

NBA: Kirilenko signs with Minnesota T'Wolves

Wednesday, 12 September 2012

Russia's top basketball player, Andrey Kirilenko, sees supporting Kevin Love and inspiring younger players as his main tasks at the Minnesota Timberwolves.

-

Kirilenko is returning to the NBA this summer after a very successful year with CSKA Moscow and a bronze medal performance with Russia at the London Olympics.

"[Minnesota coach, Rick Adelman] said that he was glad that I'm coming," he told Sport-Express newspaper. "He said he didn't expect that they'll be able to drag me out from Russia as I was doing so well with CSKA. We've known each other for a long time, since Utah and his Sacramento were fighting in the playoffs."

"According to Adelman, he sees me as a sort of a bear leader – an experienced player, who'll be an example for the young talent Minnesota has in the squad," the 31-year-old added.

One of those talents will be Kirilenko's compatriot Aleksey Shved, who also joined the team before the Olympics.

"I have my own formula of success in the NBA, which consists of three components: coach's trust, hard work and luck," Andrey said. "Basically, I think that Aleksey has a very good chance here. But it depends on him, whether he'll take advantage of them. Of course, I'll do everything to help him. But it's him, who'll have to prove he's good enough to the coach."

AK-47 also says he realizes that – unlike CSKA and Russia – he's not going to be the leader of the Timberwolves.

"It is clear that Minnesota – is first of all a team of Kevin Love," he stressed. "During the last two years, he's come a long way – from just a very good player to an NBA superstar. And it's him, who'll move the Wolves in the coming years. But, no matter how great you are, you can't win alone. All superheroes have assistants, who are always ready to support them in their hour of need. That that's the other thing on my job description."

Kirilenko is currently resting after a long season and is expected to arrive at Minnesota's training camp in the last days of September.