

NBA Draft

Tuesday, June 23, 2026

Brooklyn, New York, USA

Bennett Stirtz



Q. I guess just your first thoughts on going to OKC and what you think about that fit?

BENNETT STIRTZ: It's a crazy whirlwind just with the trades and everything, but super excited to get going. The work starts now. It was a long process, pre-draft and everything. But now it's go time.

I think the fit couldn't be better. Organization, just the people around it, nothing but good people. Community is great. Love the city of Oklahoma City. Just excited to create relationships with everyone and get going.

Q. Could you just talk about your path from Division II? You told me that you thought you might never play even Division I, to now, you know, going to one of the best teams in the NBA.

BENNETT STIRTZ: Yeah, I never would have thought. I thought I would have been at D-II my whole career, but opportunities presented themselves and went with it and seized the opportunity, and I'll never look back.

Every step of the way, I needed that just to get me where I'm at today. Super grateful for all those stops.

Q. During the draft period, did it feel fast when the picks were going by? Did it feel slow? What were your emotions as that was all happening?

BENNETT STIRTZ: In the moment it was super slow, but now looking back, it went by super fast. I tried to stay in the moment, but pretty anxious, pretty nervous, pretty excited. All those three traits was something I was feeling. Yeah, it goes by quick.

Q. When you worked out for OKC, what stood out? And I guess just other things during the pre-draft process that you remember about the organization?

BENNETT STIRTZ: Again, just great people. Not a lot of the guys were in there, but just know how hard they work. Watched a bunch of their games the past three years. I know some guys on the team. Payton Sandfort obviously went to Iowa. Got some connections. But all the way from the coaching staff, front office to the players, they run it the

right way and the culture is something that's really fun to watch.

Q. When you join a franchise like this that obviously has a lot going right, how do you set your own personal goals for how you fit in immediately and making incremental progress?

BENNETT STIRTZ: I think it starts with creating relationships and knowing what the team needs out of me. Making it clear, talking to Coach [Mark] Daigneault, talking to Sam [Presti] and seeing what they want from me and just being myself out there.

I'm pretty versatile and I can do whatever they need me to do. Obviously there's going to be ups and downs, and there's going to be controversies. But going to keep my head down and stay working.

Q. You said Payton, one of the former Iowa players reached out to you. What's your relationship like with him, and thoughts on joining him there?

BENNETT STIRTZ: Honestly he texted before this happened, the draft. So it's kind of crazy, full circle.

But we have the same agency. Last year, called him about advice from him. So just that whole family, the Sandforts, super great family, great people. Excited to get to work with him.

Q. At what point did you know the trade was going through? Was it when they announced it, or did you get a heads up ahead of time?

BENNETT STIRTZ: Yeah, my agent, it was probably like a minute before Memphis picked. He's like, You're going to OKC. Before anyone else knew, I knew.

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