

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## AJ Johnson

Media Conference



**Q. Why did you switch numbers and what does it mean?**

AJ JOHNSON: I switched to 4 because it was a childhood number I wore in middle school, through high school, and my brother Jalen, he wears No. 4, too, so it means more than just a number to me. That's why I switched.

**Q. You have a big reputation of high flying dunks. What's that next layer of your game that people need to be aware of for this coming season?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I would just say really every area of my game and just trying to amplify that on the court and just help us win games. Honestly, be a leader, just trying to do things on both signs of the floor to help my team win. Definitely every area of my game I'm trying to show that I'm not just dunking.

**Q. Is there any kind of internal friendly competition with the high-flying dunks?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I feel like with all of us it's a little bit of friendly competition, but I feel like that pushes all of us to be great. We all are good friends, but we all push each other too. But Cam, yeah, it's going to be a fun year for sure.

**Q. Housekeeping question: Have you grown at all over the off-season?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I think I grown maybe like half an inch, something like that, for a little bit, but that's all I know.

**Q. Any weight added?**

AJ JOHNSON: They said like nine pounds of muscle, I think.

**Q. This is your first full summer with Washington after getting traded. How have you improved on the court and how much does that help you heading into this season?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I feel like just learning the details of the game, just little things, and shooting and the skill stuff, we work on that every day. But really just understanding the game, I feel like that's went to another level this off-season, being with my coaches and my staff and my teammates. Yeah, it's been fun.

**Q. Talk about what you learned most about yourself from last year, if there are one or two things specifically that you can carry forward into this season.**

AJ JOHNSON: I would probably just say the grit that I have, just the belief in myself. I came to this team after being traded from my other team to come in and be strong mentally, just trying to get better, just taking advantage of every opportunity I get, and just to keep pushing, so I just liked how I handled it through the rest of the half of the season.

**Q. Knowing what you learned, how are you going to facilitate your approach in terms of what you're going to bring to the court tomorrow starting at the training camp?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I would just say I'm on the same thing, just trying to help my team win games and just get better every day.

**Q. Will told us you have an injury that you're dealing with --**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, it's nothing major. It's a little bone bruise above my calf. I've really been good to play and train and practice but they've been just having me sit just to be safe. It's the beginning of the year; they would rather me fully heal than play on it. Yeah, it's not bad.

**Q. We were talking to CJ and Khris about setting an example for the young players. What in your experience as a rookie were you able to pick up watching players like that?**



AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I definitely think it's good having vets like Khris Middleton and CJ and all the vets that we have. I feel like they definitely have a lot to spread, like a lot of knowledge to spread to all of us on the team. I feel like it's going to make us a lot better.

**Q. Thinking about this off-season, obviously you came in the middle of last year. What type of advantage has it given you now that you're settled into the city, you're well-oiled with the organization? How much of a head start does that give you heading into camp this year?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I would just say it gives me a good head start. But I would say just being with the team in the off-season during the breakout -- the jump season that we've had this summer, that's given me a big advantage just being with the team every day, going over our offense and defense, watching film. Regardless of what it is, I feel like being here the majority of the summer definitely helped a lot.

**Q. You mentioned earlier the trade from Milwaukee. I imagine at the time it probably maybe caught you off guard or something like that, but now months later, more time with the Wizards, what benefits do you see have come from Milwaukee trading you here?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, there's a lot of benefits honestly, just being somewhere where I'm wanted and there's so much opportunity to grow. Having teammates the same age as me and we can all push each other and stuff like that, it's definitely good for me I feel like.

**Q. What would you say you learned the most from playing over the summer, and what did you learn the most about your teammates, et cetera?**

AJ JOHNSON: I'd say I probably learned playing against my teammates and stuff like that -- yeah, I'd probably just say, just like I was saying before, the little details of the game that really make a big difference when it comes to game time and about winning games and stuff like that. But I feel like, yeah, just pretty much all the little things when it comes to our game that we play.

**Q. I know you generally want to get better at all things, but is there anything specific that you knew you wanted to work on this summer? Where was the lab? Who was in the lab with you? Who's going to be with you to keep you on that track during the season?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I would definitely say shooting was something that I was really trying to focus on, my shooting. Defense, as well, on the ball and off the ball. But yeah, I

would say all of my coaches and development staff that we have, pretty much I worked with all of them, and that's who I'm going to be working with this season. I'm excited.

**Q. There's going to be more competition in the guard room than there was in Summer League. How do you envision yourself fitting into the platoon here?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I see myself fitting good. I'm a competitor. I love to compete at the end of the day and just win games. I feel like me being myself for sure is something that the team can use for sure.

**Q. In Vegas you mentioned spot-up shooting and off-the-dribble scoring as some of your biggest emphasizing -- what you're trying to emphasize this off-season. How did you work on those specifically since then?**

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I would just say honestly, just everyday reps with my coaches and the staff, coming back in one, two times a day, just constant grind, but it's been fun for sure.

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