NBA Draft 2019
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Brooklyn, New York

Zion Williamson
NBA Draft

Q. Could you just talk about feelings about going No. 1 overall in the draft?
ZION WILLIAMSON: I don't think it's feelings I can really describe. You know, as a little kid you say you want to go to the NBA. People basically say, you've got to have a plan B because the chances of doing it is just little to none. For me to be selected No. 1, I mean, I can't dream it no better than that.

Q. There's been no secret about your draft position for months. There's been no suspense here tonight that changed anything, and yet in the moment your emotions sort of welled up on you. Can you talk about why you think that happened the way it happened tonight when you heard your name?
ZION WILLIAMSON: Because I love the game of basketball. You can hear people say things like, oh, that it was likely I was going to go No. 1, but I guess you don't know until you actually go through it. Hearing my name called and I was able to make it on stage without a tear, shake the commissioner's hand, but in the interview my mom was standing beside me, and my emotions just took over.

Q. How much responsibility do you feel to the people that have been there for you up to this point, to the people that are going to pay attention to you now, and particularly to yourself as the No. 1 pick, not just drafted into the league but the very first player of this class?
ZION WILLIAMSON: Honestly, as much as responsibility, I love the game and I love to win. Whatever the team needs me to do, I'm willing to do it, because I feel like people remember winners.

Q. Just wanted to ask, to play for a guy like Coach K for however long is a privilege. What will you take from him from everything he’s taught you, the year that you’ve had, that could possibly make the transition to the NBA just a little bit easier for you?
ZION WILLIAMSON: Just be myself and trust myself because that's what got me this far. Just continue to do that while honing my other skills and just keep my love for the game.

Q. What excites you about the roster you’re going to play, especially playing with Brandon Ingram and Lonzo Ball?
ZION WILLIAMSON: What excites me the most is the fact that they're young and they're close to my age so they can help me a lot more, like how to deal with this transition. I think we can build something over there.

Q. People have known you for a while because of things like Instagram and stuff like that, but when did you first think that the NBA could be more than a dream and was an actual possibility for you?
ZION WILLIAMSON: When the college coaches started coming to my house and telling me that they expect me on campus six to eight months, and then just see me later. I'm thinking to myself, I don't know about that. I'll probably be there like two, three, four years, who knows. And then I met Duke and Coach K, just telling me that I can keep up the hard work, then I can leave after this year. It's different. Coach K, top five figure in basketball telling me I can go pro after one year, I mean, what other motivation do you need?

Q. You coming to a relatively young team, do you see yourself stepping into more of a leadership role right off the bat because you've been so anticipated as a figure in college and even high school?
ZION WILLIAMSON: Yeah, I see myself trying to step into a leadership role. When I think about doing that, I have to also understand my teammates and understand where their heads are at because I think if you're not on the same page, things don't usually go well. I think it's a matter of us coming together, making the same goals and just willing to win, and I think we can do something special.

Q. What do you believe is the biggest misconception about you going into the league?
ZION WILLIAMSON: Gosh, I'm not sure. I think that I get labeled. I just get labeled. I was in a position of hearing about somebody else a lot with like, this player can do this, that, and you want to see for yourself. So I think with people just trying to label me, I don't think it's that serious because I'm just looking to play basketball and win.

Q. What is one attribute that the whole world should know about you?
ZION WILLIAMSON: I'm going to do anything to win. I'm just going to do anything to win.

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Q. How much have you studied about managing money, having an investment portfolio, not just depending on an agent to do that? What’s your strategy?

ZION WILLIAMSON: My strategy is I'm still learning. I'm going to learn as much as I can about what I need to know. Any tips, please, shoot them. I like to hear all kind of advice.

Q. You’re the first player to be born in the year 2000 to be drafted into the NBA. You’re making history in many ways. How will you change the league, especially how players relate to younger fans in the future?

ZION WILLIAMSON: Before I -- how old are you?

Q. I'm 15.

ZION WILLIAMSON: I respect that. I like that.

You know, times change. I think that's why there are so many debates about who people think the greatest players of all time are. I think if you were in the time of Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell, you'd probably say one of those two. Or if you were in the time of Jordan, you'd say Jordan. In our generation, a lot of them say LeBron. So times change, and I think younger fans like younger players.

Q. Who are you looking to for advice and counsel on how to handle all the fame and fortune, and what’s the best advice you’ve gotten so far?

ZION WILLIAMSON: Just veterans from all teams who have been in the league for like 10-plus years, maybe seven-plus years, because they've usually been through it all by then. And the best advice I've been given is be myself and keep my love for the game.

Q. LeBron James told me he has a lot of advice for you and you know how to reach him. Did you get to talk to him before the draft? Will you talk to him? And what do you want to learn from him and from all the veterans in the league?

ZION WILLIAMSON: I actually did see that interview. Yeah, I probably will hit him up. Hopefully he responds to me. My questions would probably be what do I have to do to maintain, what do I have to do to just try to make my way to the top.

Q. Everyone saw the moment that you shared on the stage with your mother and the emotional interview. You said she sacrificed a lot and she means everything to you. How do you describe your mother for people that don’t know her?

ZION WILLIAMSON: How would I describe her? In a lot of words. Tough love. She would always be the first one to keep it real with me. It was never she's trying to cover it up with love. She would always keep it real with me. She taught me growing up, and whenever I needed something, she would do everything in her power just to get it for me and my brothers. She put aside her dreams just so me and my brothers could have a chance at ours. I don't think a lot of people are fortunate enough to be in that kind of situation, so I just thank God that I got a mother like I did.

Q. Reflect on the draft process, doing it with two of your teammates, two of your good friends. Talk about that process.

ZION WILLIAMSON: It makes the process more enjoyable knowing that three of us from the same team are able to get our names called. We would talk about how we were all born in three different parts of the world and our journeys led us to the same part. We just found that crazy. And we wished the best of luck for each other.

Q. Have you given thought into being able to play with Cam again potentially in New Orleans?

ZION WILLIAMSON: Well, now I have. Yeah, if Cam came to New Orleans, I can ask him much more. Cam is a very talented, special player. I said this at media day yesterday: I wish you were at the scrimmages we had before the season. I used to look at Cam like, man, this dude is different. He hit five threes in a row and then come dunk up the middle of the lane. His ball handling. That size is just different. I have a lot of respect for Cam. If we can get him in New Orleans, I would love that.

Q. I moved to New Orleans about 10 years ago, and I think that city is really looking forward to your arrival, and I think you're going to enjoy it. It's a city like no other with so much going on culturally. I wanted to take the focus off basketball for one second since music plays such a big part and ask you, do you have a favorite brass instrument?

ZION WILLIAMSON: Do I have a favorite brass instrument? Wow. Wow, that's a great question. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. That's a great question.

Q. I know one of the exciting parts about getting ready for the draft is finding out what to wear. How exciting was that for you as far as fashion?

ZION WILLIAMSON: I just trusted Adrien [Sauvage] with this suit. He said your skin will pop in this color. I was like, I don't know about that. But he's been in the fashion business for a long time and he trusts my game, so I was like, all right, I guess we'll do the cream white suit. And when I saw it in person, I was like, you know what, I actually might look good.