

Sam Presti



Sam Presti is in the midst of his 10th season with the Oklahoma City Thunder after being named the 11th General Manager in club history on June 7, 2007. A year into his tenure with the Thunder, Presti was promoted to Executive Vice President and General Manager by Professional Basketball Club Chairman, Clayton Bennett.

During his nine-plus seasons with the Thunder, Presti has worked diligently to assemble the building blocks for long term success both on and off the court. Dating back to the start of the 2009-10 season, Presti and his staff have watched the Thunder amass the second best record in the NBA during this span (behind only San Antonio).

With Presti at the helm, the Thunder has captured five Northwest Division Championships and has finished the regular season with a winning percentage of .610 (equivalent to 50 wins) in six of the last seven seasons. Additionally, the Thunder has finished with a top five record in four of the last five seasons.

Presti's consistent focus has been to utilize the NBA Draft to establish the foundation for sustained success on the floor and in the community. He selected Russell Westbrook with the 4th overall in the 2008 draft. Westbrook has since become a five-time All-Star, and this past year became the first player to win back-to-back All-Star MVP awards since Bob Pettit in 1958 and 1959. Meanwhile, Steven Adams was named to the two consecutive BBVA Rising Stars teams after being selected by the Thunder with the 12th overall pick in the 2013 NBA Draft. Most recently, Presti acquired the second overall pick in the 2013 NBA Draft, Victor Oladipo, also a member of two consecutive BBVA Rising Stars teams.

After moving to Oklahoma City in July of 2008, Presti has stressed the importance of community involvement for both Thunder players and staff. Under his leadership, Thunder players have made more than 2,000 community appearances in and around Oklahoma City. Presti has also made it policy for every new player and staff member to tour the Oklahoma City Memorial and Museum soon after joining the organization.

Under Presti's guidance, the Thunder has advanced to postseason in six of the last seven seasons including five straight years (2010-2014) and at the conclusion 2012-13 season, Oklahoma City became just the second team in NBA history (Boston Celtics; 1955-1960) to increase its winning percentage for five consecutive seasons (while maintaining a winning percentage of .700 or better in two of those seasons). Dating back to the 2011-12 season, the Thunder became Western Conference Champions on the heels of the 2010-11 season in which the Thunder became the youngest team in the prior quarter century to reach the NBA's Western Conference Finals.

During the 2009-10 season, Presti's third year at the helm, Oklahoma City experienced one of the largest turnarounds in NBA history. A year after winning 23 games, the Thunder concluded the 2009-10 season with a 50-32 record (.610) and captured the franchise's first playoff berth in Oklahoma City. The 27-win improvement was tied for the eighth largest improvement in NBA history. Presti was named NBA Executive of the Year by The Sporting News at the conclusion of the season.

Presti has been on the NBA's Instant Replay Committee since 2009 and has served on the league's Competition Committee dating back to the 2011-12 season.

Prior to joining the Thunder, the 40-year-old Presti held a variety of roles with the San Antonio Spurs. After starting in 2000 as a video intern for Gregg Popovich, Presti moved up through the front office ranks in San Antonio before being elevated to the position of Vice President and Assistant General Manager. As a member of the Spurs, Presti was part of NBA Championship teams in 2003, 2005 and 2007, as well as five division titles.

Presti earned his bachelor's degree in 2000 in communications, politics and law and a minor in psychology from Emerson College in Boston, where he was the first Rhodes Scholar nominee in school history. The Concord, Mass. native served as team captain of the Emerson College basketball team during both his junior and senior seasons. In addition, Presti earned All-Academic honors two times and was twice selected to the Great Northeast Athletic Conference All-Tournament team. He was honored with the Emerson College Young Alumnus Award in 2005. Presti has also completed Harvard University's Continuing Education program on leadership and decision making.

Presti currently resides on the board of the Oklahoma City National Memorial and served as chairman of the Oklahoma Standard campaign, a movement built on the foundation of resilience, compassion, consistent acts of honor, service and kindness.

With the support of the Thunder, Presti has established the Forward Thinking Leadership Development Program within the Oklahoma City public schools. Additionally, Presti is actively involved with PeacePlayers International (PPI), a global outreach program focused on bringing children and communities together through the game of basketball. He also serves on the Board of Directors of Shooting Touch, an organization that grants graduating college seniors the opportunity to travel the world and use the platform of basketball to help foster education and influence positive social change in third world global communities.

This past summer, Presti was awarded the Humanitarian Award from the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice. Furthermore, he was named Oklahoman of the Year from Oklahoma Magazine for 2016. Presti was recognized as Oklahoma City University's 2012-13 recipient of the Abe Lemons/Paul Hansen Award for Sports Excellence and he also won the Oklahoma March of Dimes Sports Headliner Special Award for 2013.

An accomplished drummer, Presti has produced three music CDs with all proceeds benefiting the Extra Ordinary Needs Fund at Children's Hospital in Boston. Also, Presti established the Keenan Smith-Anthony Halls Scholarship Fund at his former high school, Concord-Carlisle, to assist students with their college tuition.

Presti and his wife, Shannon, have a son, Nicholas Ruben. Shannon continues to serve as the Director of Teen Leadership Initiatives for the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City.