

NBA Draft

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Brooklyn, New York, USA

Kasparas Jakucionis

Q. Could you talk the emotions of today and what was going through your mind when you heard your name called?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: Yeah, thank you so much. I'm so excited. I'm so grateful to be in this moment, to live this moment right here. I know it doesn't feel real yet. I think it will kick in, maybe some day, maybe tomorrow, maybe later. I can't believe it. But it's just the beginning of something new, and I cannot wait to start working.

Q. The Heat have a strong reputation for player development and identifying talent. How do you feel you fit in and where can you grow the most?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: For sure I'm so happy. Happy to be able to be part of the organization of the Miami Heat. Like you said, the development part is very important. The winning culture is important to me because I like to win. I like to do everything I can for a team to win.

Q. Lithuania has such a strong basketball history, going back to Arvydas Sabonis, Sarunas Marciulionis, even when they played under the Soviet flag and even with the Lithuanian flag, winning the bronze medal in 1992. How much of those great players inspired you? I know they came before your time, but how much did the culture of basketball in Lithuania and those great players in the past inspire you?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: Yeah, for sure. In Lithuania, basketball is like a second religion. Everybody is playing. Everybody has their own hoop in the backyard, or if not they will find a court to play with their friends.

It's just the most popular sport, and everybody lives basketball. Everybody watches. Everybody tries to reach the best in basketball. I'm so happy to be Lithuanian and to be able to call myself Lithuanian and to try to represent the culture.

Q. You had Brad Underwood at your table. What did that mean to you to have him here tonight, and what did Illinois mean in getting you ready for this moment?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: A lot. We had a really great



relationship with Brad and with all the staff of Illinois. I've only been there for one year, but we connected so good. I feel like they're my family. I'm so happy to share the moment with them because I really believe that they trusted me this year. They gave me the keys to the team. I'm so grateful that they can be here in this moment with me.

Q. You're going to Miami, where a coach like Erik Spoelstra has had guys like Goran Dragic and other European players come and have success there. How excited are you to go to a team like that and what's it like to be able to play with a squad that wants their rookies to compete and be professionals?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: Yeah, I'm so happy to be a part of the Miami culture. Like I said before, it's all about toughness, all about winning. I want that. I think that's what basketball is about, and that's how you succeed.

Q. For you and Will to go back to back, what does that mean? The relationship that you have being at Illinois together and going into the league together on back-to-back picks, what did that mean to you?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: That means a lot. Back to back or not back to back, it will still mean a lot. Now it's even more fun that we went back to back. Just to share this moment together almost at the same time, it's pretty awesome.

Q. Looking at the team, obviously Tyler Herro, Bam Adebayo are the two mainstays of the franchise. How excited are you to join a squad that has two guys like that?

KASPARAS JAKUCIONIS: Yeah, I'm so happy. I think I can fit in pretty well. Just to be able to play with Bam in the pick-and-rolls and try to share the ball, playmake and try to find open shooters like Tyler Herro. I'm so happy to be there.

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