

NBA Draft

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Brooklyn, New York, USA

Khaman Maluach



Q. Khaman, I'm sure this moment of being drafted has played through your head at least a couple times over the last few months. Did the moment meet your expectations of what you dreamed about this was going to be like?

KHAMAN MALUACH: Yes, the moment met my expectations. I didn't think I was going to cry, but sometimes I let the emotions out. I was so happy. Everything was just going through my head, my whole journey and my people and the continent I represent, the continent of Africa.

Q. Talk about who you're most looking forward to playing.

KHAMAN MALUACH: I'm excited to put on the Phoenix jersey that has my name, that has "Maluach" on the back. I'm excited to play for the Suns and step on the floor.

Q. When you mention your people and the continent of Africa, I'm curious, what does it mean to you to be an African man playing in the NBA? What specifically does that make you feel proud about?

KHAMAN MALUACH: It just makes me proud because I had beliefs. I believed in myself. I was delusional about my dreams. No matter what the odds are against you, it shows that you can win.

Q. Cooper Flagg goes 1, Kon Knueppel goes in the top five, you go in the top 10. Seeing your Duke teammates, even though you've only gotten to know them for a year or a year plus, what were your emotions seeing them drafted right before you being drafted?

KHAMAN MALUACH: It was so emotional getting to see my teammates, my fellow freshmen getting drafted. I was so happy for them because they deserve everything they have. They worked hard for it, for that moment, too.

Q. Khaman, this is obviously a big first step in starting your NBA career. What is something that you wish you could have told yourself when you started your basketball journey that you know now?

KHAMAN MALUACH: I mean, it's nothing much because when I started my basketball journey I believed in myself and that's what I told myself the whole time, like believe in yourself and let God work on everything else.

As I said, I was delusional about my dreams, and I believed in myself before anybody else did.

Q. You mentioned your family and the circle of people that you have here with you, and you even got emotional. What was it like sharing that moment with them and kind of that emotion that everybody expressed at your table outside?

KHAMAN MALUACH: It was so special. It's a special moment to me. It's a day I'll never forget in my life. I was just so happy my family was out there with me. I got to have my agent at the table and my head coach and had my circle around me, seeing one of the best days of my life. Them just being able to experience it with me was great.

Q. There was a reported trade that Mark Williams will also be heading to the Phoenix Suns. What do you think you could learn from another former Duke big to kind of start your career off and kind of him be in the same situation as you, being a big for Phoenix?

KHAMAN MALUACH: Mark has been in the league for a couple years, and I'm going to learn a lot from him. I'm going to learn how to navigate and how to get better and what stuff I need to do to be able to play throughout the whole year and get better.

Q. How did you feel seeing your support system react to this moment they're experiencing with you?

KHAMAN MALUACH: It felt great. It was a special moment seeing my family there and my support system there and them seeing me achieving my dream.

Q. So many people, when they think about Africa, think about strife, think about war, think about not so great things about the continent, let alone South Sudan. How much of a responsibility do you think you have in changing perceptions of what people think



Africa is in terms of thinking more about the resources, thinking about the people of Africa and South Sudan maybe specifically?

KHAMAN MALUACH: I think about showing them the good parts of Africa. I'm thinking about showing them the great places in Africa like Kigali, whether it's Senegal, whether it's the safaris in Africa and showing them the cultures we have and the people we have, which is different from the stuff they see on TV.

I just want to change the narrative, the narrative of our people and how they see my continent.

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