

Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Steve Ballmer

Lawrence Frank

Tyronn Lue

Press Conference

STEVE BALLMER: Thanks, everybody, for joining us today, depending on where you are, morning or afternoon. It's a real pleasure.

Before I get started on the business of today, I want to emphasize it's time to get out there and vote in the next few days, three days from now specifically, and starting on October 24th, we will have the Forum open as an in-person or a place to drive by and drop off ballots in this election.

We all know it's important to get out and vote, so I want to just underscore that. I also want to thank the people at the Clippers, the Agua Caliente Clippers and particularly at the Forum for working so hard to try and facilitate voting because it's so important

Next thing I want to do is I really want to thank Doc Rivers. Doc is obviously a fantastic championship coach. Doc has really been for me a mentor since I first purchased the Clippers six years ago. I am so grateful to Doc for all he's done, not only as a coach. Doc is -- I think everybody on this call knows Doc is a very special human being who's been a great ambassador and just is a great person. I wish him well in Philadelphia, except of course for two games a year when we play him. I can't wish him as well on those two days, and it's just great to see Doc doing what he's going to do again in Philadelphia.

We are here as a consequence of a real extensive search process that we engaged in to try to find the next coach of the Los Angeles Clippers. I wanted to make sure particularly for me, as someone who has never been involved in a coaching search that we went out, and met the best and brightest coaches from around the NBA. And I'll tell you, I was super impressed by the quality of the talent, not only people who have been head coaches before, but particularly some of the assistant coaches around the league, check diverse group of people, very



talented; and I'm optimistic, if you will, about the future of the league with.

That said, while there are a lot of great coaches, we had to get the best of the best, and the best of the best is Ty Lue. Ty, of course, has now spent two years with us, last year and I guess it would have been what, the 2013-2014 season, Ty was a Clipper, and it is such an honor for me to have a chance to participate in introducing Ty as our new coach.

Ty has won championships. Not that I'm an expert on game management and X's and O's, but all of our staff, Ty sees the game as good or better as anybody you'll ever meet, which I think is awesome. Ty is also a guy who I have really come to understand holds himself and others accountable, which is a key part of being good in the sports business. Ty is a coach who has had a real record of connecting, as a former player, perhaps, but connecting with his players.

And even the short time I've really spent more time together, I'll tell you, Ty is my kind of guy. He wants to move, move, move, learn, new things, absorb, think new thoughts, which I think is essential to keep pushing yourself like that to be better, to grow.

And if you ask Ty, what else do you spend your time on, Ty said, "Steve, I'm really all about basketball." And I think that kind of work ethic is what you really need to succeed in any business, but particularly this one.

Lawrence Frank, who you will hear from, Michael Winger, Trent Redden, Mark Hughes, really did their job to ensure we have the best coach. And of course we were able to consult with Jerry West who has quite a track record of all of this kind of stuff, and who I guess has known Ty for over 20 years now

Without further ado, I'm going to turn things over to Lawrence Frank, and Lawrence will proceed with the proper introduction of Ty.

LAWRENCE FRANK: That was pretty good, Steve, thank you. When you work in basketball, you deal a lot in numbers and letters, X's and O's on a white board, stats on a screen, lines on a resumé. Everything can be studied



and measured, almost everything. "Feel" is a term you hear, but you can't quantify. Feel for the game, feel for players, feel for people.

The man I'm about to introduce has a lot of qualities we prize. He's a thinker, he's a connector, he's a dynamic leader who lists you, even as he challenges you. He's got the X's and O's. He's got the resume. He's also got the feel. It comes across in the way he sees the game from every angle and the way he relays his vision off and on the fly in the action.

Ty has been where we want to go. He has taken a supremely talented team faced with challenges to the peak of the NBA.

It's no secret we have had a difficult month. We lost a series we were in position to win. We said good-bye to a coach we all greatly admire. We all take responsibility for what took place and have been working hard towards making the necessary improvements. The first step was finding the best head coach to lead us forward and grow with our group.

We talked to a lot of fantastic candidates, as Steve said. Sometimes, the best is sitting right in front of you. I would like to introduce the new head coach of the L.A. Clippers, Ty Lue.

TYRONN LUE: Thank you, I appreciate it. First of all, I just want to say thank you to Mr. Ballmer. I really appreciate it. Thank you, Lawrence; thank you, Jerry West; thank you, Mark Hughes; thank you, Trent Redden, for having the belief and confidence in me to give me the opportunity to coach this franchise and I really appreciate it.

I'm happy to be back. I'm excited and I'm just ready to start working right away.

