

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## Tyus Jones

Media Conference



**Q. Before you were officially on the injury report at the end of the season, we would see you wearing the back brace. What were you dealing with throughout the year? What was going on with your back?**

TYUS JONES: Most of that is just preventative. I've dealt with kind of lower back spasms from time to time in my career, never to this extent, but it would get tight on me or stuff like that.

Then another part of it is just I'm a creature of habit, so I've got the same routine every game. That's kind of the other part of it. Like next year you'll see me with the same -- wearing the head pad before the game, during the game. That's just my thing. It's a little bit of both.

**Q. We talked to you a lot at the start of the year about obviously moving into the starting role and everything like that. I wonder if this season changed maybe how you view yourself as a player a little bit.**

TYUS JONES: No. To be honest, it didn't. For myself, I've viewed myself as a starter for a number of years now, just hadn't been in that role or that opportunity in a permanent -- permanently. So for me this year was kind of my first time being thrown into that full-time starter role, and I was appreciative of that. Felt like I took advantage of that, of the opportunity. Had my best year to date, obviously individually numbers-wise, and I still feel like I have so much more kind of left on the table. Still feel like I'm just getting started in terms of what I'm able to bring to the table.

Again, it's kind of my first year playing that many minutes, that consistently, having that big of a role, so I feel like I'm just at the tip of the iceberg for sure.

**Q. What was that adjustment like having done it before for about a quarter of a season and then being the starter for the entire year?**

TYUS JONES: Yeah, it's just a bigger toll. It's more minutes on a nightly basis, and that adds up, so you have

to really stay locked in on your recovery, stay locked in mentally, but all that is a challenge. It's a long season. We play a lot of games. We're traveling a lot.

There's a lot that comes with it, but for me, that was like a fun challenge for me because it's something I've been asking for. It was something I've been wanting. I just tried to make the most of it, and again, take advantage of the opportunity.

**Q. You mentioned the career year and feeling like there's still a lot left to tap into. As you approach this off-season, what do you think you can add to your game?**

TYUS JONES: Yeah, I want to get better in all areas, not for it to be a cop-out answer, but again, I feel like I just have so much more that I can give and that I can put on display. I feel like at times this year I was kind of trying to figure stuff out, new team, new system, new teammates, and I pride myself on being a complete player, understanding my guys, knowing how to get them in the right spots.

Part of the year I know I was really trying to survey stuff, get a good feel, and just approach everything the right way, and I just feel like moving forward, coming back here next year, if I am back here, I would be able to hit the ground running, knowing the guys already, knowing where guys like the ball, kind of understanding guys' games already, which also gives me a lot to look forward to.

**Q. Tyus, everybody kind of already knows the free agent situation that you'll step into this season. Going into that, the mental approach that you'll take with it, having the conversations with your family, what is the biggest thing that you want to look for as you make that decision, if it is returning to D.C. or going elsewhere? What's the biggest thing for you, your family, is non-negotiable with that situation?**

TYUS JONES: Junior being happy. (Laughter).



No, but honestly, just being valued. Being valued, and that there's a lot that comes with that. It's not just money. It's not just what they tell you. But you want to be treated the right way. You want the environment to be right. You want your family to be comfortable.

For me, my role is important. My role on the team, my role as a leader. So yeah, there's just a lot that goes into it.

But to sum it, try to put it all together, I would say just being valued properly and how I look at being valued.

This summer is a part of playing at this level, and I look forward to what comes with that, and we'll just kind of see what the future holds.

But again, I've really enjoyed my year here in D.C. They welcomed me in with open arms, and I'm grateful for that. My family enjoys it here. Obviously Junior enjoys it.

Yeah, the wins weren't there, what we thought they would be this year, but that doesn't take away from kind of the joy or the happiness that I had and I think our team had together. Like we had a really close-knit team. Guys got along. That doesn't happen every day. That doesn't happen in every locker room. That's definitely something that's special and that you don't take for granted.

