

# NBA All-Star Rising Stars Practice

Friday, February 16, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Team Pau

## Victor Wembanyama

### Press Conference

**Q. Overall, what has this experience been like so far and how much are you looking forward to having a longer weekend here next time?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah, it's been -- I mean, the schedule has been full, but it's also what I'm here for. It's a lot of fun experiences.

I'm looking forward to play in the game, two games hopefully. Next year hopefully the big game.

**Q. Victor, how was the Tech Summit this morning? Second question, Pop talks a lot about not skipping steps. Do you allow yourself, though, to look forward about what it could be once the team adds veterans, free agents, and how good it can be down the road?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: The Tech Summit, that was a lot of fun. It was funny. Had the rehearsal yesterday too. Actually learned a lot from these people who made the Internet world what it was today. It was a lot of -- I learned a lot.

Yeah, about not skipping steps, I've been told never to skip steps my whole life, but that didn't stop me from running up the stairs. So yeah, of course it's something I want to be a part of in the future.

For now I'm just a student of this league. I don't really know how everything works. Of course, it's something I want to be -- highly involved in the future, yeah.

**Q. What would your advice be to your new teammates this weekend playing for the Rising Stars? What's the best way to get, Victor Wembanyama the rock?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I don't know. I'm probably going to keep that secret because I want to beat those guys in the season. Yeah, I'm going to keep that secret.

**Q. Do you think they're going to have a fun time**



playing with you?

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yeah, I think so, especially if we win.

**Q. I was there this morning for the Tech Summit as well, and you brought up the French film Hoosiers. I'm curious how many -- I hope that you've watched the movie. Do you remember watching it, and what do you kind of think of it other than seeing some similarities between Norman Dale and Gregg Popovich?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: I just discovered the movie yesterday actually, so I barely know about it. I don't even think there's so many similarities between the coach and Popovich. But it was funny, wasn't it?

**Q. Coming in from a very strong two weeks of basketball over your last 10 games averaging about 20, 10, and 4, how do you plan on navigating a potential rise in expectations to close out the season?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Expectations, it depends from who. My coaches and my teammates, the rise of expectations has been going on all season. It's no reason that it changes. So it's something I hope will continue as well with the years coming because I don't want to -- we want to be in the playoffs soon, and then we want to win.

It's something anyone has to manage in their career.

**Q. Just kind of a broad question, tapping into your basketball historical mind. When you hear the name Wilt Chamberlain, what do you think about in terms of what he's accomplished in the game, what his kind of place in the game represents?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: To me he's kind of like a mutant. He was ahead of his time and just so different from -- he made the game so different from what it was. This is someone I'd like to -- I mean, I would like to look like him sometimes because he was so special.

Of course, not even talking about the statistical facts. He was just incredible.



**Q. What would you say has been your "Welcome to the NBA" moment? And also, how different is it playing in the States compared to playing in Europe?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: "Welcome to the NBA" moment, there's been plenty of them. The earliest one I can remember is Kevin Durant was pretty tough to guard. Even though sometimes it feels like you've done your best and he still scores. So, yeah, there's been plenty of those.

**Q. How different is it playing in the States compared to Europe?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: How different? The talent is just so incredible here, every team. So it's tough to guard because -- yeah, it's tough to guard. Yeah, those shots you've got to take are different as well offensively, the positions. Yeah, it's way different.

**Q. Victor, you've got all the best players in the world here this weekend. If you'd have told your 12-year-old self that you were going to be here, what would he have thought of that?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: My 12-year-old self would have probably said something like, "Why not earlier? Why not the year before?"

(Laughter).

I don't know. Yeah, when I was a kid, one of my goals was to make the 2016 Olympics with the National Team. Unfortunately, I'm a little bit late for this, but I already had high expectations.

**Q. Victor, there's been a lot kind of written and said about the work you and your team have put in physically to have a long career in this league. At what age did that really crystalize for you? As you see guys like Steph Curry, Kevin Durant, LeBron playing in his 20th All-Star Game. What does that say about the possibility for a multi-decade career in this league?**

VICTOR WEMBANYAMA: Yes, how everything's getting better in terms of knowledge, the body, treatment, stuff like this, I think we're going to see more and more of those. Taking care of my body has long been one of my most important thoughts even for long term.

But only the future will tell how the health is going to be. For sure, I'm trying to have no regrets about how I treat my body.

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