

Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Doc Rivers

Press Conference

Q. Obviously Kawhi just arrived, which is very exciting, but as you look ahead to the next three months, how important is the depth of this team going to be?

DOC RIVERS: Well, it's going to be vital. It's why we built the team the way we did. You obviously need your stars to win. I don't think it's going to be a team that wins starless.

Having said that, you need a ton of role players. You need to be able to sustain injuries, and when you can, you still have a chance to win, and that will help our team. It also gives us an opportunity to play different lineups, and that's something we'll work on here in the first couple weeks.

Q. Doc, the other day you mentioned that this team is so much healthier than it was during the previous season, how that made things different for you as a group. In terms of Kawhi, does that mean you're still going to have limitations on him in terms of minutes played or the back-to-back?

DOC RIVERS: I don't know that yet. But no limits. Kawhi is healthy for the most part. That still doesn't mean that we don't want to maintain him and get him through the first eight games and get ready for the Playoffs. We want to be smart about this. Not just for Kawhi; it's with everybody. But having everybody healthy was more about training camp. I mean, we really did not have a great training camp because we didn't have enough bodies and enough of our key guys practicing. We have a virtually new team, so we needed our new guys to be on the floor, and we didn't have that ability to do that. This time for the most part we'll have everybody in.

Q. How much fraternizing with opponents to you expect to be going on down there, and do you welcome that?

DOC RIVERS: You know, I don't care one way or the other. Listen, we're in a bubble together. I'm sure there's guys who have made friends from other teams, from AAU.



There's just friendships that have happened throughout this league. No coach is going to stand in the way of that.

But once the games start, it's all business, and as long as our guys are able to maintain that, then it's all good.

Q. Doc, we've got two positive tests reported from players during quarantine there and a number of players that haven't made trips. Russell Westbrook announced that he tested positive. We've seen two players break quarantine protocols already. I'm just curious, has your confidence level in this getting pulled off changed at all?

DOC RIVERS: It's probably grown, if anything. I mean, right now, look outside the bubble what's going on. I mean, right now the United States is on fire in some ways as far as COVID. Here we've had two tests. We've had two guys, two guys who broke protocol. One I know that was a mistake, and the other one just happened. I'm very, very happy with what's gone on so far. Does that mean we're going to be able to pull this off? I don't think anybody knows that yet. But the guys that I'm hearing, overall not a lot of complaining going on. We don't have the place to complain when you think about it with what's going on in the world. No, I'm fine with what's going on.

Q. Landry mentioned during the quarantine the chemistry had improved because everybody was talking so much on the group chat. Now that you've got everybody together, is that something that you've seen, that the chemistry is even better than before?

DOC RIVERS: You know, I don't know. I don't think you really know chemistry until adversity hits or until you get on the floor and you start playing. Chemistry is great as far as guys knowing each other. All the new guys now know each other. So as far as off court and verbal chemistry, it's unbelievable. But you'll know your chemistry when it gets tested, and that's yet to happen yet.

Q. I just wondered, Rajon Rondo suffered a hand fracture yesterday. I was wondering your thoughts on how important it is to be careful with injuries because we know that players want to play through things, and how much more attention are you putting on making sure these guys are 100 percent or close to it and not pushing them too hard?



DOC RIVERS: Well, it doesn't matter how hard you push them. You've got to play. We're playing basketball. So you're going to have competitive practices, like every team will. And it happens. Listen, no one is trying to get anyone injured. I guarantee you whatever the Lakers were doing was not to say hey, let's get someone injured. It just happens. It's part of sports. Like you can be running down the floor with no one around and you can go down. There's almost no way to prevent injury other than not playing at all, and if you did that, you're not going to win.

You know, listen, every time we have a practice, we're worried about it. We all are. The whole league is. That's just the way it is. But you need it to get better. I would say time of practice, that's something we do monitor. We don't want to go three hours of all running; that makes no sense to us. But it's hard to prevent injuries, especially fluke injuries like that.

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