

How did they pick Dirk Nowitzki to speak for Guitar Hero?

November 11 2008, By Victor Godinez

Dirk Nowitzki sure is a cool guy, but I'm not sure GameStop and the marketing experts behind the Guitar Hero franchise did enough research before picking the Dallas Mavericks star as their spokesman.

Two weeks ago, Dirk made an official appearance at a GameStop store in Plano to promote the new Guitar Hero: World Tour.

As what looked like about 2,000 screaming fans waving camera phones pressed in, I snagged a small corner from which to interview the big German.

They tried to sneak Dirk in the back entrance, but the crowd noticed him almost immediately and went wild, and Dirk turned bright red and grinned.

After he made his way to the tiny, roped-off corner at the front of the store, he signed a few guitars and talked to a few reporters.

As I tilted my head nearly straight up into the air to talk to him (and at 6-foot-2, I don't have to do that for many interviews), I asked him whether he played a lot of video games.

"Nope."

Somewhere, a GameStop marketing executive began to experience chest pains.

Well, have you played much Guitar Hero?

"I think I've played it like one time."

(GameStop exec fumbles for the phone to dial 911.)

Have GameStop or Activision hooked you up with an early copy of World Tour?

"No, but they better!"

(Exec tumbles to the floor, vision going dark, wheezing for breath.)

What about the other guys on the team? What games do they like?

"A lot of Madden, sports games."

(Exec flatlines.)

Dirk was a heck of a good sport, though, and after posing for countless pictures, he took to a stage in the parking lot.

First he threw autographed jerseys into the crowd and then drew names for bigger prizes, and that's when he displayed a quick wit that I think most people missed.

Several weeks ago, the Mavs traded little-used guard Eddie Jones to Indiana.

During the raffle at GameStop, one of the goodies was a pair of Mavs tickets to an upcoming game against the Indiana Pacers in Dallas.

As Dirk was rummaging in the box of names, he asked out loud into his

microphone, "Who's going to the game?!"

And then, almost under his breath, before announcing the actual winner, he said, "Eddie Jones is going."

I LOL'd.

After that, while the PR people said Dirk wasn't going to play a song from World Tour, he went ahead and sat down with a guitar, snatched a pair of sunglasses from one of the chubby Mavs Maniacs dancers on the side of the stage, and strummed through Nirvana's "About a Girl."

Then Dirk mingled with the crowd a bit longer, climbed into his dusty SUV (seriously, can the man get a car wash?) and slowly backed out of his parking space while trying to avoid flattening any of the dozens of fans who'd converged.

Good times.

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Citation: How did they pick Dirk Nowitzki to speak for Guitar Hero? (2008, November 11) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-11-dirk-nowitzki-guitar-hero.html>

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