

Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Kawhi Leonard

Postgame Press Conference

Los Angeles Clippers 117, Dallas Mavericks 97

Q. Doc had mentioned that he felt like when he watched you perform today, that it looked like you were the one guy who knew what it took to close out a series. What's your experience in a big series, how did that factor into how comfortable you felt in a second half, particularly, today?

KAWHI LEONARD: I guess just, you know, being here before, you know what I mean. You know, just knowing it's going to take a full 40 minutes. I always say, just playing even keel out there. I thought if we play pretty well in that first half, 6-point lead -- starting that third quarter and we got the lead up and got the lead up. You know, you've just got to keep fighting. This is playoff basketball and everything is not going to go your way. You're going to have downs and ups. Just got to keep playing.

Q. We haven't spoken to you since Wednesday's emotional players meeting. Doc thought it was good of you to talk to the players and deliver a calm sense of demeanor. I was wondering what your message was to the players, and did you think that the season was going to end after that meeting?

KAWHI LEONARD: Didn't really know what to think at that point. I think pretty much the whole league didn't want to stop playing. You know, just told them, we can't control what's going on outside. All we can control is what we're doing on and off the floor.

You know, just take it one message at a time to change racial injustice, or whatever you want to do, or education or economics. It's just up to the individual to try to change my mind off the floor, so you know, we just -- we stayed steady.

Q. Second round of the playoffs what do you need more of from your team and what do you need less of?

KAWHI LEONARD: Just got to focus. That's what we got



to do. Less mistakes for sure, and more execution.

Q. So Doc's point -- staying calm under pressure, what's the key to having that mindset with not only what's going on in the world but all of the adjustments?

KAWHI LEONARD: You know, the most fun you have is coming out here, for me, is playing in a basketball game. But it's hard to -- live your every day life, but kind of been here before, you know, going through rehab, it was just gym, home, gym, home, and kind of feels like that. Just focus and that's all you can do. Take it one day at a time.

Q. Talking about your steadiness and your consistency, do you feel that sort of affect on your teammates when you're out there; that you can kind of bring down their energy if it's the wrong kind of energy?

KAWHI LEONARD: No. Not at all. I mean, I've been the same player my whole career. You know, I've been fortunate enough to get to where teams want to get to and win it. I don't think it affects them at all. If anything at all, it helps, you see that I'm bringing energy to the floor.

Q. Yeah, positive energy, your demeanor gets them to -- you've got to push through; it's the playoffs?

KAWHI LEONARD: Yeah, I try to be positive for the majority of the game, unless somebody is making a mistake over and over again, I, you know, kind of get out of character or I want them to do better.

But for the most part, just talking through it and trying to do better the next possession when a team does run a certain action. That's all it's about. You can't get too mad. You can't get overly excited. Like I said, you can't control shots. Everybody wants to make baskets, and sometimes they just don't go in for you.

Q. Doc had mentioned that these were the playoffs of Zub's life and Zub's joked it's the only playoffs of his life. What did you see from him and how he was able to close out the games later in the series?

KAWHI LEONARD: It was a big series for him. You know, he was able to contest those shots when Luka got in the



paint or when he was trying to shoot those threes. You know, kind of making him think about it a little bit more than him coming down very comfortable and laying the ball up. He had to go against the 7-footer. You know, he helped us out big time. The numbers might not always show it, but his presence was amazing and him running the offense, finding his spots and that dunking spot and laying the ball up and making his free throws was very big.

Q. How do you, I guess, go about in terms of celebrating? Obviously this is worth celebrating, getting through, but there's been stuff made about guys celebrating on the bench. Do you celebrate this or just put this aside and move on to the next round?

KAWHI LEONARD: You always celebrate. I mean, you could be going home right now. It's one step closer to where we want to get to, so it's a good accomplishment that we got through the first round, now we enjoy it tonight and we get ready for the next thing tomorrow. That's how it pretty much is. You always want to enjoy a win. You never want to take that away, I don't know why you want to take that away.

Q. Obviously this means more time in the bubble. We've heard players here and some of your teammates about the effect the bubble has had on them mentally. Has it in any effect on you?

KAWHI LEONARD: For sure. I mean, you're not able to see family. You're doing the same thing every day. It kind of feels like you can't get away from the game.

But like I said, I've kind of been here before going through rehab, dealing with my knee injury every day was going to rehab, going home. Wasn't going outside.

You just have to -- your teammates are your family, so you've just got to spend time with them, get outside with them, laugh and joke and really just don't take it so seriously. Just one day at a time. That's it.

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