# Strength and conditioning work on Gold Coast key to Matt Hodgson's NBA dream

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VISITS to the Gold Coast are the backbone of Boomers basketballer Matt Hodgson's ambitions of reaching the NBA.

Hodgson, who celebrates his 27th birthday on Thursday, is spending time at Miami working closely with Ultimate Sports Performance strength and conditioning coach Joey Hayes in a bid to improve his troublesome knee and ultimately gain a performance edge.

The 211cm giant with size 18 shoes has been plagued ever since badly damaging the meniscus in his right knee in 2014.

"I know that Joey is obviously very good at getting people's performance better but if I can't get my knee better, it doesn't (matter)," Hodgson said.

"His big focus is helping me get that right and then once that is right, obviously adding in that extra edge that other guys probably don't have."

Hayes is offering all sorts of techniques to do so, with wide-ranging outcomes including increased peripheral vision.

"The average human has about nine degrees (of peripheral vision)," Hodgson said.

"They say that race car drivers and people that have to use it get to about 25 to 35 degrees so you can improve it a lot and as a basketball player, it is massive because if you can take in what is going on around you, it's easier for passing, dribbling and stuff like that."

Joey Hayes (left) puts Matt Hodgson through his paces. Picture: Richard Gosling

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Hodgson deliberately signed only a one-year NBL deal with Brisbane, who he will join from Adelaide, with the intention of following the likes of Joe Ingles on "the journeyman way" into the NBA.

"I feel like if I get a chance to prove myself, I can then take that step to the next level," he said.

"Not this off-season, the one before that I did the Dallas Mavericks mini-camp there. I want to get back there again, do well in one of those camps and then play in the summer league.

"From there, once you play in the summer league it opens up the whole world to you."

Hodgson has been named in Australia's 24-man squad for two World Cup qualifying matches next month, when the team will aim to put behind them their infamous Philippines brawl.

He had missed that clash due to injury and admitted to being in shock upon learning what had occurred.

"I woke up to a text message from one of my mates and it was Sobes (Nathan Sobey) getting punched in the face," Hodgson recalled. "It was wild, I have never seen anything like it."

The Boomers will face Qatar in Doha on September 14 and take on Kazakhstan four days later in Bendigo.