

Los Angeles Clippers

Media Conference

Monday, September 14, 2020

Orlando, Florida, USA

Doc Rivers

Press Conference



Q. That 2008 season with the Celtics that you guys won the championship, the first two rounds you got pushed to seven in consecutive series; do you see any parallels with this team and that team, and what did getting through the Conference Finals early end up doing for that team because you had an easier time deeper in the Playoffs.

DOC RIVERS: Well, I'll say this: It doesn't really matter. No teams are the same. Everybody goes on their own journey. You know, if we end up winning it all this year, this will be a story to tell. It's just the way it is. It's funny how often you see that. It's just the way it is. Every year is different. Every journey is different.

We're here because we put ourselves here. You can look at that in a good way or a bad way, but it is what it is. So do I take things from that? I take things from everything we do. I take things from our wins, our losses and all my experiences. This team didn't have any experiences, and so they're learning everything right now.

Q. In your reviews of the second halves of these past two games, are there any breakdowns you felt in specific areas that are uncharacteristic of this group?

DOC RIVERS: No, there's no secret like potion that something happened. The two things that we didn't do, clearly defensively, they shot almost 60 percent in the second half. The one thing that did stand out, they went to the free-throw line like on every play. I think from the time when Murray went down with that injury, the next 12 out of 15 points were free throws. I think that's human nature. You see a guy go down, there's no call on the play, and then the next thing you know you're at the free-throw line. And give Denver credit because they understood that and they started being aggressive.

What I see the most is our pace offensively. Some of that is because they're scoring, but some of that I thought was self-inflicted. And then defensively we have to be better.

Q. You said this team doesn't have any experience together. Kawhi is that guy who has been in Game 7 --

DOC RIVERS: Kawhi has no experience with this team.

Q. But in terms of Game 7s he knows what it's like to play in these situations. What do you see from him?

DOC RIVERS: Oh, he's unshakable. Kawhi, you can't guarantee he'll play well or not because he's human and all players are. But you know, the moment won't be too big. That's the one thing like with him, you just know that. You know, so that's comforting to know that.

Q. Do you know what you're going to say to the team tomorrow yet?

DOC RIVERS: No, I'm going to say let's go win. Rah-rah speeches are very overrated. They last about three-minutes and you come running out and you're fired up, and then three minutes later you've got to focus on playing basketball. There's no like secret speech. That's for the movies.

The real thing is you've got to have them prepared in preparation. That's what we'll do the next two days. We'll get them doing what we've done to get the leads and continue to do it. But there's nothing secret or magical. It's about playing basketball, manning up, moving the ball, doing all the things that we can do. Other than that, that's about it.

Q. You said yesterday you clearly have the right formula. I'm just curious how much of this conversation about what you do right, what you do wrong, X's and O's, or is it about look, this is what you do --

DOC RIVERS: It's a little bit of both. Give them credit; they are playing hard. We're playing the third best team in the west, and they're good, they're relentless, resilient. And you know, but what we've done to get the leads has worked continuously, and then when we stop doing it, it has worked the other way, too. And we've proven to ourselves that, even going back to Game 2. I think it was Game 2 that they won.

You know, it's a mirror of Game 5 and 6 in the second



halves. They are doing something that they enjoy doing, too, and when we take them out of it we are good, and when we don't, we're not.

Q. What do you think you'll learn from your team tomorrow in their first Game 7 together, and what have you learned from your past teams that have gone through a Game 7?

DOC RIVERS: You know, again, I don't do that because teams are so different. Your journey is so different. I hope what I learn from our team is that we win Game 7s. I don't know what we'll learn. You will learn something for sure. And if you get through this, it will definitely serve you well. There's no doubt about that, because when you go through things like this and adversity and you come out of it on the other end, on the right end of it, it absolutely makes you a better team.

Q. Obviously Pat is such a wonderful competitor, but with the foul trouble he's been experiencing --

DOC RIVERS: Yeah, that just can't happen. He is a competitor, and he plays hard, but he can't put himself in a position where he's fouled out in 17 minutes. He's better than that, and he knows that, and that obviously hurts our team and our rotations. When you think about like last night as an example, we have a chance to go up big, but Pat and PG are in foul trouble, and it limits rotations, it limits what you can do. But that's the unplanned stuff that actually happens in games that you can't control. You can control not doing it, hopefully, as a player on the floor, but when it happens, it definitely throws the rotations that you had set for the game out of the window.

