

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

**Alex Sarr**

Media Conference



**Q. Alex, when you evaluate your rookie season, what are the things you are most proud of? Where do you think you have more improvement?**

ALEX SARR: I think just like me improving throughout the season, getting better, all the way throughout the season is probably what I'm most proud of.

Stuff I could have done better? Everything really. That's just what I'm focusing on during the off-season, coming back into the second year, just being even more impactful.

**Q. Can you narrow in a little bit on the areas that you want to improve on in this off-season?**

ALEX SARR: Just be more impactful defensively, blocking more shots. Just better offensively to just all those things together.

**Q. What do you think you need to do to improve your finishing inside?**

ALEX SARR: I think just reps, just keep working on it. Yeah, just getting reps at it.

**Q. What about as a rebounder?**

ALEX SARR: Same. Just keep working on my body, keep getting stronger, just going and get 'em.

**Q. Do you feel like you deserve to win Rookie of the Year? Why or why not?**

ALEX SARR: It not up to me really. There's voters. I'm pretty happy about the way my season went. I'm happy we got better as a team and starting to build the identity of the Wizards.

**Q. You were good as a shot-blocker this season. What do you think helped you get to that point to be that effective?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I think just trying to be active

defensively, just trying to disrupt, helping off of my guy to try block shots. I think I could have done better. Just trying to be impactful.

**Q. What do you want improve the most in the off-season?**

ALEX SARR: Just like I said, everything really. Just my overall game offensively, defensively. There isn't really a single thing I'm trying to improve.

**Q. During the draft process, you made it known you wanted to come to Washington. What are the reasons for that? What behind the scenes gives you hope for the future?**

ALEX SARR: I would say just the fact we're building something here. You can see we have a lot of young players, a lot of vets that we added, great players here. Just me trying to be a part of that, trying to help in building the identity here.

Yeah, just, I mean, the chemistry around the building, like you can really tell that we're all working towards something. So I think that's definitely a good sign.

**Q. Versatility is the name of the game in the NBA. You have the ability to play the five and four. When it comes to comfortability, are you comfortable in both positions? Do you prefer one or the other?**

ALEX SARR: I think I'm pretty comfortable in both. I played way more five this year. I think the way, like, BK, we run the offense, is very inside-out. Like the five man kind of really roams on the perimeter a little bit. It kind of depends.

I feel like nowadays there's not that much difference between the five and four. It's whoever gets down the floor first.

**Q. Did you feel you gained confidence for the season? What surprised you the most during the season in the**

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**NBA?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I think I definitely seen my confidence keep growing as the season was going, getting more comfortable, getting used to the NBA game.

What was the second one?

**Q. What surprised you the most in the NBA?**

ALEX SARR: Probably just the scheduling at first. Like, realizing we have a game every other day. Just getting used to that.

**Q. When you look at all of the noise, you had a tight circle around you that let you focus on the game, didn't tell you what was going on, what was being said, and you let your game speak for itself over the season. Do you feel, looking back at all of that, where you are now and the improvements that you made, that you quieted everything that was being said and validated being the number two overall pick?**

ALEX SARR: I feel that kind of always happens in sports. No matter what, everybody has an opinion on what you do. So I really still to this day don't get caught up in that. I really just try to, yeah, focus on what we're doing.

People are always going to have stuff to say, whether it's positive or negative. Just really got to let it go and try to focus on what I can control.

**Q. It seemed like late in the year you were more aggressive around the rim. Coach Keefe mentioned the same. How did that change for you over the course of the year? Was it getting more comfortable?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, definitely, I mean, getting more comfortable, getting used to the game. The game kind of slowing down. I felt like it was a good opportunity for me to keep working on my game and be aggressive.

**Q. We were talking to Marcus Smart, and he said you and him are working on your mentality, how to be tougher for both of you. What are those interactions like?**

ALEX SARR: Marcus always talks about defense really. Like, he always gives advice in the game, stuff I could have done differently.

I mean, offensively giving me tips about stuff he's seen. I'm really just listening. He has a lot of experience. He's been on a lot of great teams. He's been on a great team.

Yeah, I'm just learning from him and listening to what he got to say.

**Q. How does any player teach another player mentality? How do you learn how to be a dog in this league?**

ALEX SARR: I think you just figure it out really. You don't really get taught by someone. You just got to go out there and do what you got to do.

**Q. Are there any players that you went up against this year, or even didn't go up against, who you like to emulate on the floor as a big?**

ALEX SARR: No, I wouldn't say emulate. A lot of great players that we played against. Yeah, I feel like I'm just trying to play my own game.

**Q. Who was your toughest matchup this season?**

ALEX SARR: Toughest matchup? Jokic was definitely pretty good.

