

Former Ohio State Point Guard Mike Conley Wins NBA H-O-R-S-E Challenge



Former Ohio State and current Utah Jazz point guard Mike Conley won the first-ever NBA H-O-R-S-E Challenge on Thursday night.

📺 NBA HORSE Challenge 📺 @MCONLEY10 goes reverse over the backboard to win the NBA Horse Challenge presented by State Farm! pic.twitter.com/J8a38OSaM9

— NBA (@NBA) April 17, 2020

Shooting in his indoor gym in Columbus, Conley — who is averaging 13.8 points, 4.3 assists and 3.2 rebounds in his first season with the Jazz — defeated former WNBA All-Star and Hall of Famer Tamika Catchings in the first round of the event by a score of one letter to five. He then eliminated former NBA All-Star and 2004 NBA Finals MVP Chauncey Billups in the semifinal before knocking off current Chicago Bulls guard Zach Lavine in the championship round, both with a score of two letters to five.

Other competitors in the H-O-R-S-E competition included current Atlanta Hawks point guard Trae Young, former Boston Celtics small forward Paul Pierce and current Oklahoma City Thunder point guard Chris Paul, as well as WNBA player Allie Quigley (Chicago Sky).

Throughout the competition, Conley used his off-hand and a mix of trick shots to make things difficult for his opponents.

“If I could do it over, I would be all right-handed,” said Conley, who is left-handed. “I shoot so much better right-handed, it’s crazy. But it’s still my off hand.”

Lavine, a two-time NBA Slam Dunk Contest champion, used his athleticism and six-inch height advantage to give Conley a letter early in their matchup, tapping the glass on the right side of the basket with the ball before converting a reverse layup on the other side. But Conley’s creativity, which included one shot with his eyes closed and another over the backboard, gave him the edge.

“He had some tricks I hadn’t seen before,” LaVine said. “He made some really, really tricky shots.”

After the game, ESPN hinted at broadcasting another H-O-R-S-E challenge amid the coronavirus outbreak that has the sports world on halt, to which Conley said he'd return to defend his title.

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