Q. As one of the few owners in the bubble watching the Clippers games, how did you feel after Game 7 and why did you feel there needed to be a change of coach? In your assessment, you've been watching this team for a long time, were there any patterns or anything you felt needed to be changed; that you couldn't just bring the same core back and try to make another run?

STEVE BALLMER: Yeah, I'd say just a couple things. I did see all but one of our playoff games and a few of our seeding games in the bubble. I don't think we played our best basketball most of the time, frankly, we were in the bubble, and certainly the way we ended our season, that really disappointed me.

I think probably fair to say, my personality is all about winning and we didn't get the job done that we expected to get done at the end of the season.

You know, you can say it was extra painful, if you will, to be down or to be up, rather, 3-1 and then have Denver come back on us, but at the end of the day, we did not meet the goals we set out for ourselves.

And so after sort of a period to breathe, to decompress for all of us, we tried to really ask the question -- we did ask the question: What do we need to do; what can we do to be better, to be better, to improve?

And one of the areas where we decided just because of, you know, where we were and trying to get a different perspective, etc., was in the area of coach, and we brought in the best coach possible -- I think the best coach in the NBA, frankly, and certainly the best coach for the Clippers at this stage of the game. I'm excited about where we are. I'm itching, actually, to have the season get going again, and somehow the magic of this crazy stuff, I don't know when we will restart. You have to ask the league about that. But I hope this is not as long as the average off-season, and just excited to see what Ty and our group of players and staff will do in the next season.

Q. Steve alluded to it, as far as being a two-time championship coach, one of eight coaches that are currently in the NBA that has won a championship, and when you think about this, only 34 coaches in the history of basketball that's won a championship, and you've been to that promised land. You know, for me, it's like what would your approach to bringing success to this Clippers franchise at this time?

TYRONN LUE: Well, first off, I want to say I'm sorry, I was just thinking through my mind. I forgot Michael Winger. I want to say Michael Winger, thank you very much for all you've done. I really appreciate it. We've been on the phone a lot lately. So I'm sorry about that, after going through my mind.

But to get back to you, I just think having the right mindset, having the right approach, I know what it takes, but I'm excited because the roster is unbelievable. And to have a chance and an opportunity to coach a team like the Clippers who I love their roster, I love the team, and I love what they stand for as an organization. Give Mr. Ballmer, and him kind of just being genuine, the person who he is and taking care of everyone and making sure everyone is a great place; that's the type of environment I want to be in and that's the type of environment you need to be in a championship.



Everyone has to be on the same page, everyone has to be together and it has to be a family. When you start there, I think it's easy to build a championship team because everyone is invested, everyone is a part of it, everyone is happy to be here, and that's what I like.

Q. You've been so open in the past about the level to which Doc has been such a driving force in your decision to really become a coach after you retired. What have these last few weeks been like from seeing him leave to now being asked to finish the job that he set out to start?

TYRONN LUE: It's been tough. Doc has been my mentor since I've been in the league and coaching, and he's given me my first opportunity. So without Doc, I wouldn't be in this position today. It's a tough loss for all of us, as Steve said.

With that being said, you know, I learned a lot from Doc, but I've also learned a lot from other coaches around the league because I'm always studying and trying to get better and I want to be better. So not just learning from Doc, but I've learned from other coaches like Spoel and Brad Stevens; and watching Nick Nurse last year, thinking outside of the box, being able to play box-and-one, and triangle-in-two, and bringing something new to the NBA. If you stop learning and you stop being willing to learn from other people, then you won't be successful.

So I think everything I do is not mine. I take a little bit from each person, each coach, each great coach, Popovich, Phil Jackson, Stan Van Gundy taught me a lot. Scott Styles taught me a lot. So just being able to take from a lot of different coaches and kind of make it your own, that's what I pride myself on.

Q. There were a couple head coaching opportunities in the league. I'm curious, what led you to choosing the Clippers, and how much of the familiarity with the organization front office and player-wise, especially in the bubble, led to you choosing to stay here?

TYRONN LUE: Well, actually, they chose me. You know, it feels good to be wanted. I think winning the championship and going to three straight Finals as a coach, and sitting out last year and kind of collecting my thoughts and doing a lot of film work, looking at a lot of different teams play, a lot of coaches, what they were doing; and for me to be here, they chose me, and it feels good to be wanted.

I kind of forgot the second part of your question, but you know, I'm just so happy and excited because they took a

chance on me and gave me the opportunity to be here, and it wasn't a situation where I turned down other situations. I think it was more so the Clippers wanted me. They wanted me to be here and I just felt good. I worked with Lawrence in Boston. I learned a lot from him on the defensive side of the basketball. From Lawrence and Thibodeau when I was in Orlando with Doc. Trent Redden was with me in Cleveland when we won the Championship. Jerry West drafted me.

