



20-second timeout: Utah Jazz rookie forward Gordon Hayward

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When Gordon Hayward last came to the attention of the general sports public, the forward was watching a halfcourt, buzzer-beating shot hit high off the backboard and off the rim to seal Butler's 61-59 loss to Duke for the NCAA Division I men's basketball championship. Hayward, 20, then entered the NBA draft and became a somewhat surprising ninth overall pick by the [Utah Jazz](#), the first first-rounder in Butler history.

The 6-8, 207-pounder spoke to USA TODAY NBA writer Jeff Zillgitt:

What was it like putting on an NBA uniform for the first time?

"It's pretty exciting. It's something you always dream about as a kid. It's pretty cool."

What has the last six months been like for you since leading Butler to the Final Four?

"It seems like the time has gone by quickly since the NCAA tournament. It's all been kind of crazy, but it's been fun."

How so?

"Not many people really knew me outside of Indiana before the tournament. It's gone from that to where I'm in Florida and somebody will stop me and try to talk. It's been a whirlwind. It's been a dream come true."

Who is the biggest influence in your life?

"Definitely my father. He taught me how to play the game. He was my coach growing up. He's probably going to live with me in Utah for a little bit. That'll be really nice."

Did you have a role model outside of your family?

"As a basketball player, it was always [Steve Nash](#). I had his jersey growing up. At the time, I was smaller, a guard. I just loved the way he played the game. He played with so much passion. He always got his teammates involved. I thought he played basketball the right way. Seems like to me, from a distance, he's doing the right things off the court, too. He was who I looked up to growing up."

Have you met him?

"No, but we play them the second game of the season. That'll be pretty cool."

Have you looked at any other games on the schedule?

"I checked out when I'm coming back to Indy, because that's what everybody's asking me, 'When do you play the Pacers?' "

Do you know that date?

"I think it's February 25."

It is.

http://www.usatoday.com/sports/basketball/nba/jazz/2010-10-19-gordon-hayward_N.htm?csp=34sports