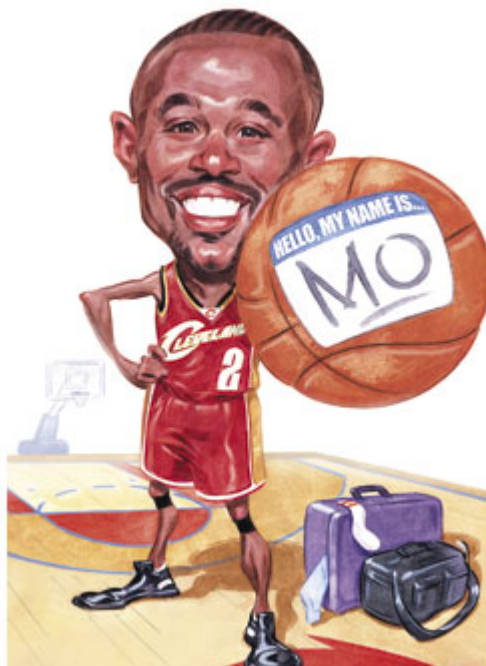


## Just Say Mo

*All off-season, the faithful have pined for the Cavaliers' missing piece that could push the team past the Boston Celtics and once again to the top of the Eastern Conference. Then came the late-summer trade for Mo Williams.*

Lynne Thompson



Darren Gygi

The 25-year-old Jackson, Miss., native appears unfazed by the collective hopes riding on his 6-foot-1-inch frame. That's a tall order in the post-Larry Hughes era — one in which the Cavaliers' new acquisitions are carefully scrutinized, endlessly debated and judged by everything they do on the court.

But Mo Williams seemed OK with all of it when he took a break from practice at the Cavaliers' Independence training facility to talk to us about his surprise trade from the Milwaukee Bucks, the high expectations for the Cavs 2008-09 season and what it's like running alongside LeBron.

### **You've said you were surprised to end up here. Why?**

Cleveland is in the same division as Milwaukee. And normally, you hear rumors come up before something happens. I didn't hear nothing. So it was more of a shock than a surprise.

### **How long until the shock wore off?**

Probably about a week. I've never been traded before, but I've been around people who have been traded. I've found myself calling people, saying, "Man, that's tough. But you just gotta live and make the best of it, blah, blah, blah." (Laughs) I didn't get one phone call like that. All my phone calls were like, "Man, you're going to Cleveland!" That's how you realize how great of a situation it is — even people in Milwaukee were saying it like, "Man, I'm happy for you."

### **You got married recently. How does your wife, Kesha, feel about the move?**

Oh, she loves it. She's just as excited as I am. She knows how frustrated I'd be at home, wanting to win. And she feels the same way, through my frustration.

### **You were recently quoted as saying of the Cavs, "This is a different team. It was a different culture in Milwaukee." Can you elaborate on that statement?**

There's a difference between talking about [winning a championship] and actually putting yourself in a position to do it. In Milwaukee, we talked a lot about wanting to do this, wanting to do that. But at the same time, the people who were around the situation, it wasn't geared to what they wanted to do, so the coaching was totally different. Definitely, the talent is here, the coaches and structure are here.

**There's been so much emphasis on the Cavs needing a point guard to take some pressure**

**off LeBron. How do you feel about the expectations on your position and performance?**

It's definitely a challenge. The great thing about it: I have a great team around me that relieves the pressure a little bit. But I know I have to come in prepared and ready, which is what I'm doing now.

**How has it been working with LeBron?**

Being around him, you realize he's a great person — obviously, he's a team-first kind of guy. His goal is the same goal as everybody else on the team: to win a championship.

**What do you like most about Cleveland?**

People are very friendly; they're very accepting, especially of myself. They're very excited about the sports teams here. And they're hungry for something big to happen.

**Joe on Mo**

When we caught up with Joe Tait while reporting on the dramatic rebirth of sportscaster Bruce Drennan (see page 134), we couldn't pass up the chance to ask him about his take on the addition of Mo Williams. Says Joe: "If he stays healthy, he is an outstanding acquisition. With Delonte West back in the fold, this year could be a very big year for the Cavaliers."