

# Oklahoma City Thunder Media Conference

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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

## Aaron Wiggins Press Conference



**Q. What did you learn from the playoffs that helped you in the offseason?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I mean, I just say what it takes to kind of be prepared for when that time comes. As a team, understanding that there's a lot of opportunities in the regular season to kind of prep for the different situations or things that might get thrown at you in the playoffs. Just understanding that every game there's a lesson that can be learned that could carry you over to the time that, you know, really matters, when it comes playoff time and you're trying to compete for a championship.

**Q. Any difference this year in mental approach? Odds are (indiscernible)?**

AARON WIGGINS: I think you have to have the same mental approach, which is just taking it day by day and trying to maximize our group, and that's not going to happen in a day.

Just understanding that we have to get better throughout the season and there's a lot that we can learn about each other and continue to do to kind of learn so that we can be prepared, you know, when we're trying to do the things that we want to do.

**Q. You brought back a lot of guys from last season and added significant pieces too. What areas of this team are you curious to see just what you can do? Obviously you haven't been on the floor all together yet.**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah.

**Q. What's your sense of -- what are you curious to see about this team?**

AARON WIGGINS: I think naturally we've always had a very competitive team. I think adding the couple of pieces that we added, though, I think that competitive nature and just mental toughness and there's just a level of competitiveness that I think exists within our group and

with the guys that we added I think that rises the level.

I'm excited just to see how hard guys compete starting in training camp and going throughout the season. There are a number of things that I'm looking forward to.

**Q. You let the game come to you and let the situation dictate how you are going to impact the game? A lot easier said than done. How do you do that when you approach the game and check in? How do you know what your role is going to be?**

AARON WIGGINS: It changes game to game. There are a number of things that the team may be lacking, but I just try to be prepared for whatever situation I'm put in. Coming into the game, I'm not looking for or thinking about maybe scoring a certain number of points or anything. I'm going in there with the mindset to help the team get the outcome that we want, which is a win.

Regardless of what that looks like, I'm willing to go out there and put forth my best foot and hopefully help my team get a W.

**Q. Can you talk about how emotional it was getting a new contract and getting the extension?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, man, it was awesome. When all that went down, you know, my family, they were with me. They were all by my side. That's just an exciting moment. Everything that a lot of guys kind of dream for, getting here, coming as the 55th pick, two-way contract, and you are trying to fight for an opportunity.

To be able to kind of live that out is a dream come true. It was awesome being able to just be with my mom, my dad, and my siblings during that time.

**Q. Have you taken the time as you get ready for training camp, talking about some of the other guys, some of the additions to the team, plus now you have guys coming into a second year. You have guys that are growing up. How competitive is it going to be when you get to training camp? Your training camp will be hard, and you guys are pushing each other and that competition, that level of competition, just how exciting that's going to be once you guys all get on the court together?**

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AARON WIGGINS: Super exciting. That's one of the things that makes you as an individual better when you are in a competitive environment. You have to be tough enough, and you have to be competitive enough to kind of fight back and be capable of pushing yourself to get better.

I'm super excited. As we added those new additions and kind of went throughout the summer and leading up to training camp, you know, you have the thought of, like, man, what is this team going to look like? How competitive are we going to be?

I don't think you can really imagine it. You know, stepping out onto the court for training camp and going to the season is an exciting thing to look forward to.

**Q. How have you seen Shai be as a leader the last couple of years, and how does that look now with those expectations that we've talked about?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah. I mean, I would say when I came in, Shai was a do-it type of leader where he would show that he was capable of being a professional, addressing, you know, certain things that might be going on in the game and stuff like that. As we've continued to kind of grow and being on the same team and stuff, he's kind of been a little bit more vocal and continue to kind of grow in that leadership role.

He does a great job not only being a guy that we can look to in game when we need him, but also off the court and in the locker room just being a guy that understands what it takes.

I mean, he's got -- he's probably one of the -- eight years, nine years in the league now. He is one of those guys that's been around for a while, and he has that experience. You know, his leadership has continued to grow, and he's been huge for us.

**Q. You started your career in a similar way as Ajay Mitchell? Have you talked to him about that? What's your memories of being the new guy and working your way?**

AARON WIGGINS: I've had some conversation with him, told him some of the same things that I've kind of had mentally noted when I came in on the two-way contract. He's a great player. I've played some pick-up and stuff with him, and he looks really good. I know that he'll be ready to go when his opportunity comes. I'm looking forward to seeing how he comes into training camp and just kind of continues to grow from there.

**Q. As this team evolves, as the league -- the style of play in the league evolves, how do you adjust to that while still staying true to who you are?**

AARON WIGGINS: Just kind of understanding. I think from a different perspective, my game is fitting. I think you could plug me into a number of different systems, and I would be able to find a way to contribute in a winning way to a team.

Regardless of the trends or the ways that are going around the league in terms of what's looked at basketball-wise, you know, being a guy that can kind of mold into fitting and helping his team win. I don't know. I don't really look at everything outside of what we have going on in our system. I just try to make sure that I'm there for my team.

**Q. You got your first playoff experience last year. How does that experience change the way you prepare?**

AARON WIGGINS: I think mentally you kind of -- you obviously have a sour taste immediately after, you know, coming up short in the playoffs as of last year. Maybe just trying to remember that feeling and going into the season with a bit of motivation to kind of find yourself back in the same situation, and you want to push yourself to be the best. Just remembering some of those things are ways to go into the season to have that extra motivation.

As well as, you know, what we learned throughout that playoffs -- the playoffs series, just what it takes to kind of be a great team and to win in that situation. So, you know, being able to kind of have a regular season when you have 82 games to prepare for that and you have all the time in the world just to kind of practice what it will take when that time comes.

So, you know, we have a smart group of guys and guys who understand that it takes a lot to be great. You know, we want to be back in that position soon, so...

**Q. Is the atmosphere any different, being expected to be so good this year as a club?**

AARON WIGGINS: I mean, obviously the atmosphere is a little bit different, but I think in terms of, like I said, we have a smart group. In terms of the way that our group kind of perceives it, guys kind of don't allow the atmosphere to affect their mentality or their approach towards the season and towards expectations or anything like that. Everybody is kind of on one page and kind of understands that it's going to take a day-by-day, game-to-game schedule to kind of maximize our talent and find our best selves.

**Q. What do you think it is about what you do and the pipeline effect that (indiscernible)?**

AARON WIGGINS: Yeah, I think the Blue just kind of mimics what we do with the Thunder. It's all some of the same things. You're getting the same practice reps, you're getting more opportunity. You might be in a different position or different role and being able to just kind of maximize some of the reps and things that can benefit a player. Kind of getting that extra look and those extra practices and things like that are very beneficial to a guy.

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