



SPORTS

Michael Beasley Says Mental Health Struggles Don't Define Him

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Michael Beasley #11 of 3's Company stares down Stacy Davis #5 of the Ball Hogs during BIG3 Week Six at Comerica Center on July 23, 2022 in Frisco, Texas. (Photo by Cooper Neill/Getty Images for BIG3)

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After a few personal setbacks, former NBA star Michael Beasley is on a mission to return to competition at its highest level and he's looking to inspire a generation in the process.

Beasley, the 2008 number two overall draft pick, and his personal battles on and off the court have been well documented over the years but he told Cheddar News that those issues don't define him. He recently partnered with Aura Health, an app focused on mental wellness, as he looks to help destigmatize open conversations around emotional health.

"[Aura Health] has given me a platform to tell my story and to share my mental health with the next person. It's [given me a chance] to do my part in ending the negative stigma on mental health," Beasley said.

Founders Steve and Daniel Lee launched the Apple awarded service after watching their mother struggle through years of depression related to a divorce from their father. Being witnesses to the power of proper mental care placed a responsibility on their shoulders to extend that arm of aid to even more people.

The decision to partner with Beasley came when the Lees first met him. He had qualities that they related to: being vulnerable and the desire to help others become better people.

"We realized that we share the same mission -- to change the cultural narrative around mental health, fight the stigma, and restore the world's mental wellbeing. It is a rare opportunity to work with a world-class athlete on his/her mental health journey as it is not a conversation that is talked about often, and we're excited to become a platform for Michael to share his story," the Lees told Cheddar News.

Hoops Help Heal

Help through the Aura app isn't Beasley's only outlet. He said just being able to play basketball has been therapy in and of itself. While he hasn't played on an NBA court since the 2018-19 season when he was with the Los Angeles Lakers, he just made a return to Ice Cube's Big3 league, where he said, "guys may be a little older, a little heavier than they used to be but the competitive nature is the same and the fouls hurt the same."

"Basketball is my safe place. It's literally a perfect world mixing the app with what I'm doing on the basketball court. It makes it easy," he told Cheddar News.

Beasley has a storied past with his original draft team in the Miami Heat after being traded and returning a number of times and the love for South Beach is still there. When asked if there was an ideal team that he thought he could not only help push culture forward but also help rack up some wins, he immediately said Miami.

"I know the culture. I know the players and they need help, especially if they're talking about getting Dame [Lillard]," he said. He did offer up a nod to Boston Celtics star Jayson Tatum and noted him as his favorite player in today's game.



Michael Beasley #8 of the Miami Heat posts up Cartier Martin #20 of the Atlanta Hawks during a game at American Airlines Arena on November 19, 2013 in Miami, Florida. (Photo by Mike Ehrmann/Getty Images)

Always on 'Go Mode'

When it comes to readiness, Beasley has the "stay ready so you don't have to get ready" mentality. Prior to tapping back in with the Big3, he said his work ethic in the gym has been relentless. He attributed much of his continued development to his mental health improvements and said it has allowed him to be a more balanced individual.

Beasley admitted that the road to a better mental state was not an easy one.

"Being vulnerable is actually my biggest fear [but] I really want to show that to the world. That it's not as easy a [click of a button](#). It takes time. It takes discipline and it takes really wanting to do it," he told Cheddar News.

Above all else, he said he just wants to be a better man and an even better role model for his children.

"[I am] teaching my sons to be a better man than I am," he said. "It's ok to be vulnerable. It's ok to need help. It's ok to admit that we're not perfect."

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