

Sneaker Shopping With Nick Young

By Dan Steinberg | July 21, 2009

When Nick Young was a kid, his mom would sometimes borrow from the rent money to help buy her son shoes. Not like, to help buy him shoes so that he'd have something on his feet. To help buy him shoes because he was a sneakerhead who would play football in his basketball shoes and rip them up after three days and then want another pair.

His favorite all-time shoes were his '93 Jordans; after he wrecked those, he went to get the knock-offs from Payless, "but when I wore those everybody was talking about me," he said. "I didn't get a chance to wear them no more after that."

So when Young signed his first pro contract, his first trip was to an auto dealer to get a Range Rover, and his second trip was to the Beverly Center for an old-fashioned shopping spree.

"First time I was really just buying what I wanted," he said the other day, from inside the Caesar's Palace mall. "It felt good. I had to slow down, though. It caught up to me. So I budget myself now, I'm on a little budget."



What's the budget?

"You know, a good amount," the Wiz guard said. "Sometimes I go over my budget, but they've been getting on me, so I have to slow down."

On this particular day, the budget wasn't much of a problem. Young is a Nike athlete, and we were at Nike Town, and he had a thousand-dollar store credit to get shoes for the rest of Summer League, plus shorts, shirts, slippers, a sweatsuit, and some of the same for his childhood friend, Adrian Pascascio.

"You're not getting anything," Young told him at the beginning. "See, this is why you don't bring them with."

(He was joking. Everything in this item is a joke, just so we're clear.)

Anyhow, Young said he's gotten about 100 pairs of Nikes since he signed his shoe deal, and Summer League is a chance for him to experiment with colors that aren't allowed in the regular season. For his first two games, he had gone with some sky blue Kobes, but he thought the style on those was



already worn out. But as it turned out, the shoe-shopping part of his shoe-shopping trip was pretty brief: just look at the model, ask for the size, and add it to the pile. Athletes, I guess, don't try on their shoes.

"If you into fashion and you've got the style already in your head, you already can picture how it's gonna look on you," Young explained. "I already see myself in the air, and everybody's looking at my shoes."

He wound up with four pair, one of which he would wear while scoring 19 points the next day, a black, red, white and blue pair with tri-colored laces, and another pair inspired by Reggie Miller, in honor

of his new turn as a jump shooter. But mostly, Young looked at the clothing; he called himself the Wizards' best casual dresser, though Caron Butler and Antawn Jamison and some of the others are better at wearing clothes for sitting behind desks, and he always needs to keep the supplies up.

"If anybody want to buy me something out there, ever, bring it to the game or something, I wear an extra large, maybe a 2x, 36 in jeans, and size 12 in Nike Dunks and Air Forces, and in a basketball shoe a 13," he told me. "I still need the support, you know, I need the help out there. I'm a struggling player in the NBA."

He also took time to look at, say, the USC clothing collection.

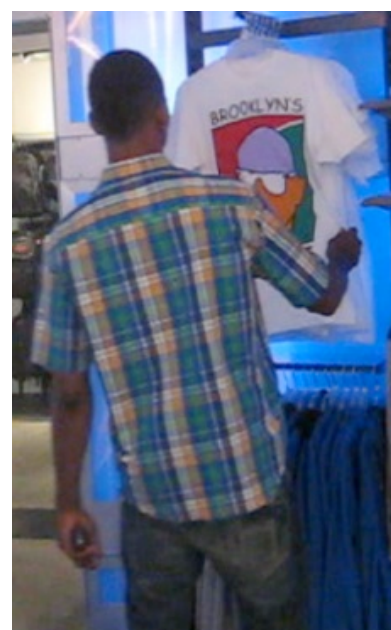
"See, look what I did," he said, pointing to the sweatshirts and t-shirts. "USC? You didn't use to see USC stuff in stores. They've got a whole section, thanks to me, Gabe Pruitt, Taj Gibson, O.J. Mayo...."

Young said USC has the best colors in college sports. And powder blue and gold?

"That's a little soft," he said. "You know, it'd be good for Easter colors, but if you're trying to intimidate somebody you've got to bring out the gold and cardinal."

Young looked at the Kobe Hand t-shirt, four fat fingers with four fat rings, but decided he couldn't buy one of those. He also looked at some of LeBron's shoes, which seemed like a no-no to me. "He's a part of the Nike family, and when you're a part of the Nike family, you're family, you know?" Young said, his D.C. credibility shrinking with each word. "But the story lately with LeBron getting dunked on? That's crazy."

I asked him whether he would let the world see the tape, if it was him being dunked on at the Nick Young Camp.



"I know whoever did it, the kid, it was an exciting moment for him," Young said. "But if he had his own



camp and those were his rules, you've got to follow the rules, by any means necessary. The rules had his back. I would have done the same thing. That's like him dunking on me," he said, motioning to Adrian. "I'd take the camera. No one's gonna see it."

After about 25 minutes, the two men passed various shirts and boxes and shorts back and forth with the cashier, trying to get as close to \$1,000 as possible. They wound up with \$999.97, about five bags worth, which Nick gestured at Adrian to take. Adrian rolled his eyes.

Everything that Gil does to him, he do to me," he said, as he picked up the bags.

"Your arms getting tired yet?" Young asked. "You got a far walk."

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/dcsportsbog/2009/07/sneaker_shopping_with_nick_you.html?wprss=dcsportsbog