

CELTIC PRIDE

JARED SULLINGER enters the Boston Celtics season as a team leader



PLAYING FOR THE BOSTON CELTICS means playing for the tradition, the fans and the community, and Celtics forward Jared Sullinger knows this very well. “When you come out, you have to understand you hold up a high tradition, and you have to hold it with pride,” he says.

Sullinger enters his third year as a player in the National Basketball Association, and is proud to have started his career in Celtics green. He has shown marked growth since his rookie season, and, at a towering 6’9”, he is set to start as the team’s power forward.

Earning the position seemed like an easy fit for Sullinger—after he put in the dedication and hard work. “We take it as a nine-to-five,” Sullinger says. Between treatments, practice and extra workouts, it’s a full-time job to keep up his best effort on the court.

At just 22 years old, Sullinger was drafted by the Celtics after his sophomore year playing for Ohio State, and was the 21st overall pick in the first round of the 2012 NBA draft. The Celtics were lucky to get him—Sullinger was considered one of the top players in college basketball that season, though his draft stock fell due to injury concerns. “My biggest accomplishment is being drafted and being able

to be here,” he says. “And being able to play with Paul Pierce.” Pierce—a legendary Celtic who played his first 15 years as a pro for Boston before being traded to the Brooklyn Nets following Sullinger’s rookie year—is one of only three players to score more than 20,000 points in a Celtics uniform. (The other two are Larry Bird and John Havlicek.) For Sullinger, it was a great opportunity to have played with and learned from such a great player—as well as former teammate Kevin Garnett, who was traded along with Pierce—if only for a short time.

In true Celtics spirit, Sullinger doesn’t have any personal goals for the season—he only has team goals. “I just want to win,” he says. “We want to do something other than what we did last year, and that’s win.” The 2013–2014 season—the first year of a rebuild-

BOSTON CELTICS HOME OPENER

October 29 at 7:30 p.m. vs. the Brooklyn Nets.
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ing project under then-new head coach Brad Stevens—wasn’t what championship-minded Celtics followers are used to, yet with Sullinger in the game and devoted fans in the stands, there are definite signs of a comeback in the air. —*Samantha DiMauro*