



PLAYERS

JOHNI BROOME'S ROOKIE SEASON WAS A DUD. HE'S WORKING TO AVOID A REPEAT.



JOHNI BROOME STRUGGLED TO MAKE THE NBA JUMP AFTER LEADING AUBURN TO THE FINAL FOUR IN 2025

AMELIA STEBBING / HHQ

He was a National Player of the Year and led Auburn to the Final Four, but Broome is once again reshaping his body and expanding his game to succeed at the next level



SAM OSHTRY

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LAS VEGAS — Johni Broome caught the ball at the top of the key, took two dribbles to his right, spun back to his left, and drilled a left-handed floater over a helpless defender, a familiar sequence for anyone who watched his three seasons at Auburn.

But Broome's seemingly effortless bucket wasn't in Neville Arena. He was playing for the Philadelphia 76ers' Summer League team in Las Vegas over the weekend.

and eight with the Delaware Blue Coats, the Sixers' G League affiliate, before partially tearing his meniscus in February. He was cleared before the playoffs.

Transitioning from starring in front of more than 50,000 fans at the Final Four to sitting outside the Sixers' rotation and playing before fewer than 2,000 fans in the G League can be humbling. Broome, however, views it as another opportunity to adapt.

"I've had to make adjustments my whole career," Broome told Hoops HQ. "I started at Morehead State. Going from high school to college was an adjustment. Going from Morehead to Auburn was an adjustment with the athleticism of the SEC and the physicality. And then going from the SEC to the NBA was another adjustment."

Broome was not a five-star high school recruit with high-majors calling. He played at Morehead State, a mid-major program, for two seasons before transferring to Auburn, where he won SEC Player of the Year, finished as a Naismith Trophy finalist, and led the Tigers to a Final Four in 2025.



BROOME SPENT TWO SEASONS AT MOREHEAD STATE BEFORE TRANSFERRING TO AUBURN AHEAD OF HIS JUNIOR SEASON

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Now Broome, who will turn 24 Sunday, is back at the bottom of the totem pole. He believes the traits that got him here will keep him here. "I'm a plug-and-play guy," he said in a hallway outside of the Sixers' makeshift practice gym after a

The NBA Summer League, a schmooze fest for NBA personnel and a showcase for younger players, is filled with players like Broome, who excelled in college but haven't successfully pivoted to the NBA just yet. The 11-day event serves as a proving ground to demonstrate they deserve one of the roughly 450 spots in the world's top league.

Broome's impressive Summer League stint, especially in the first two games, shows how much he has improved since he was drafted 13 months ago. He averaged 21 points and 12 rebounds in the first two games before an underwhelming third outing. Although Broome sees Summer League as a step above college basketball, he admits it's closer to the G League than the NBA. Still, practicing against bona fide NBA players throughout the season led to improvement.

"Dealing with guys like Joel [Embiid] and [Andre] Drummond every day, the physicality of those guys makes you have to adjust," Broome said. "It makes you want to get in the weight room. It makes you have to work on your body and get stronger."



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Broome kept resurfacing one theme: transforming his body. He stressed the importance of playing and guarding multiple positions, which will ultimately determine Broome's staying power. In college, Broome's 6-foot-10, 244-pound frame overpowered smaller, weaker centers. His back-to-the-basket approach doesn't translate to today's NBA, where post-ups have become obsolete, and frontcourt athleticism and physicality are elevated. "That's what I'm trying to work on more... to be able to guard fours, be able to guard fives," he said. "Also be able to play the four, be able to play the five."

Pre-draft scouting reports often described Broome as slow, undersized, and unathletic. His 24.5-inch vertical limits his ability to play above the rim, and while he's a capable shot blocker, he lacks the size to defend NBA centers consistently. The Sixers coaching staff has emphasized to Broome the importance of developing into a better shooter, allowing him to serve as a floor-spacing power forward or stretch five. He shot 27 percent from three in his final season at Auburn



BROOME IS WORKING WITH SIXERS ASSISTANT TJ DILEO TO HONE HIS THREE-POINT SHOT

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"I want him to shoot threes," DiLeo said. "He's been working on it. I think it'll be a part of his game."

He's 2 for 15 (13.3 percent) from three-point range in Summer League, but he's clearly a more willing three-point shooter than he was at Auburn. "They told me to keep working on my shot," Broome said. "I shot thousands of shots this summer, so I don't think my confidence is ever going to go away because of the time I put in when nobody was watching."

Another area where Broome can carve out a role is on the offensive glass, which has become increasingly valuable as teams prioritize the possession battle. Despite his vertical, Broome is a tenacious rebounder. His 16 total offensive rebounds are tied for the most in the Summer League. Plenty of role players have carved out successful careers by becoming a menace on the offensive boards.

"They want me to crash, kind of have a higher motor," Broome said. "That's why I've been trying to get double-doubles. Twelve, 13 rebounds a game."

"His instincts are unbelievable," DiLeo said. "Every shot he's following. Guards are downhill, he's following it. He knows where the ball is coming off the rim. ... Value the possessions in this league, and if you got a guy that can do

Broome signed a four-year contract after the draft, but with only one fully guaranteed year remaining, the upcoming season is pivotal for his NBA future. Cracking the rotation might seem like a long shot, but finding a role and proving he can contribute would extend his career.

Buried beneath every critique in Broome's pre-draft scouting reports was one recurring word: winner. He's figured it out at every other stop. His track record says he'll figure it out again.

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Sam Oshtry

Sam Oshtry is a multimedia sports reporter covering the NBA and college basketball. He has worked at theScore, iHeart Radio, and local Philadelphia radio stations. His work has also been featured in Front Office Sports. A graduate of the University of Maryland's journalism program, Oshtry won the John McNamara Sports Writing Award.

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