**Q. What are your impressions of Kyshawn George? What does he do well?**

ALEX SARR: Kyshawn, I mean, he's a hard worker. Plays great for us spacing the floor, pick and roll. He's really able to read the defense well, put pressure on the rim. Definitely he has, like, great positional size. He's really able to guard tough matchups, block shots at the rim, rebounds well. He does a lot of different stuff for us.

**Q. What were the conversations you had during your exit interview like? What do they want to focus on in the off-season?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I mean, just keep working really. The off-season is going to be kind of long, so just trying to attack it and make the most out of it to come back ready for next year. That's the main thing.

**Q. What are the things you want to focus on?**

ALEX SARR: Keep getting stronger, take care of everything as far as my body and make sure I'm ready to go at the fullest for next season.

**Q. You're a pretty mild-mannered guy. Is that something that you need to turn up sometimes when you get in games?**

ALEX SARR: No, not really. I feel pretty good about it.

**Q. Last year Bilal coming into this year, he spoke about how it felt like he was having to almost look at his matchups with guys and not respect them. Do you feel that's kind of the conversations that Marcus has had with you? As good as these players are, you got to bring that dog mentality so you can have that aggressiveness that he's trying to pull out of you? Is that the mindset he's encouraging you to have out there?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, definitely. That's everybody I would say. I think I kind of understood that early, you know, what Bilal said. As great as the player you're playing is, you really got to put that aside and focus on the matchup. You can make the most out of your matchup and really win the matchup. That's all that matters really, yeah.

**Q. What have you learned from being around Jordan Poole?**

ALEX SARR: Just his work ethic, I would say. Just seeing the works he puts in. Finds time before shootaround, before walk-throughs to come in and work on his game. Kind of shows you what it takes to be a professional.

**Q. Coach BK said point guard and center are two of the hardest positions to play in the NBA. What makes playing center hard?**

ALEX SARR: You're kind of the backbone of the defense, got to communicate everything. A lot of pick and roll. Every team runs heavy pick and roll. You're involved in most of the actions defensively.

**Q. How do you see your next season? What are your main improvements? Where do you need to do improvement in your game? How did having your family around you help you dealing with the NBA?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I mean, during the off-season, trying to focus on my game offensively, my game defensively, watching film about what I did, stuff I could do better, stuff that worked and I got to keep working on.

Yeah, as far as my brother helping me, he definitely helped a lot during the whole season, me being able to have him for my whole rookie season was very special, coming to every one of my games, gave me advice. He's already been through it, so he's definitely helping me a lot, yeah.

**Q. What stands out to you most about this team now that it's been a full season?**

ALEX SARR: I would say just how everybody is motivated. Even though we didn't have the best record this year, the

energy around the building is really not reflecting that. Yeah, everybody's just working towards that. You can really feel the energy.

**Q. You mentioned playing center you're the backbone of the defense. How are your communication skills on the court? Are you constantly talking?**

ALEX SARR: I'm trying to. I think I definitely could do better. That's something I got to work on, too, to be even more of a voice defensively for the team.

**Q. Speak to your relationship between yourself and the other rookies, what it's been like to watch them grow over the course of the season.**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I feel like Ky, Bub, AJ and me, we're pretty close. Obviously AJ got here after us, but most of us already knew him. It's kind of, like, it was a seamless transition for him.

Yeah, I mean, we've been together all the way from the draft through the whole pre-season. We're just going through the same thing together. Yeah, just for us to share that experience, have that rookie year where we all get significant amounts of minutes, that's very special.

**Q. Among the goals for the organization at the end of the season was to establish a foundation for the culture and how this team operates. A year in, how do you feel that process is going, and how would you describe the team culture?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I think we're doing just that, trying to build what we're going to be about. That's just like everyday stuff that we do, all the work that we put in, how we come out for games.

I feel like we're doing just that, yeah.

**Q. How much time will you spend in France? How much time will you spend here or elsewhere in the United States this off-season?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I don't really know exactly yet. I'll go back to France for a little bit, for sure, and then definitely come back to DC for the most part of the off-season definitely.

**Q. How do you feel right now at the end of the season? You said it was quite intense with a lot of games. Did you find a balance for this season? Do you feel tired?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, definitely I think I found the balance,

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like, trying to get enough recovery while still working on my game, managing the games.

But yeah, I feel pretty good. We had a lot of games all the way from, like, March and April. Definitely going to rest for a little bit. Feel pretty good overall.

**Q. Do you expect to be part of the national team for this Euro basketball this summer? How do you see you can fit (indiscernible) which is pretty crowded right now?**

ALEX SARR: Yeah, there's a lot of good French players, so the selection is going to be very interesting. It's always an honor for me to be able to represent my country. Did it at the youth level. Haven't done it really yet with the adult team. It's very exciting.

**Q. Do you know if you'll play in Summer League this year?**

ALEX SARR: I don't know yet, no.

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