

Media Day

Saturday February 15, 2020

NBA All-Star 2020

Giannis Antetokounmpo



Q. Welcome to Chicago. What do you think of coming here and honoring a legend like Kobe with the format?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: The format is amazing. It makes you want to play hard and compete against one another. Each quarter you have the opportunity to win, and it makes it way more competitive. But wearing 24 and LeBron wearing number two, it's a big honor. I wouldn't want it any other way representing Kobe and Gigi in tomorrow night's game.

Q. Giannis, what does it mean for you to lead this new generation of international players?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: I'm just trying to do my job. I try to play hard every day, try to stay humble, try to do whatever it takes to win, and I hope other international players can see that and follow my footsteps, the way I followed other guys before me, you know, Pau Gasol, Manu Ginobili, Tony Parker, Toni Kukoc, all of those guys.

Q. What was your relationship like with Kobe?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: A guy that mentored me in the last few years of my career, a guy that was always there for me. In the regular season, the playoffs, a guy that told me that whenever I need something, I could just reach out to him, and he was really always there. If I needed something, he would text me back, call me.

Growing up, he was my idol. Not just my idol, probably the whole generation, a lot of people my age. For us, he was the Michael Jordan of our generation. He was one of those guys that gave back to the game so much, gave back to the players. A lot of people when they're so great, they don't do that. There was a quote that said that talent is worthless if you're not willing to share it, right? And he was one of those guys that was sharing his talent with us, and he's going to be definitely missed.

Q. How do you balance being competitive in this game with not getting hurt?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Yeah, I know it's going to be a long season. Obviously, it's the All-Star Game. You want to have fun, but at the end of the day, you play against guys that you might meet in the playoffs.

So you're going to try to have fun -- I'm just competitive, and I'm just going to try to go out there and get a win, get my first All-Star [win]. I'm 0-3 so far, but at the end of the day, I've just got to keep a smile on my face because we've got to put on a show for the people.

Q. Coming to Chicago this year, what do you think of the season Zach LaVine is having and his future potential?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Zach LaVine is having an unbelievable season. He's helping his team in any way he can. They're, what, ninth, eighth? Ninth in the standings? So if he keeps doing it, they're going to be able to make the playoffs, and they're going to be fine.

Q. On the Bucks' mindset coming out of the All-Star break:

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Our job is to take it, obviously, day by day. We want to win as many games as possible, but our goal is to win the whole thing. So obviously, as I said, you want to win every game, but if you win every game, that would be great. But we cannot lose focus. We can't lose track of our actual goal, which is get better every day, keep learning every day, and win the whole thing.

Q. Giannis, what's your favorite part about All-Star Weekend in Chicago?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: So far, I haven't had time to enjoy it as much. I came last night. I woke up early this morning. Right now I think so far one of my favorite parts was when I was signing -- usually when you walk in, you sign some balls, and then it kind of hit me this is going to be my fourth year being in the All-Star Game. It's been a long journey, and hopefully we can keep going.

Q. Giannis, now that you have a baby, can you -- from the responsibility of having a baby, how do you feel?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: So now that I have a baby, I kind of feel sleepy. I need some rest. I need sleep. But, obviously, you're in a good place. When you have a baby, it's the best thing that could ever happen to you. It's the biggest blessing, like bringing a life into this world.

I'm in a good place. I'm happy. So usually when I'm

happy, I play well.

Q. What skill are you an All-Star at off the court?

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: I'll say that I'm a couch potato off the court. That's one of my best skills. I just try to chill and watch as much TV as I can. So probably one of my skills is that I'm a couch potato.

Q. On the Olympics:

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Man, that's far away from now. I'm just trying to take it day by day, just try to be in the moment. That's what I've done my whole career. When that opportunity presents itself and I'm able to represent my country with my brothers, that would be awesome if my brothers are also there.

But I'm just going to try to listen to my body, and if I'm good, I'm healthy, and they give me the opportunity to represent my country with my brothers, that would be awesome if we could qualify for the Olympics.

Q. On Steph Curry:

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: Obviously Steph Curry is an amazing talent, amazing player. The game is different without him, so we definitely -- actually, let me be honest with you. The players, we kind of enjoy that he's not playing -- not enjoy that he's hurt. We want him to be healthy, but he just makes it way, way tougher for the rest of the league, but I'm happy he's going to be back healthy and happy that he's going to be able to help his team win some games.

Q. On the Basketball Africa League:

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO: It's amazing creating a league in Africa. Giving opportunities to African talent and African players to go out there and showcase their talent. I knew it was going to happen, and I'm pretty happy I was able to execute it with Nike and Masai [Ujiri] and all those people.