something. Maybe with experience we learn to gather ourselves, slow down a little bit, find our kind of like rhythm and not -- maybe decision-making.

There's a number of things, both in the playoffs and in the regular season, where possessions matter. There were times where we might have -- you know, just being a little too loose with certain possessions.

I can't think of one specific instance or anything like that. Just I think with experience you kind of develop a sense of understanding.

Q. Mark was saying yesterday that the pain that came from your loss, he wants guys to make that an investment for the future. Is there any part of you that's harboring that feeling, maybe trying to weaponize it?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I mean, nobody expected our season to end yesterday. Having that feeling, I don't think anybody's kind of necessarily come to peace that this season's over. Having that feeling, knowing that we have such a large gap between now and next season, I think you can easily take that and use it as motivation and something to push you to find another level of work ethic or something you want to get better at or a number of things. Just how you're going to work out, your approach to

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everything.

I feel like I'm ready to start today, like get right back in the gym and get to work today. You can definitely take that pain and just kind of move with it and keep it tucked in your back pocket and be ready to apply it, apply those feelings and the energy to when you're working out and preparing for next season.

Q. How do you feel you've grown this season?

AARON WIGGINS: Just kind of maturing. Like I said a couple times, this experience, a third year in the league, learning the ways of the NBA, learning individual players, how guys play, how teams play, certain -- you know, different, strategic ways of playing games.

And then our team chemistry, just kind of continue to grow with all of it. I think I grew in a lot of those facets of the game. I'm just going to continue to grow in it.

Q. Is there any specific camaraderie that exists between you and guys like Lu that are on two-way contracts and have kind of fought through being on these standard deals? Is there a chemistry that exists?

AARON WIGGINS: Sure. Specifically some of those guys with two-ways, even now, Lindy who was on two-way and has been converted, Keyontae, Adam, Olivier, all those guys I've had conversations with both regarding their situation and where they're kind of like positioned individually, as well as just what they're doing both on the court, off the court, likewise, all those things.

I think a lot of the guys have relationships that go beyond just NBA. I know specifically -- I knew Lu Dort in high school. We played against each other in high school. We played against each other in the Allen Iverson Classic. So I've known about who he was, the type of player he was and everything, long before I ever even joined here.

You guys got to ask him about our one-on-one at Allen Iverson. He'll be mad.

Q. Maybe you tell us.

AARON WIGGINS: I'm not going to speak on it. Just let him tell you.

Q. What kind of player was he?

AARON WIGGINS: Similar to who he is today. He's like huge. Totally had an advantage over everybody then. He was pretty similar. A dog, a dog.

Yeah, like I said, a lot of guys, they go further than just NBA in relationships. I think our camaraderie in that aspect, both in relation to where guys come from, whether it's contract-wise or position on the team, experiences, or anything of those things -- I mean, I think it helps build into those individual relationships which only help contribute to team chemistry.

We did a good job just kind of maximizing our collectiveness and togetherness that we had. This is a group that I think just is willing to put forth their best foot so that whoever is beside them can put forth their best foot. The connectedness is a different type of feeling.

Q. Thinking back to your childhood, playing in the playoffs in the NBA, what are some things that are exactly what you expected them to be, and what are some things that are completely different from what you expected?

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, the playoffs, for sure. Specifically related to OKC, the crowd, the fans, the atmosphere, everything I expected, like above and beyond. It's crazy because in comparison to where we played, I mean, our fans are one of a kind. Everybody wears the shirts. That's awesome. Like that's super dope. That alone just kind of shows the collectiveness that not only our team has, but the people behind us, the people who root for us and stuff like that. It goes a long way.

But the atmosphere is one thing that, as a kid, you watch. You obviously watch the Thunder 2010, 2011, 2012, all those years, and you're just watching them, and you're seeing them, and you see everybody wearing blue, everybody wearing white, the crowd is electric. Then being able to play in it -- I mean, I'm doing it on the video game too as a kid. I'm on the video game and OKC playing in the playoffs. It's a different feeling.

I mean, I'd just say it's one of a kind, here at least.

Q. What are some of the things that you need to work on?

AARON WIGGINS: There's a number of things that I can continue to build on. I'll continue to just work on ball handling. On the offensive side, ball handling, shooting, all of the basics that everybody would say. But defensively, continuing to just kind of work on lateral quickness, my physical being and stuff, just try to come in a better player. That's what everybody is going to say. You work on the things you need to work on as an individual, but at the end of the day, you want to come back a better player, a noticeably better player.

Q. Along those same lines, you mentioned the experience you guys got this season. Knowing how competitive this group is and how much everyone wants to get better, how much are you looking forward to seeing what you guys can accomplish?

AARON WIGGINS: It's definitely a lot to look forward to just because I think our group has a certain sense of hunger about them. I think you can see that from our team both in the regular season and the playoffs, and knowing that this ended not how we wanted it to, keeping that feeling and going into the summer with it.

I think guys will have that same hunger and approach to off-season workouts, just kind of preparing themselves for the opportunity next season. So I think there's a lot to look forward to. I know the guys are probably itching to get back to playing.

Q. Earlier this season, I asked Mark what is your best skill as a basketball player, and he said everything. I'm going to ask you what is your number one skill as a basketball player?

AARON WIGGINS: I'm going to tell you something about that. J-Will saw that, and after he saw Mark say that answer, he called me like everything every day. He was like everything, you're good at everything. That was annoying. What was your question?

Q. What do you think is your number one skill in basketball?

AARON WIGGINS: The ability to be willing to do what it takes to win. I don't want to -- I don't force to try to do a specific thing for my individual success. I want to be a part of a winning team. I want to be a part of a winning culture. And I want to maximize obviously my level of play, but also others'. And being in an environment where you can do that is more important than being an individually great player but not in a great environment and not a winning environment, not a winning culture.

Just trying to be a player that wants to win and puts forth whatever he has to to make sure that he's going to win in every setting.

Q. What are some things you're looking forward to getting to, like hobbies this summer?

AARON WIGGINS: Chilling with my dogs.

Q. How many dogs?

AARON WIGGINS: I have two dogs, a Cane Corso and a pitbull and lab mix. I don't know, I want to take them to the beach. I want them to see the beach.

Q. Which one?

AARON WIGGINS: No particular beach. I just want them to see the beach, see how they react to just water. They don't like water. They don't like baths or any of that. See if they enjoy that setting. It will be fun.

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