

# NBA Draft

Thursday, June 22, 2023

Brooklyn, New York, USA

## Victor Wembanyama



**Q. You obviously knew you were probably going to go first, but now that it's happened, what are your emotions that you're the No. 1 pick tonight?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I can't really describe it. It's still fresh. One of the best feelings of my life. Probably the best night of my life. I've been dreaming about this for so long. It's a dream come true. It's incredible.

**Q. If you could share with us those five minutes where obviously everybody was knowing what was going to happen and you have to wait, and then another moment after your first comments, I think you kind of disappeared for a moment somewhere. You were in the back. Could you tell us about those moments?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Longest five minutes of my life. This is when I started getting the butterflies, and it's where I started seeing my family get silent. Everyone watching their watch.

Then I got called, and I went to the back. I was congratulated by a lot of people there. I saw Adam Silver, shook his hand again, gave him a hug. Then someone gave me this (Spurs jersey). Someone knew this was happening somehow. (Laughter.)

I just got a lot of love.

**Q. About an hour before, maybe like an hour and a half before the draft, you came out, walked up on stage and then you kind of were walking off and you turned back and looked at it. Was it starting to feel real at that point?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah, this is when it started to feel a little bit real. But it still isn't completely real. At that moment, yeah, I started visualizing the thing.

**Q. When you got the phone call, I assume Pop, R.C. was on it. What did they say, and what did you say back to them?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: You know, very, very casual. I did get phone calls. Yeah, I was just told that they were waiting to work with me. They just wanted to reassure me

and to keep me going, because I was in the Playoffs in my season. It was very casual.

**Q. Is Pop exciting or intimidating --**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: He's not intimidating yet, but I'm sure he's going to get intimidating when I see him in real life.

**Q. There's an arena full of people going crazy in San Antonio, people driving down the streets honking horns and going nuts. What's your message to San Antonio Spurs fans?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I need to see footage of this. My message to them is I'm going to give 100 percent, make all that's in my power to make this franchise win, to have impact on the franchise and the fan base and the community.

**Q. You spent a lot of time with Tony Parker with ASVEL, Boris Diaw with Metro 92. What did they tell you about coming to the NBA and carrying on that legacy in San Antonio?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: They never talked to me really clearly about the NBA because they were such -- how I do say? It was so important, the seasons we were playing, that they didn't really talk to me about the NBA that much, but more about how to prepare for the NBA.

As we have known I was going to the Spurs for so long, they never really told me about the Spurs, either.

**Q. How do you feel about that first season? Do you have aspirations? Do you have objectives yet?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah. Some players have tried to win the championship, win a ring for years and haven't made it. I don't want to be one of those. This is going to be -- my goal is going to be to get closer and closer every time to the ring and to learn how to make it.

**Q. Curious, when do you earliest remember watching Spurs games on television? Was there a specific regular-season game, playoff game?**



VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Probably Finals game, 2013, 2014, around that time. Yeah, this is my farthest memory.

**Q. Right after you were picked, Pop did his press conference in San Antonio and talked about how it's important with you, as with all Spurs players, to not skip any steps. I'm wondering what that means to you, and also he said you'd expressed an interest in working with Tim Duncan. What do you want to learn from him?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Not skip any steps for me makes sense because it's easy to make that mistake. I'm glad I got people around me that can help me not make that mistake.

Tim Duncan, if I got the opportunity to work with him, is going to be -- I can't really think of a better role model.

**Q. You mentioned that you learned English and you tried to learn English during your process because you saw yourself in the NBA. After knowing that you saw yourself at the Spurs, did you think about learning some Spanish, knowing that the Spurs have one of the biggest fan bases in Latin America? Do you know any Spanish?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I've been thinking about learning Spanish for (a long time). But I've been kind of busy ever since the lottery. But this is going to happen some day, yeah.

**Q. Remembering that last moment when you first saw the San Antonio Spurs on TV and now going to them, what excites you most and what do you want to work on this summer?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Breakfast tacos. I've heard a lot about breakfast taco.

I can't wait to wear my first Spurs jersey. Yeah, I can't wait. It's the start of such a great adventure. You never know what's going to happen, and this is what's exciting. That's it.

**Q. Spurs fans are really happy with how happy you seem to be coming to San Antonio. I know somebody in your position, you can't really say it before it happens, but now that it's official, would you have considered yourself a Spurs fan before this day as you were growing up?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: A Tony Parker fan, for sure. Yeah, so I guess it made me a Spurs fan, also. I'm really glad -- I've felt so much love toward me by the Spurs fans

ever since May 16th. I think there's murals of me in the city center in San Antonio. It's just incredible. I could not ask for a better welcome than this. I really love the fan base, man.

**Q. The NBA shifted to small ball and now it seems like it's going back to the bigs. We have Joel Embiid, Nikola and now you at the top of their game. How do you plan to attack the top tier of centers in the league and what's your message to all those kids, the seven-footer kids who have growth spurt, what can they learn from you?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: You're right, the game shifted a little bit in the last couple years. I think it makes sense because you need a combination of skill but also of luck and genetics to be the best. The best lately have been bigs, and European bigs.

Yeah, the road is going to be very long for me to reach the top, but I'm ready to learn from anybody.

I don't know if, as you said, the kids, the seven-footer kids and stuff can learn a lot from me. But they can learn more from themselves. The most important is to know yourself.

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