

NBA All-Star Media Day

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Los Angeles, California, USA

Victor Wembanyama

Media Day Press Conference



Q. Was De'Aaron's selection a case of better late than never, or would you like to have seen you guys at least have two from the start?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Oh, I mean, I would have liked two, and I think we should. I think the general consensus is we should have.

But no, I'm happy for him, for sure. I hope will he still be able to enjoy a few days of rest.

Q. You're on the short list for becoming the next face of the league. LeBron has obviously been that for the last two decades. What have you learned from him? What do you want to carry forward in terms of just how he has represented the NBA for so long?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I actually think LeBron has some -- he's very intelligent in these areas. Him obviously being the face of the league. Having very few mistakes, PR mistakes. I think that definitely takes some intelligence.

No, I think there are many things to take from him. I've never had the chance to spend time with him, to have full discussion, but I would love to.

I don't know how many millions of basketball players are on earth, and all of them can learn something from LeBron.

Q. You've expressed some interest in bringing some competitive fire back to the All-Star Game. How do you think you would actually go about having others on the World Team adopt that spirit?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I think exclamation-point plays, playing in a solid manner and sharing the ball with energy. If you share that energy, people feel like they have a responsibility to share it back to you.

I'm confident in the way it's going to go.

Q. If you were to teach a master class on any basketball skill, what would it be?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It would be shot blocking. I think regardless of height, I think many, many players can get better at it at any level.

Q. You talk about competitiveness. Do you think this USA versus the World format will actually increase the intensity, and if so, can you tell us why?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I think it definitely has a chance to, and the reason is simple in my opinion: We've seen that many of the best players have been increasingly foreign players, so there is some pride on that side. I guess there is some pride also on the American side, which is normal.

So I think anything that gets closer to representing a country brings up the pride.

Q. LeBron has been playing in the NBA your whole life. When he retires, be honest, are you going to shed a tear?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: No (smiling). You asked me to be honest. I'm not going to shed a tear, but it is going to be very weird, for sure.

Q. Are you chasing greatness or building something we've never seen before?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I guess chasing greatness is subjective. I'm definitely chasing my own greatness. I'm very much pursuing it, actually. Every day trying to push myself out of my comfort zone and do hard things.

I think the first step, in my opinion, to greatness every time is what you can do in the moment. You don't have to think about where you're going to be in 20 years, but you have to think about being the best in the next moment, the next game, the next 24 hours.

So you could say I'm chasing greatness, yeah.

Q. You spent some time with the (Shaolin) monks during the summer. How has that carried over into the season? Has it inspired any of your teammates to try



to take that journey along with you?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I think it has definitely intrigued some of them. But most of them aren't ready to let go of the dreads, so they won't be part of it.

It's definitely carried over some things. First of all, the physical work was really things that my body has never experienced. So it has put it outside of its comfort zone and forced my body basically to adapt.

Also, obviously the human experience was amazing. The meditation side and the dive in the culture.

Q. What are your thoughts on teammate and Rising Star selection David Jones García?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I mean, definitely deserved. He's one of a kind. He's a true hooper and one of the best people to be around, too.

It was a real, real sadness when we learned that his season was over, because he's a real hooper.

Q. Do you see yourself redefining the center portion or is it redefining itself?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I think I am -- if you ask about me, I am part of something. I'm part of a big-picture mechanism.

I think that right now it's an era of very skilled bigs that this position is definitely evolving. Am I a symptom of that? Yes, because I've watched these guys growing up and got inspired by that. Am I participating in the change? I think I am. I'm pushing the boundaries in some way.

So you could say I'm definitely a product of that, yeah.

Q. What is it like dealing with that pressure of being a franchise player and being a No. 1 overall pick on a day-to-day basis?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It's a good question. I think that depends on the context. In my franchise, in my city, I've been welcomed from Day One as if I had been there for 20 years. So the Spurs' city, the people, San Antonio, and the Spurs fans really make it, like, there's no pressure. They really make it like I'm part of the family, so they make me super comfortable.

We even notice it with my teammates. When we're in other cities, we're much more -- we get much more intrusion from people than when we are at home. But the difference is at home people know where we live, people know where we

go every day, and they're still not intrusive. There's no pressure about being a franchise player.

First overall pick, that's something I'm super proud of and something I've literally spent 19 years of my life trying to reach. So I mean, I'm here for all of it and everything that comes with it.

Q. Young fans believe you are doing whatever you want on the court, but they don't know that you are under a coached system in the NBA. Can you explain just how hard it is to play under the coach system at this level in the NBA?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It is actually one of the hardest difficulties, in my opinion, in what I've seen since I've been in the league, because when you have ambition as a team, you have obviously responsibility to apply the scouting report in the coaching system, as you said, which is fine, but the difficulty is doing it three to four times a week while in pain, while fatigued, while people are actively trying to prevent you from doing it.

Actually, I think answering "present" every night to the scouting report and especially to the tactical aspect is one of the most difficult things.

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