**Q. With regards to the season, if you look at that in totality with how you tried to implement yourself, new system, new staff, new teammates as you mentioned, did you feel that you were peaking at the right time with how everybody was gelling and the chemistry you all were building prior to you unfortunately having to sit out and then dealing with the injury, not being able to return to the lineup? Do you feel like that hindered what you guys wanted to try and do?**

TYUS JONES: Yeah, a little bit, for sure. I think after BK took over, obviously there was some adjustment. There was an adjustment period. But I think we were just gradually kind of improving, taking steps in the right direction on both sides of the ball.

Yeah, I definitely feel like we were moving in the right direction. We were gelling better. Our communication was way better than it had been earlier in the year from top to bottom. Yeah, we were playing better. Even though we weren't winning a whole lot more games, but we were in a lot of games. We were competing way more and you could feel that. You could see it from the outside looking in, but inside that locker room you could feel it. You could just feel the difference.

So yeah, obviously when I went down, that's not what

anybody wants. That's definitely not what I want, wanted. But it's a part of the game, and it comes with it, and you've just got to be ready to just attack your rehab, and you just try to prepare yourself for that not to happen. You try to prevent that. But injuries are a part of the game.

But yeah, that definitely kind of threw a wrench in what we were working on and trying to do, but at the same time, it allowed some others some opportunities. It allowed guys to play some more minutes and things like that. It also gave me a different perspective and allowed me to do some other things, to view the game from the sideline, to be more of a coach while I wasn't playing, to still -- BK challenged me to use my voice still, to continue to talk, continue to point out what I see. I spent a lot of time talking with like Jared Butler and trying to help him take advantage of that opportunity, as well.

Also, it's how you look at it. It's a viewpoint thing. You've just got to try to have a positive outlook on everything.

**Q. What knowledge and what influence have you handed down to the young guys considering they're early on in the rebuild?**

TYUS JONES: Yeah, just the approach, like the approach. Stuff doesn't happen overnight. Change doesn't happen overnight. But if you're approaching everything the right way every single day, if you're kind of making your daily deposits, you'll look up and you'll like where you're at if you just keep your head down, keep grinding, keep working. It's a part of it. In this game you have to kind of earn everything. Nothing is given to you individually, nothing is given to you as a team.

Where we're at this year, it's a part of it. You've got to grind. We've got to work towards something, and it's not going to happen overnight. It's not a light switch. You can't just all of a sudden be a 50-, 60-win team. You've just got to grind. You've got to fall in love with that process. You'll look up and realize how far you've come.

But it didn't happen overnight. So just try to apply that in my daily approach but also preach that to the young fellas for sure.

**Q. You're far better educated than we are as to what's going on with the franchise and the progress it's making. When you take a big-picture look at things, what gives you hope that the franchise is on the right track?**

TYUS JONES: Yeah, starting with Michael and Will, their approach every single day, how they carry themselves, how they expect excellence from the organization, from the



day-to-day things to how we as players approach everything. That's where it starts. So it starts at the top.

Everyone else kind of has to follow suit. That's honestly what gives me the hope and the belief in this organization is those two at the top.

Then secondly, again, I touched on it earlier, but the camaraderie the guys have in the locker room. We've got a really good group. We've got a group that gets along. We've got a group that can speak to one another, that can be honest with each other and that you don't always get that in every locker room. That also gives me belief that we're headed in the right direction because those are some of the things that you need first and foremost to become the team that you want to be.

**Q. How do you hope the coaching search ends up? I'm not asking for a particular person, but what are some of the characteristics you hope that whomever is going to be the coach has?**

TYUS JONES: Transparency. Transparency, work ethic. Work ethic and just the right approach to everything. Obviously you want to win, but understanding the process of that. So yeah, I would say those are kind of the main things.

**Q. Just to follow up, what about Will and Michael's approach resonated with you?**

TYUS JONES: Their openness. Their honesty. It goes back to the transparency. They were honest with me from the beginning, from the second I got traded here. I felt they wanted to build relationships with everybody. They wanted to be able to have conversations with you. They care about your family. For me, those are big things. It makes you feel comfortable and confident in what's going on here, and it makes you want to show up every day and work and be happy to be here. So for me, that was huge.

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