

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Alex Sarr

Media Conference



Q. Coming into now you're out of your rookie season, the expectations and more importantly about the growth over the jump season, what steps and what jumps did you take to head into the end of the season?

ALEX SARR: I think a lot of aspects like we worked on pretty much everything, defensively, offensively. Also the games in EuroBasket allowed me to work on different stuff also and was in the weight room a lot this whole off-season.

Q. I think it was eight blocks that you had during Summer League, setting a record. Defense being a priority this year, what strength regimen and nutritional regimen did you incorporate to continue to build your defensive presence?

ALEX SARR: I mean, yeah, I feel like that, like you said, the strength thing, also just being on court playing defense with these guys, having to guard guys in EuroBasket or just us when we're practicing, our schemes and stuff, we want to do.

Q. Playing with team France over the summer, what was that experience like and how did you use that opportunity to improve as a player?

ALEX SARR: Yeah, it was great. It was my first experience with the national team, something that was very important for me, and I wanted to do my first summer. It went pretty -- like not the way we wanted it to be exactly, but still a good experience, and it allows me to know what my summer is going to look like from now on playing with the national team.

Q. Will last week mentioned that you were the best switch defender in the NBA last year as a rookie. On-ball defense, how can you improve being an on-ball defender heading into year two?

ALEX SARR: I think just knowing the personnel, knowing the guy you're guarding. I feel like we do something that's caught in the middle, to be specific, so just keeping that in

mind, and just always doing stuff where I can get better guarding on the perimeter.

Q. A housekeeping question: Have you added any height or weight over the off-season?

ALEX SARR: Like half an inch, and weight, probably five pounds, something like that.

Q. Specifically what did you want to work on as you entered the off-season, and how did you attack that?

ALEX SARR: Specifically I would say positioning defensively, you know, that stuff about timing, shot blocking, stuff like that, my shooting.

Then everything, being a better decision maker with the ball, being a better roller, good reads with the short ball. So it really isn't a single thing. I'm always trying to get better.

Q. Specifically with the roll work, everybody uses it, sets it up a little bit differently. How did you approach that knowing that it may look a little different once the season starts? Whether it's footwork or whatever it was, this can travel with whoever I'm in the action with?

ALEX SARR: Yeah, just get a connection, but just the timing of when you get out the screen because those are easy points that you can get and they can really change the impact of the game.

Q. You talked about closing the middle on defense. Can you elaborate a little on what that means?

ALEX SARR: You just don't let your guy drive middle. (Laughter).

Q. When you talk about your positioning on defense, what specifically are you trying to work on when it comes to the timing?

ALEX SARR: I would say just being early in spots because

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then it puts you in a better shot blocking position for me, and same with close-outs, like every shot matters on where we are defensively.

Q. Will talked about the improvements that he wants to make as a rebounding team. How do you specifically do you want to improve?

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I think me being a better defensive rebounder will help our team rebounding for sure.

Q. What did you learn most about yourself as a competitor last year as a rookie, and what do you want to see from yourself in this year in terms of how you are described and classified as a player?

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I would say just like the impact I can have on the game my rookie season, and I would say for this upcoming season, maybe just being a bit more impactful defensively, being more impactful defensively, too. Just finding more ways to be impactful, be more efficient, block for shots, grab more rebounds.

Q. Your leadership style, describe what that would be for this year's team.

ALEX SARR: I would say just leading by example, like try and do everything right, and also be vocal because that's very much needed on the floor.

Q. You talked about being impactful with your jump shot, and given how important it is for your game, have you set any specific goals for yourself for a percentage you want to hit or anything like that?

ALEX SARR: Not like specific goals, but there's obviously some shots out there to take and then some other ones.

Q. What kind of shots are you trying to filter out then?

ALEX SARR: Obviously anything close to the basket. Obviously that's not my main focus right now.

Q. Alex, have you had conversations with Bub and Ky heading into your second season and what you want to see out of each other heading into your second season together?

ALEX SARR: No, we haven't talked about that together yet. I feel like we all got a sense of what we would like to see from each other.

Q. What's stood out to you about CJ McCollum?

ALEX SARR: He's very vocal. He practices. He runs.

You can see that he's been doing that for a long time. He gets to his spot. We all know how CJ plays. But yeah, it's nice to see.

Q. One question about your expectations for the team this year. What do you hope to achieve as a team, and how do you think you can bring something on the floor that might help reach a threshold for this year's season?

ALEX SARR: Yeah, I'd say just for us to compete every night, compete hard, don't back down from competition. I think that's the main focus for everyone. Everybody says we're a young team, which is true, but I think everybody is ready to compete no matter what.

Q. What advice do you have for international players?

ALEX SARR: Advice for international players, I'll say just to keep playing the game. Like there's opportunities everywhere nowadays. You don't really have to play for any type of -- like it just depends. You can play anywhere and get drafted to the league nowadays. I feel like there's a lot of opportunities out there.

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