I mean, the fact that Pat didn't play the last five, four minutes of the game, that hurts us.

Q. I know obviously every game is important, but just from your coaching experience, how would you compare what it's like coaching in a Game 7 as opposed to any other playoff game?

DOC RIVERS: You know, I guess the difference is you don't worry about minutes as much. You can extend minutes. Now, extending minutes can be dangerous because some guys just can't handle them, and so if they can't handle them, you can't do them.

You know, you tend to stay on plays longer, where one of your plays that have been working that you may hold, you don't hold. You start the game out with them. And you hope that your players can get to that single possession mentality, because that's really important in Game 7s.

Q. When it comes to a Game 7, having played six games prior, how easy is it to make adjustments, and how hard is it to avoid sort of overreactions?

DOC RIVERS: Well, you can't overreact. That's a fact. You are what you are. Like I'm not going to go today in practice and put in 15 new plays. First of all, they wouldn't work. Secondly, we wouldn't run them very well. But you can tweak for sure. You can tweak the rotations a little bit. Again, you can spread your minutes out a little longer. And you can really hone in on what you've done well and really -- like you've got to drill it into your guys' head, this is what we do well, this is what we do well, this is what we do well. And we do that now, but we do get where we've gotten away from it. We've gotten away from it two games in a row. So we've just got to stay disciplined.

Q. How difficult and how important will it be to attack Jokic when you have the ball and try to get him into foul trouble early? How much of a goal is that?

DOC RIVERS: You know, we won't try to get him in foul trouble because doing that throws you off, and it's not like he's guarding Zub so we're not going to feature Zub for 15, 20 plays, and every time you do that, Kawhi or PG or Lou or someone doesn't have the ball. But we want to involve him a lot. Like he's good. There's no doubt about that. And he's playing extended minutes the last two games. He's up at 40 now.

We have to make him work as much as we can make him work.

Q. How concerning is it to you that you have to inspire and try to encourage your guys to kind of show some life, show some spirit, show that sense of energy in the game? There was a point in the third quarter of last game where you were pleading with them to come on. How concerning is that to you?

DOC RIVERS: Not concerning. It happens. You know, it does. Like listen, guys, these are human beings. I know we don't think that at times, but they were rolling, they were playing great, and then all of a sudden a bunch of calls didn't go their way or they got frustrated with all the fouls that were being called, they started missing shots, they had turnovers. This game is mental, too, man, and it's easy to get lost.

I thought a lot of that happened last night. We had just blown our lead, and I thought the stress of that, you could see that on our guys. They're looking at the scoreboard, too. They know they have an opportunity. They want to win worse than everybody. Like they do. But that doesn't mean they're going to play perfectly. This is not a game of

perfect.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Lou Will. He's had his struggles this series, only shot I believe about 50 percent once in this series. Is there anything specifically that they're doing or has he just not had a rhythm this series?

DOC RIVERS: Probably the latter. He's had some fantastic shots. I thought last night was his best stretch. Unfortunately it's -- like Lou got to the basket three times in a row and missed all three lay-ups. One he was in between a dunk and a lay-up and missed, the two others were challenged, I think one by Porter, one by Plumlee. They were good shots and the ball bounces in, and players need to see the ball go in. It would have been amazing had those three gone in, we might have had a Lou game. But he's right there. I loved last night, I thought for the first time really since the Playoffs have started that he played with Lou Williams pace. That's all I've been telling him.

You know, the results will happen after that, but just get back to your pace, and I thought he did that.

Q. Obviously Kawhi and PG are who they are, but is there anything more that you need from them in situations like this?

DOC RIVERS: No, just PG can't get in foul trouble. I think he's been in foul trouble at least two, maybe three of the games, and at times he's not even guarding one of your key guys. We've just got to keep him on the floor. The foul trouble by our guards, they have been very hurtful in this series, and not just the last two games. We've got to keep our guards on the floor, because if we don't, we've got to go to lineups defensively that are not desirable.

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