

Los Angeles Clippers

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Doc Rivers

Press Conference



Q. Doc, Zu was just talking about how closing games has been a big deal for him and his development, and I know that usually that time this year has been Trez's time. Knowing this match-up is tough for Trez and he's coming back from so much time off, how much has Zu earned your trust playing that kind of time?

DOC RIVERS: It's not really about trust. I've always trusted him. Overall during the season Trez was more the finisher because he only won Sixth Man of the Year award, but Zu has been fantastic. When you think about it, in the first two series, it made more for Zu to finish games, and the fact that he can has been terrific. Obviously he fouled out yesterday, but if he hadn't have fouled out, he probably would have still been in.

Q. Your defense was dominant during stretches, especially in the fourth quarter, including Paul and Kawhi. What did you think about how they played? Is this kind of what you envisioned when you guys first got Kawhi and Paul?

DOC RIVERS: Yeah, but I envisioned it for four quarters. We've just been sketchy defensively. We've at times played very well. When we do, we're really good. We've shown the ability to get needed stops. I think that's a great quality for your team. You have to have a stop if you can get one, and we've done that, but as good as we've been in stretches, I think there's a better defensive team in there throughout the game, and that's what we have to do a better job of.

Q. Is figuring out why teams have that juice some nights and not others, has that been an impossible question to ask?

DOC RIVERS: Yeah, one of our young coaches asked me before a game, what do you think. I said, I've given that up a long time ago. For the most part, guys are there. Sometimes they just don't play well. Sometimes something happened at home. I mean, you never know what's going on in a guy's life outside of basketball, why, and that one

thing can affect the whole team. You just don't know. I've learned that.

You know, why you play in spurts, it's a tough predictor. So I've given up on trying that.

But being consistent is something you have to preach and push, and execution, and if you can get that, then the effort will probably follow.

Q. Are the variables here even higher?

DOC RIVERS: I don't know. I don't know the answer to that. I guess you would assume it would be because there's so many just things that can get you off kilter, that you can't control, but I don't know the answer.

Q. I'm just curious, you said you'd prefer to see the team play well for 48 minutes, especially defensively, but excluding the players, is the grind and the ugliness of the wins and losses just something you have to deal with?

DOC RIVERS: You know, the grind of the playoffs is always going to be there, but you can be a better team despite that. We can all be better people every day. You can't accept what happened yesterday and what you were yesterday. You want to be better each day, and your team -- we forget that this team has not logged as many minutes together as most teams, as any team, as far as just time together, practice time, floor time. And so we are in the middle of the playoffs and we're still growing, and we actually understand that.

It requires more focus and more work from us because of that. There's teams that have been together -- Denver, this is their third year together. They can come down and call any set they want and every single guy knows it, they know the timing of it, they know the reason they're running the play. We're still in the middle of the playoffs and figuring that out. That's tough. But it's the bed that we've made, and so we've just got to deal with it.

Q. I've been doing some research lately about the lack of education in America, about inequality in racism throughout its own history, and I'm wondering from your perspective, do you remember wondering about that or seeing that in your kids' schools?



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DOC RIVERS: It's funny, and I like how you worded the lack of education, or the miseducation may be another term, or in some school books, the no education. We sang Dixie songs in high school, in grade school, and we almost celebrated slavery, like it was a cool thing. Think about it; black kids singing songs about picking cotton, how absurd that is when you think about it. Now, as a kid I never thought anything of it. Thought it was a cool song. And when you grow up, you're like, what the hell was that.

We have not in this country -- and I keep saying it, has not come to grips with the original sin of slavery and the impact of slavery, and I say it all the time, if you look at our country, and you just did it in 275-year increments, well, if you take the first 175 years -- 150 years of that was slavery. The next 50 or 60 years was Jim Crow, segregation, hanging, lynching.

If you give anybody a 200-year head start economically, educationally, you're going to be in a deficit, and we have not come to grips with the impact of that. All we talk about is black crime. There's no such thing as black-on-black crime if there's no such thing as white-on-white crime. Everything black is bad, and this country has to come to grips with that, whether they want to or not.

The fact that we have a president right now that is trying to take education away about social injustice and racial injustice, it's absurd. No, we have to just keep the talk -- and I'm just going to keep saying this. It's not a black thing. It's a white thing, it's an American thing, it's human justice thing, equal justice and human rights.

Yeah, I'm going to stay on it. I'm not going to relent.

You know, really, voting and all that is important, but we've got to teach the right stuff. You go to Germany and there's markers everywhere where holocaust victims were. They've come to grips that they did -- they paid reparations in Germany. They still are. And we have still yet to come to grips -- forget reparations, we have yet to come to grips with we did something bad. Do something about it, because usually when you do something bad there's a fine to pay about it. Pat Beverley yelled at an official. He had to pay \$25,000. We killed millions of black people and we've done nothing. So to me I'm going to keep talking about it, and I think we all should. Again, I think it's not a black thing. It's a human rights thing and it's an American thing.

Q. I want to ask you about Nikola Jokic. Can you give me a comparison of what you've seen from him? He has a wide array of tools. Can you give me a comparison when you actually played, what he

reminds you of?

DOC RIVERS: Man, I don't know. He's good. I don't know if there's a comparison. He has a little bit of everybody. He has all the footwork and the moves of an Olajuwon, the lanky and goofy, like goofy intelligence of Kevin McHale. Shoot, man, he's just good. He's the best passing big that I've seen, I think, ever. I know Walton was one of them. Man, he's just very good, and he's very frustrating to watch on film.

Q. Being with all these players, you've always had great relationships with guys around the league. You've been asked about this before earlier in the process, but as we get deeper and you've been seeing Paul, how bizarre is that dynamic?

DOC RIVERS: It's bizarre. I mean, it's bizarre that I'm doing an interview and Murray is messing around with me. Millsaps and I are talking about golf, and then tomorrow we're going to hate each other. It is different. But it's accepted now, and we understand it. I think the strangest thing is at the games, getting off the bus -- both teams are getting off the bus together going in the same elevator. It's absurd. It's crazy. It may be dangerous in some cases, too.

But I think we've all accepted that it's not normal off the court. I think the craziest thing but on the court is normal. On the court is basketball. But right when you walk off the court, everything is abnormal, and that's just the way it is. That's the way everything is right now.

Q. For you is there another layer to it because the moment you guys shared at the players' meeting you had a lot to say, and you already were probably the most popular coach around the league among players --

DOC RIVERS: I don't know if that's true.

Q. But did the connection deepen through that.

DOC RIVERS: Yeah, it's not just with me, I think it's a lot of the coaches, because I think like Spo, Lloyd Pierce, who's not even in the bubble, Mike, Brad -- Brad has been amazing. Brad had one of his players do a freaking Power Point in one of our meetings. Shoot, I couldn't do a Power Point.

So I just think that the coaches -- not me, just the coaches in general, have really pushed their players to lead, which is usually the other way around sometimes. Where I'm proud of the coaches is that I think we all understood that this was a young people's thing. These protests are

different. These are young people involved. And to push them to stay in front I think has been awesome for me from afar, just to watch them do their stuff and keep speaking out. I'm just so very proud of our players.

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