

Josh Howard gives the low down

People that follow my interviews can tell you that I do a Q&A with Dallas Maverick star guard Josh Howard every summer. It's almost like a tradition. This summer was no different.

A lot of you probably don't remember that my first ever Q&A for *The Chronicle* was with J-Ho. We did an interview during his senior year at Wake Forest. The uncut version of that interview was something else. I'm not going to go into details about it. He and I talked about that funny interview a couple years ago, though. The truth of the matter is J-Ho and I have great conversations every time we talk. He simply gives you something that you want to hear. He's honest. Howard's funny, and he keeps it real with you every time he opens his mouth.

I'm going to go ahead and let you know that he and I didn't talk too much about the radio interview with Michael Irvin that caused so much controversy. I told him that I didn't want to go there on paper. But we touched on a number of other things, though.

Number Five and I talked about his camp, his love for old school cars, his new coach and next season. J-Ho and I also talked about whether or not he planned on getting into a serious relationship anytime soon.

There were a number of other topics he and I touched on during a very fun interview earlier this week. Take a look at some of the things I was able to get out of Josh on Tuesday evening.

Anthony: Josh, what's going on?

Josh: (Smiles) Nothing much. You all right.

Anthony: I can't complain, man. It's great to see you. And, this camp is something else. I thought I'd say that real quick.

Josh: It's just a blessing. We've had a great turnout. I guess I am making everyone eat their words. First, I'm giving praises to God for giving me the ability to go out there and play ball so that I can do things like this. I've got the right team around me. Guys like yourself help me out a lot. And, I'm just staying positive.

Anthony: No doubt. I've got to ask you this, Josh. How were you able to maintain when all of the bad press hit you during the playoffs, and people seemingly started to crucify you?

Josh: It took me to the point to where it made me want to work harder. It let me see that a lot of people form an opinion about things they don't even know about without asking the person that said it. It's sad that the world is like that. I flipped it around and turned it into a positive. That's my motivation now. I'm going to keep using it.

Anthony: How did you take watching guys like Skip Bayless and others talk about you?

Josh: I just wish they would contact the person they're talking about before they go out and make their assumptions. That's what I think would be fair. Instead of just going out there and blasting a person. And, they'll give another person credit when they don't deserve it. Find out what's really going on. I don't really pay that much attention to it.

Anthony: I feel that. Um, do you want to be seen as a guy that's purely about his community?

Josh: Definitely. That's the way I've been from the jump. I had a chance to play with the Olympic team. But I turned that down. That would be a big dream for anybody else to go out there and win a gold for the United States. For me, growing up in Morningside and walking to Reynolds Park, I didn't have a male role model besides my step dad and my older cousin.

I feel like if I'm around these young men and young women I can show them that there's a positive guy that's going to give them a chance — no matter what. Hopefully they can see they can do whatever they want to do as long as they stay positive.

Anthony: I was with you at the league championship games last night (Monday night).

Josh: Right.
Anthony: And, I've seen you here during the regular games. (Smiles.) It's funny because most guys would've just given their money and not

really come as much. But you're interacting with the crowd. You're seemingly so much a part of this league.

Josh: It's a special thing. It's hands on. I'm able to see the lives of these kids change with me being here. It's just a blessing. Hopefully one day they'll be another Josh or Josh-ette Howard playing in the NBA or WNBA. (Both laugh.) That's what I really want.

Anthony: (Smiles.) A lot of people want to know what your personal life is like. Have you settled down with anyone?

Josh: (Laughs.) Nah. I mean, I'm slowing down. But no girlfriend. I'm living life. I'm trying to get stuff set, so that when I do decide to settle down she won't have to worry. Nor, will the kids have to worry.

Anthony: How does a guy like yourself, or any professional athlete determine whether a female is keeping it real, or simply wants you for what you have?

Josh: (Both laugh.) Number one will be prayer. Number two you have to trust in your gut feeling, and the people that's around you. Just watch people. I'm a big watcher. I don't say much, but I'll watch you all day. You can read a lot of people off that.

Anthony: Let's talk a little basketball.

Josh: (Laughs.) OK.

Anthony: The season ended on a bad note for you all. How ready is Josh Howard for this upcoming season?

Josh: I've been working out. I took about two weeks off, and started right back with the new coach, Rick Carlisle. I'm excited. That's the only word I can really say to describe how I feel about it. It's a new opportunity with a new coach. And, we get a full season with Jason Kidd. We only had him for 29 games. With him being a future Hall of Famer you have to like our chances.

