

Emirates NBA Cup

Friday, December 12, 2025

San Antonio Spurs

Victor Wembanyama

Semifinal Practice Day



Q. Victor, three years ago, I had a chance to meet you, actually, here in Las Vegas when you came to play with the Metropolitans. I don't know if you remember that day.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Three years ago.

Q. Speaking to us in Brazil. Since then being drafted, where would you say you have improved the most not only on the court but mentally as well?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I would say I've improved the most in realizing what it takes to win, what you need to focus your impact on. Yeah, I'd say that's it, all the dynamics that run a team, what people care about, what players look for, coaches. All this stuff. I think it's showing in our whole group, how we're growing.

Q. How do you feel, and can you just talk about the process of the last few days, and how close you were and what the ultimate decision was for you to come back?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I'm just a little tired. I just finished running cardio. But right now, I'm feeling great. I think we have done the right things over this past however long it's been, three weeks, one month, and I'm feeling great. I'm ready to go.

Q. Mitch said that you were campaigning to come back pretty much two days after the injury. What were those conversations like? How much did you push back? How hard did you fight to play, and kind of what agreement did you and the Spurs make as to the big picture here?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It's a lot of trust that comes into play both ways. I know I have a chance to be around the best staff in the world, so I trust them very much. I have the chance, also, that they trust me because I've shown them I know my body and I give them good feedback.

But it's true if it was only me, I would have came back earlier. But I think it's more reasonable to do it the way --

to listen to them and do as they said. Because, I mean, there was no reason to take inconsiderate risk two days after my injury. But yeah, I can say, okay, I have to trust the process a lot. Because it wasn't always painful. It was almost never painful or even uncomfortable. I have to trust the process.

But I don't think anybody when they're hurt, as dedicated as I am, because I want to know everything, I want to see all the images and see all the feedback because I want to make sure nobody is slipping on their job, you know [laughing].

Q. You would have come back much earlier if it was up to you, but the fact that it's Vegas, this stage, this opponent, the tournament, how much more did that add to you wanting to be out there tomorrow?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It doesn't matter. Because when you're a part of a team like this where we are starting to be more successful and we are starting to win, every single game is important, and I have responsibility toward my team to come back as quick as I can but also to be healthy, so to not come back too early. It would have been a mistake to come back earlier. So it just happens that I'm coming back in this game in Vegas here. But every single game, I was pushing.

Q. Every year, the Cup, one of the things we talk about is the prize money. You've already earned at least \$106,000 by making it this far, and if you win it all, it's about 530 grand. Being on the rookie contract, what do you think? Is this a motivating factor for you?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Poor Vic needs more money, right? No, I haven't thought about what I'm going to do with it. But probably not -- I'll probably -- just stacking money hasn't been any goal of mine in my life. That's not going to be it. But I don't know what I'm going to do with it yet.

Q. You had the chance to play elimination games in the Olympics. So how do you prepare for those games?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I think it comes naturally to me.

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Now, I've lived a lot of elimination games in my life, in my career, whether it's with the national teams or young teams or playoffs or whatever, back in France. But I really, really trust myself. I say, like, my unconscious self has proven to me over and over again over the years that I don't need to overthink things in finals and semifinals. It comes naturally to me.

Obviously this one is a little different, because I haven't played in a while, but I'm really not overthinking it.

Q. Just curious to know what you remember playing or being teammates with Ajay Mitchell back in France for a little bit and what it's like to see him now carving out his role in the NBA?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: It's incredible to see him here. He's a guy that I have, you know, kind of lost sight of after he left Nanterre, and I saw him being a prospect in college basketball. I haven't really heard much of him between those two, but seeing him there, I'm just really proud. And it brings back great memories, of course. But it's a guy I've always had good connection with on and off the court. So I'm just super proud of him.

Q. The Knicks are also here in Vegas. You've had two of your best games of your career against the Knicks. You scored 60 against them. What sticks out about the Knicks?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I scored how much against them?

Q. 60.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: 60. I didn't. What was the question? Sorry, you threw me off.

Q. What sticks out about the Knicks?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: What stands out about the Knicks? It's a great team. It's a great team. One of the teams I've looked up as a kid to, which has a lot of history. So it's always interesting. Going to New York, as well, is always fun. But yeah, it's a good team, tough team.

Q. The guys went 9-3 without you, beat L.A. in a really tough environment. Your thoughts on how they played without you and what you've seen from them.

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I've been really proud. Of course, it's been hard to watch from my couch, but almost every night, they have proven me that I have nothing to worry about.

But yeah, really, the brand of basketball we are playing, that they have been playing, just makes me proud because it's getting closer to the ideal basketball, in my opinion. Everybody has something to eat, you know. Everybody can step up at any time. Everybody can take up responsibilities. Everybody trusts their next teammate. It's just beautiful to see.

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