

Los Angeles Clippers

Media Conference

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Doc Rivers

Press Conference



Q. I want to know, you obviously have the highest scoring duo coming off the bench in Montrezl and Lou Williams, but can you talk about the combination or the duo of Patrick Beverley and Marcus Morris and the intensity they bring to your squad?

DOC RIVERS: Yeah, they've just been great overall. I knew Pat was, obviously, coming into the year. I really didn't know who Marcus was. Didn't know we were going to have him. Then when we got him, I really didn't know what he was going to bring. I knew he was going to bring great offense. I didn't see the intensity, the defense, the intelligence that he plays with. He's been such a glue guy for our team. It's been absolutely amazing.

Q. I was curious, going back to last week, you mentioned that -- I know Chris Paul didn't leave the Clippers very amicably, but you mentioned that you and him were talking and he urged you to speak at the meeting. What's your relationship like after the last couple years and everything that's going on right now?

DOC RIVERS: Our relationship is great. We put that behind us a year ago at least, golfed a bunch this summer before the season started. We cleaned the air long ago. That happens from coach-player a lot. Usually when a guy leaves a company, in business, most of the time it's not on great terms, even if they're just going to another opportunity, but usually you come back to that company and say thank you and appreciate all the things you've done, and I think that was CP and our case. That's old news with us.

And then in this whole thing, he just used me as a sounding board and I was glad that I could provide that for him. But him and Andre Iguodala, their leadership to me is what stood out.

Q. One thing that Pat Beverley said last night that was really cool is he loves that you allow him to be himself on this team. When you look at this roster that you've

put together, there don't seem to be any gaps. Obviously you've had to work through the injuries and all that, but aside from that, it doesn't seem like you're ever put in a position where you've got to play someone out of position, ask them to do something they can't do. What kind of luxury is it to have a team where everyone can be themselves?

DOC RIVERS: Yeah, it's a luxury, but that's how you should coach everyone, no matter what team you have. Lou, when I got Lou, I told Lou, I just want to make it clear, when we're bringing you in the game, we're not bringing you in to be a defensive player, we're bringing you in to score, and he started laughing. I said, I'm being very honest here. You are an offensive player, and be that. And Pat, you're an instigator. Be that. We told Marcus when we got him, be who you are, and in that you'll find the role that you should play for this team inside of who you are. And I think it's very important that guys do that because I want them to have a freedom inside their role. If you can't be yourself, I don't know who you can be. And honestly I don't know if Patrick could be anyone else anyway. It's been great.

Q. You were saying the other day that as you go through this first postseason with Kawhi, you kind of learned to see some things like how good of a passer he is and maybe that surprised you. What have you learned about his personality off the court and have you ever had a leader who was this quiet and what is that like?

DOC RIVERS: I guess Patrick Ewing was a little like that. He was very open with his teammates, but with everybody else, Patrick, you were not getting in, period. And so I think that's the only similarities that I could draw. But they both are very similar in the fact that they work their butts off, and when they do talk, it's about doing the right stuff, running the right play, executing. I mean, Kawhi is very demanding and particular in that, and so when he talks, I think it carries weight because he doesn't talk a lot.

Q. I was interested in what you were talking about with how you have to just let guys be themselves. Have you always felt that way as a coach?

DOC RIVERS: I think I learned that. It takes years. But I think I learned that as I went on. You know, the biggest



lesson I think I learned my first year in Orlando, we had I think 45 transactions, maybe more, and each guy we got, you'd get calls from other coaches, man, bad guy, you don't want this guy, and then you find out, no, he's not a bad guy or vice versa. But you realize that you've got to learn who each person is under you, and that doesn't mean that he's a good or bad person; that means he fits you. So the only way to do that is by allowing him to be himself as much as he can and not trying to change people, because most people don't change, and so you learn that.

Q. Is there a player that sticks out in your mind that you tried that philosophy with and it worked very well for you in the past?

DOC RIVERS: I don't know. I mean, I think -- D.J. would be a great player. D.J. was a guy that had some trouble here in LA, and when we got the job, when I got the job, they were telling me, not a great guy and all that, and I find out he's the exact opposite. He's a sensational guy. He's enrolling right now in an Ivy League school. He just texted me this. He just needed a role. He just needed to -- he told me actually who he was, and I think that made it clear to him. In that meeting we had, he was telling me about all these offensive things, and I said, are you crazy, I'm never going to be. I actually told him that and he started laughing. I said, why would I draw a play up for you, honestly. But you can score by doing your job. He got that. Like he got it immediately, and off went D.J. He ends up getting a max deal, and I was thrilled for him.