Anthony: But I know you were close to Devin (Harris). Were you really feeling that trade?

Josh: Hmm. I understood the business of it. As a friend, that was my guy. Him, Marquis (Daniels) and Diop.

Anthony: You recently got Diop back, though.

Josh: (Smiles.) Right. He's back now. That's another thing. I think Dallas is trying to help



Getty Images/ NBA Photos
Dallas Maverick guard Josh Howard goes up for a score during a first round playoff game last season.

me out now. They are trying to do things to make me more comfortable. I appreciate them, even though it took five years for them to do that.

Anthony: (Laughs.) No doubt. I was just on the website

looking at the banner and it had you, Dirk and Jason Kidd. You were first, though.

Josh: (Smiles.) Yeah. I've been there for five years now. Check my track record. I've done so many positive things.

And that's one of the things that I've always hung my hat on. I've never been a negative person.

Anthony: How much did it affect you to see Avery Johnson fired at the end of the year?

Josh: It's a business. Everything coach Johnson taught me on the court is valuable to me. He taught me a lot about defense and being more patient on the court. Things kind of went wrong at the end of the season. I felt like he didn't represent the team like he should've. I really wasn't expecting him to be fired. But someone felt the same way I did, evidently.

Anthony: OK. I saw you on "MTV Cribs." (Smiles.) You were bragging about that Kool-Aid. Is it really like that?

Josh: (Laughs.) That Kool-Aid is great. My mom can vouch for that. My little brother too. I'm the only one in the house that could make the Kool-Aid growing up. I wasn't playing about that. And, I wasn't playing about anyone challenging me in pool.

Anthony: I think T.B. (a mutual friend of ours) might try to challenge you.

Josh: (Smiles.) I know he'll play me. He's probably the only one that will play me. He's a good challenge.

Anthony: No doubt. If you could trade places with anybody who would it be?

Josh: I'm still on Hugh Hefner. I told you that in college. I want to be my age, though.

Anthony: I know you're cool with a lot of entertainers and rappers. You have rap star Jadakiss coming through later this week. How do you come in contact with guys like that?

Josh: I don't even know where I was at. We just bumped into each other somewhere. I'm real close with one of his guys, Top Cat. I hang out with him. It's great to have them be a part of this. I have some other guys coming through. Devin Harris is outside now. Josh Powell is coming. Jerry Stackhouse is coming. Shammond Williams will be here tomorrow.

Anthony: OK. What have you been bumping lately?

Josh: Of course, Lil' Wayne — the hottest rapper alive.

Anthony: No doubt. And, shout out to Big John (Lil' Wayne's bodyguard).

Josh: (Laughs.) Shout out to Big John all day. My boy is in the video stunting. We have people from Winston that are doing things around the world. I'm proud to be from here.

Anthony: Who would you like to play one-on-one?

Josh: Earl "The Pearl" Monroe.

Anthony: Do you play any other sports, besides pool, in your spare time?

Josh: I can play golf a little bit. I don't really know what club to use when I get out there. But that's about it. I just find peace with my family. I'm real simple.

Anthony: Some people try to get your contact information from me, and I'm like no way. But how can people reach out to you if they want to do something with your foundation?

Josh: Josh Howard Foundation.com. You can go to the Dallas Maverick website. Come up to Reynolds Park. Mr. B (Bryant McCorkle). He's the man they can talk to. That's it.

Anthony: OK. Let's finish with a little free association. Um, Josh Howard.

Josh: Still on the rise.

Anthony: NBA.

Josh: We'll come back to that one.

Anthony: Carmelo Anthony.

Josh: My guy.

Anthony: Jadakiss.

Josh: My guy.

Anthony: Pimp C. (Late rapper)

Josh: Rest in peace.

Anthony: Chris Leak. (Local Morgan Stanley financial advisor)

Josh: I've heard of him. (Smiles.) Just playing. Savvy business guy. Great guy.

Anthony: Steve Nivens. (A mutual friend)

Josh: That's my homie.

Anthony: Winston-Salem.

Josh: That's my home, my blood. I live, breathe and die Winston.

Anthony: Dallas.

Josh: My home away from home.

Anthony: One more question. How's your grandmother?

Josh: Love her to death.

Hanging in there. Not a care in the world. Just worried about me having kids one day. That's about it. (Both laugh.)

Anthony: (Smiles.) I hear that. Well, that's it.

Josh: (Smiles.) OK.

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