

NBA Draft

Tuesday, June 23, 2026

Brooklyn, New York, USA

AJ Dybantsa



Q. AJ congratulations.

AJ DYBANTSA: Thank you.

Q. First and foremost, now that it's over, you got a coach and I won't say who it was, said that this meant a lot to you to be the No. 1 overall pick. Now that it's in the books, how much did it mean? And second question is, there's a group of people in Brockton right now having a watch party. There are a lot of people in Boston, Patrick Ewing, Jimmy Walker, Will Blaylock, Terrence Clarke. For you, what does it mean to put Massachusetts basketball at the level it's at right now?

AJ DYBANTSA: Yes, to answer your first question, being the No. 1 pick was -- it's meant a lot to me. Obviously me being No. 1 throughout all my high school career, I definitely wanted to be a staple to be No. 1 in the NBA Draft and be in the same conversation with LeBron James and Cooper Flagg, Allen Iverson and guys like that.

To be a staple in Boston, I just try to put on my state, Brockton bred, 508. I like helping back in the community and kind of giving kids hope. There's a lot of kids that play basketball out there and think they can't make it, but once they see me, they are like, okay, they might have hope. It might not necessarily be basketball, but anything they do. If they want to be a doctor, engineer, anything, I just try to be their role model.

Q. I know you just recently visited D.C. What did you think of the city, and do you have any message for the fans of the Washington Wizards that you're about to play for?

AJ DYBANTSA: It was amazing. Obviously I landed, got to meet the staff, got to see the facility. It was great.

Recently went to see a Mystics game when they played the Liberty. They actually won. I think I might have been some good luck.

I'm super excited for all the D.C. fans. Super excited to get there tomorrow and get to work. Summer League coming up soon. I'm just ready to work.

Q. Nike put out an advertisement today and had Wale featured in it. I wonder what your plans are with them and how excited you are to be a partner of theirs?

AJ DYBANTSA: Super excited. Been with them for the last three years and they have been doing a great job just marketing.

But shout-out to Wale. I know Wale had been wanting me to come to D.C. for a while, so glad for that to happen with him.

Q. So when did you find out that you would be going first? And we saw on social media you made a beautiful, heartfelt post for Father's Day. You were in D.C. Did you know already when you made that post with the picture from Washington, D.C., or how did you actually find out that you would be taken No. 1?

AJ DYBANTSA: I mean, I found out when y'all found out. 8:11 p.m., just now. I mean, they called my name, when they said Anicet Dybantsa was the overall No. 1 pick. Got up there, prayed and just hugged all my family. Super surreal.

But true story, I was going to post another picture. But it was like me as a baby and I was naked, and I was like, I can't post that. The next picture was me in the White House. I just post it, and then I see a whole bunch of stuff up on Twitter. I was like, oh, that's a coincidence.

Q. Talking about this class for a second. The first eight picks were all freshmen out of college. Just how strong you guys are as freshmen coming into the pros?

AJ DYBANTSA: It's been great. I've been playing with these guys or against these guys since I was 13 or 14, going to USA circuits, NBPA camps, Nike academies. Just seeing the same faces. It shows credit to the hard work and discipline and focus that we're able to do this for X amount of time.

I think down the road we can continue to do this. They are comparing us to a certain amount of draft classes. Obviously we have to see how that plays out and how we do in the league, but if we talk it into existence, I think that

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would be pretty special.

Q. You land with a Wizards team that made some big veteran additions at the deadline. What do you think you bring to this team and what do you think about the prospects of winning right away?

AJ DYBANTSA: Yes, I think I bring versatility. Obviously them re-signing Trae, having AD. I think I can just fit in as like an off-ball guy that can score in different ways, score in transition, score off the catch, score off the dribble.

But also they challenged me, when they talked to me, like, "If we pick you, we want you to play defense 94 feet and pick up." So I definitely bring that, too.

Q. Obviously you've become the first-ever BYU Cougar to be selected 1 overall. What does it mean to do that for the Cougars you left behind?

AJ DYBANTSA: It means a lot. They welcomed with open arms. I give the utmost thanks to BYU, KY [Kevin Young] and the whole staff for just believing me. I know I wanted to commit when I went on that visit. I saw Egor [Demin] today too. It's just BYU family all around, and I just give them thanks.

Q. You've always said that you've been No. 1 your whole life. What is the first thing you want to show Washington once you get there?

AJ DYBANTSA: I mean, a little bit of everything. Right now, we are in the offseason. I'm going to get there and work out. But I'm going to try to just interact with the fans. I think I've got to do something on Thursday. So see a lot of the fans and interact with them, and just kind of show my personality.

Q. You're joining a Wizards team with Trae Young at point guard and other veteran experience. What does it mean to you to have those type of guys with you day one?

AJ DYBANTSA: I mean, it means a lot. Just coming into the league and not having any vets is probably tough. I mean, it is tough. But having vets, like All-Star guys like Trae Young, Anthony Davis, guys who have won chips like Anthony Davis, I think I can kind of pick their brains and just get some easy knowledge.

Q. What's the balance of enjoying this moment? You were just the first overall pick in the NBA Draft but also knowing that you've got a whole career ahead of you. What is that fine line almost?

AJ DYBANTSA: I know I have a lot of work to do. But obviously this night is just a celebration of all the hard work I've done in the past, and so now I'm going to celebrate. But now I have to get on a plane tomorrow morning, and I'll probably work out tomorrow, if I can, if they let me.

Q. The Wizards have been trying to get off the mat for quite some time now. Why are you built differently to really change this franchise and get them moving in the right direction?

AJ DYBANTSA: Like I said, my versatility. I think I can bring whatever they need me to do. So if they want me to be strictly like a defender, I think I can do that. If they want me to be strictly offensive, I can do that. But I think I can bring two-way abilities, being able to score off the catch, dribble. Been working on my catch-and-shoot three a lot. Trying to guard the best player.

And obviously me being able to fit in with other long wings they have there defensively, I think we can really mess things up.

Q. Obviously you had the ball a lot at BYU obviously as well. Trae Young has the ball a lot whenever he plays. How do you think you guys can find a balance on offense?

AJ DYBANTSA: I think I can definitely find a balance. I can play off-ball. I mean, not a lot of people have seen that, obviously, going to BYU.

But I can play off-ball. I've been playing off ball with Prolific Prep. I played with Tyran Stokes and other No. 1 guys. When I go to USA [Basketball], I'm not the No. 1 option. So I can definitely play off-ball.

Obviously I have to pave my way. Obviously I'm walking in with some vets. So definitely have to earn my spot.

Q. You've said that your dad helps you handle a lot of responsibilities that you can focus on basketball. I'm sure it's going to be hard to do, but can you put into words what your dad and your family means for this moment?

AJ DYBANTSA: It means the world. I don't know how to explain it. So many sacrifices that he's made. He quit his job just to retire to come move in with me at Utah Prep so I'd be safe. Sending me over to California by myself to go get a better basketball experience.

All the little stuff that I didn't notice he was doing at a young age is obviously paying off now. But he's my dad. I mean, he acts as my manager. He does a whole bunch of stuff



that he doesn't have to do. But I just give him the utmost thanks.

Q. We saw your full name on the gold basketball, the full name announced by the Commissioner. Are we having a rebrand going into the NBA, or can we stick with AJ?

AJ DYBANTSA: Y'all can stick with AJ. But I wanted Adam to call me Anicet because I want to also honor my dad. He is Anicet Dybantsa Sr. It's his name. I mean, it's my day today, but without him I wouldn't be here. So I wanted to add his name.

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