Q. What Ivy League school?

DOC RIVERS: I think he just got accepted to Brown, but I'm not sure. Yeah.

Q. Going back to Kawhi, he's been so automatic from the mid range all postseason, it's just not a shot obviously that you see a whole lot anymore, three-pointers and lay-ups. Going back to last summer when you were kind of thinking of ways to scheme offensively for Kawhi, did you draw on past players you've coached for kind of ways to get him open in that spot?

DOC RIVERS: A little bit. I think I drew more on him. I watched all his offensive sets from San Antonio to Toronto, and it was a lot of the same thing. And then I did have a guy in Boston, Paul Pierce, who does some of the stuff that he did, and so we do run some of that. Like we dusted off -- as Ty Lue loves saying, man, you dusted off some of your old Boston stuff for Kawhi because I hadn't run some of the things that we're running for him in eight years, and now we're using it again because they do have some similarities.

Q. What have been some of the interesting interactions when you run into the other team at the hotel?

DOC RIVERS: They're strange. They're really strange. It's just different after the game, or going to the game. Denver is getting on the bus, we're getting on the bus. After the game, you see them getting off, we're getting off, because now -- before we wouldn't have that because the teams we were playing were in a hotel. Now we're in the same hotel playing a team that -- I'm doing an interview and I'm doing the Nuggets walk by. It's just really strange. Yeah, I don't know what to say about it.

Q. The deeper guys are getting into the Playoffs and there's fewer teams, is there a feeling like you guys have more space now?

DOC RIVERS: Not yet. Not yet. But I think that's coming hopefully. It's funny, we're not on top of each other, I just think it's just abnormal to -- like yesterday the players from both teams were going up in the elevator together. I actually told one guy, I don't know if that's even healthy, if it's a contentious game. It was like, I don't know if I need to see that. Anyway...

Q. No fights broken out?

DOC RIVERS: Not yet.

Q. Last night Pat was saying that he was impressed with how Trez sort of handled the last series, having to come in like he came in and hit the ground running and how difficult that was. What did you see from Trez and how he handled all that?

DOC RIVERS: I was more impressed that he accepted -- we had decided early on that there was a tough matchup in that series for him, the way Luka went downhill, and we needed a big big to be in drops and to be able -- the only time we were going to use Trez more was when we were in traps, which meant that his minutes were going to be cut almost in half, and he handled it. That tells you he's a good team player. He understands where in this series we could use him a lot more.

I just was more impressed with just his ability to buy into what we're doing, and even though buying in may mean less him, he still took it. I thought that was great for our team to see.

Q. A lot of times in the NBA now a team will win by 40 points because they made 25 threes, but yesterday you guys won by practically 30 only hitting 10 threes.

How do you expect Denver to respond in a game like that where you were just so overwhelming from all different facets?

DOC RIVERS: Well, I'm sure they'll try to keep us out of the paint more. We were in the paint a lot, so that will be the adjustment they'll make for sure.

Q. This is kind of a random question for you, but when you guys are preparing for a playoff series in practice and you guys have kind of the scout team, how do you guys decide to play certain -- who did you have play Luka in the last series on your scout team?

DOC RIVERS: Listen, we don't really try to choose a guy that's like the guy. I don't ever want that guy thinking he is as good as that guy, so we just stop it. We just use five guys.

Q. You don't like decide, okay, this guy --

DOC RIVERS: No, no. I remember years ago playing for Pat Riley, we were playing the Bulls and Pat Riley decided he was going to use Bo Outlaw as Michael Jordan, and freaking Bo destroyed us in every practice. Then he started thinking he was Michael Jordan, which became an issue. So I always thought if I'm ever a coach, I'm naming no guy that he's that guy. I don't want him thinking that way. We don't need any of our guys thinking they're Luka.

Q. Speaking of the Knicks, today they officially announced they hired Woody as an assistant. Were you surprised he didn't another chance while he was here, based on how he did in New York? And I guess if you could compare what it might be like working under you and now going under Thibodeau?

DOC RIVERS: I think working under me would be a lot easier than working under Tibs would be my guess. I'm joking there. I hope everyone knows that.

First of all, I'm thrilled for Woody. I'm also just amazed at Woody, when you look at his record, that he didn't have a head coaching job already, but it is what it is. He's going back to New York. He's very happy. I'm happy to see two of my assistants working together now, and I just love what Tibs is doing in New York. I think they're going to be successful, and I can't wait for them to be that. That would be great.

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