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Keyon Dooling Talks Business

The Bucks point guard gives himself off-court business options.

by Kyle Stack / @KyleStack

Keyon Dooling has never felt comfortable enough as an NBA player to play without a backup plan. The Milwaukee Bucks guard, who's playing for his fifth team in 11 seasons, has used the same grit he displays on the hardwood to open doors for himself once his career ends. He's always tried to stay flexible, to be able to transition to a different career if playing in the League no longer remained a viable option.

That's why it was so fitting that he led a roundtable among high school students and senior citizens in early November as part of the Bucks' community outreach program. The ASSIST (Active Seniors Supporting Influencing Students Transitioning) program that he participated in was intended as a discussion about the economy and entrepreneurship.



The event provided benefits for the students as well as the seniors. Students learned about handling adversity, the importance of networking and the qualities demanded of a good leader. In turn, they helped educate the seniors on using technological programs. For Dooling, it was an opportunity to help students understand all the career paths they can choose. In a recent phone conversation following a team shootaround, he revealed he's familiar with giving himself career options even as he's charted a path for himself as an NBA journeyman.

"Me being a middle-of-the-pack player, I've always had to do right by my money," said Dooling, who's earned slightly under \$27 million in his career, according to basketball-reference.com and hoopshype.com. "I've always had to try things off the court. Some things fail, some succeed. The life experience you get from going through life's challenges is second to none."

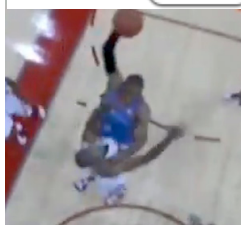
Dooling studied business during the two years he spent at the University of Missouri from 1998-2000, but he has never completed his degree. That's something that will have to wait until his playing days are over, as his responsibilities as a basketball player and husband and father to three daughters are paramount. "During the season, it's too much to do school with basketball and family," Dooling said of the study hours required to finish his degree.

He vowed to get his degree, admitting that he needed it for his next career. And what might that be? "I want to be a GM," Dooling claimed. "The business of basketball is by far my favorite spectrum of business, and it's something I want to pursue when I'm finished."

For now, Dooling has his hands in a few different ventures. He owns a club in Miami called Club Play South Beach, and he's in the beginning stages of starting a magazine with his wife, called Sportsality.

"It's a magazine that shows athletes in a different life," Dooling explained. He stated that many times athletes are sensationalized by the media, whether it's for the large amounts of money they make or for controversial

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off-field and off-court situations they find themselves in. Sportsality, Dooling emphasized, would shine a light on the positive things athletes are doing for themselves and for others, with philanthropy being a consistent theme in the 'zine. "A lot of times [the media] miss the true essence of what athletes are," he said.

Dooling also has a sizable stake in a branding company called Global Village Concerns. GVC, as its [website](#) explains, provides schools with "the engine to position your organization to generate revenue 24 hours a day, seven days a week with zero up front or downstream costs to all participating schools."

That his off-court business interests still center around sports shouldn't come as a surprise. As previously mentioned, Dooling aspires to become a general manager for an NBA team. His current role as Vice President of the Executive Committee for the NBA Players Association has given him an essential understanding of basketball economics.

Now that he sees the light at the end of his NBA tunnel—at least on the court—he realizes how important it is to set himself up for a smooth transition after his career ends. And he's found himself identifying with many of his peers in that regard.

"Everybody has those conversations, especially when you get older," Dooling said. "The young guys don't really know what direction it's gonna go. They kind of think it's gonna last forever. As your days get numbered, you want to align yourself with people who have common interests and can be beneficial and positive in your life."

Whatever business success Dooling finds in the future, he emphasized that he wants to be happy and to continue to put in the type of work that's enabled him to play in the League for more than a decade. "I consider myself someone who's a hard worker, a stand-up guy, so I want to continue to learn as much as I can."

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