

NBA All-Star Media Day

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San Francisco, California, USA

Chuck's Global Stars

Victor Wembanyama

Media Day Press Conference



Q. What did you make of Stephon's performance in the Rising Stars last night and is it another signal of how good he is going to become?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Of course. Since day one, I knew he was playing in a very mature way, much more than any guy of our age should. It doesn't surprise me. It's a very strong performance from him. Very proud of him. We're all very proud of him.

Q. You talked about bringing a more serious approach to the All-Star Game. Where does that competitive fire come from? Is that something you learned at an early age from your parents, or is it just inborn, just something you have?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I guess maybe it's not something I learned; I guess it's maybe innate. But it was definitely encouraged in our family's culture around sport, of course. I don't know. I just feel lucky to be -- that I have that will to stay true to myself.

Q. To follow up, it's a very quick game, just to 40 points. Do you go all out in a game like this because you know the history of this game in recent years, guys aren't playing a lot of defense? Is it your intention to go all out?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Definitely, yeah. That's the goal. The goal is not to chill, for sure.

Q. You've played for France. You've played in international events before, obviously. This is your first event in the All-Stars. Would you like to see an international versus U.S. format for this game?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah, I would love to, because for me -- I mean, my opinion is that it's more purposeful. There's more pride in it. More stakes.

Q. You said you were coming, like, an official commitment today. What did you mean exactly? You want to have fun, yes --

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah, so I'll always have fun in any situation, really. Whether it's all we do outside of basketball with the NBA or my partners, it's a lot of community events and fan interaction. So there's always ways to have fun in those. It's really not hard to.

But in basketball, I'm always going to have fun if we win and if we perform and if we play the right way. I'm trying to approach this game with much importance.

Q. You talked about not making any friends out here and how this is a business trip. Have you had a chance to learn anything about any of your All-Star teammates?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: No, I still think the same. I'm not here to make friends. I know not everybody thinks like that, but what's for sure is I'm trying to -- I have some questions for some of the greats, the OGS, but I'm definitely not here to make friends.

Q. How do you assimilate that within your teammates
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VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Let's say I'm going to have to deal with it for one game, so it's fine.

Q. It's been two weeks since the Luka Doncic trade. What did you take away from that, and what's your outlook on this new team in your division?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I've watched games of both the Lakers and Mavs ever since it happened. But what I remember from it, what really strikes me, is how the Mavs' fans are hurting, how they feel. It's really something that I think was a really strong emotion.

But otherwise, I think the Mavs are still contenders. The Lakers are contenders. It's very competitive. They traded for very good players.

It's interesting. We'll see how it goes. But in two weeks after, it's still the craziest trade I've ever seen.

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Q. First time as an actual All-Star, how are you processing all of this? I'm curious how you've been able to deal with such a hectic schedule since you've been here.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It's been growing in intensity since two days because before that I really did not think about the All-Star Weekend because of all of the games of the season.

I don't fully realize I'm going to play the All-Star Game yet, but seeing all that energy, I feel like it's really different, even from last year. It's really different for season 2. It feels like the whole city is vibing around the NBA right now. It feels like we have a real impact that I have rarely seen before.

Q. Your teammate Stephon Castle is going to participate in the Dunk Contest. Are you going to be in one of his dunks?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I don't know. We'll see.

Q. Have you had any desire to rewatch the France-USA gold medal game?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Desire, yes, of course.

Q. Have you watched it?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I have not.

Q. Along those lines, the three-point shots that Steph made that were game deciding. You're one of the league leaders in three-point attempts. Where does your opinion fall in terms of too many threes in today's game?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: You know, I agree to some extent, but I also think that analytics back this up, and defense has to catch up. We see some dynamics over spans of maybe five years in the NBA. There was that whole era where slashing guards were it. Now it's the best players in the league, they're Giannis, Jokic, Embiid, versatile bigs, and it's a lot of threes now.

So it's dynamic changes like that. Right now, I think the defense has to catch up and maybe NBA teams will shoot less threes. But analytics back it up, so it makes sense.

Q. This is your first All-Star Game; it's LeBron's 21st. You mentioned wanting to pick the brains of some of the greats. Is there anything you plan on asking him, and have you been able to connect with him on anything in your first couple years in the league?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: We'll see. I'm sure I'm going to run into him and other guys, as well. There's definitely -- I have a list of questions, of course, yeah.

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