Just being around the environment that we have and people that I know is great, and then also having a year under my belt of just being around PG, Kawhi, Lou-Will, Trezl, the team that we have in place and just seeing what we need to do better, what we can get better at and just having that one year of experience of being around those guys, that really helped me out, as well.

Q. Can you admit that I'm taller than you are?

TYRONN LUE: You're 5'9 and a half, BT.

Q. So are you, that makes me taller --

TYRONN LUE: I'm 5'11 and three fourths.

Q. Knowing the way, how you operate, I'm sure you've looked at film of your team. What do you think it will take to get this group to the NBA Finals and win that championship?

TYRONN LUE: I think a few things. I think just looking at our team, we need to play faster, at a better pace. I think getting easy baskets is one thing. I think sharing the basketball, playing through our best players and also making the other players on our team better, moving the basketball, changing the size of the floor with the ball, I think is very important for this team.

But also getting our players in the best position and best spots on the floor that they are comfortable in, and they have kind of played in those spots or positions throughout their year.

Q. For everyone, there are some comments made from some of the players that the chemistry wasn't where they wanted it to be, and from your perspective, what did you see in that and how do you guys address that moving forward?

TYRONN LUE: I think we're talking about chemistry and continuity, and it's not more so off the court and guys not liking each other. When.

You talk about chemistry, it's more so PG came in, he had

shoulder surgery, so he was out and he missed the whole training camp, he missed the first 11 games of the season. Kawhi came in so he couldn't participate in the whole training camp. Then we lost Pat Beverley in and out of the lineup a few times.

Once we got to the bubble, it was tough because we had some bad things happen: Trezli's grandmother; Pat Beverley's best friend; Lou had a funeral. With those things, it was hard to get continuity and chemistry thought the season because we didn't have a lot of practice time or our starting unit or our whole team for a large part of the season.

When we talk about chemistry and continuity, it's more so on the basketball court of just being familiar with guys and how guys like to receive the ball or where this guy is going to be on the floor. It was more so that; I think that comes from being healthy and not having as many injuries.

Q. So Mr. Ballmer was just saying that obviously winning is important, and you've been in a situation with Cleveland where you came in and had to win right away. What's it feel like there pressure-wise now that you've taken this job at this point in the Clippers tenure?

TYRONN LUE: Well, I'm big on pressure because if you don't have pressure that doesn't mean you have a chance of winning the Championship. When you talk about pressure, that means you're in a situation to win. That's what I want to do. I want to be one of the greatest coaches. I want to be great.

So in order to be great, you have to win. So to me when you start talking about pressure and all that it means, to me it just means you're in a position to win the championship, and you want to take on those pressures. You want to be better. You want to be great. In order to be great you have to get over those hurdles.

I'm excited about it. I don't look at it as pressure. I look at it more so as a chance to win another championship and a chance to take this team to a higher level.

Q. What do Kawhi and Paul need to give you guys more this year that they weren't able to give you this season? And for Lawrence, how important do you think for the next two or three years of this franchise is going to be player development, considering you guys spent so many Draft picks and so many assets in trades to go for it this season?

TYRONN LUE: I think for me, just being who they are, I think put them in a comfort zone that they can play their

game. You know, they have to adjust to my system and my program, but also have to be able to adjust to them, to their comfort zone and what makes them better.

I think setting the tone defensively, being the best two-way players in the league, I think it starts on the defensive end with those two guys of setting the tone every night defensively.

But also just health. I think PG came into it, like I said, had two shoulder surgeries and then he messed his hamstring up throughout course of the season. So being in and out of the lineup kind of hurt PG a lot; so he didn't get a lot of basketball; he didn't get a lot of chemistry with Kawhi and other guys on the team. I think health is the biggest thing moving forward.

LAWRENCE FRANK: In regards to player development, player development is critical regardless of where you're at in your team building. We're fortunate that five of our top eight are 30 years or younger. A lot of times when people talk about player development, they focus on younger players, which is critical but also the best teachers and best coaches get the best out of your best players.

We've talked a lot and we've looked internally in terms of how we can get better, and we think we can make great gains organizationally in the player development phase. And when -- player development is kind of like a catch-all phrase. There's skill development by the coaches. There's development by the performance of medical staff. There's developmental performance, nutrition.

So it all comes together but it's something that Steve has given us the ability to invest in both in people and resources, and in conversations with Ty. We're very, very hopeful of our young guys getting better, but also at the same time is making sure we have a plan for every single player and making sure we're giving them enough feedback throughout the process to see the gains they are making.

Q. Kawhi was handled with a load management factor so often last season. Do you foresee that happening again, and do you at all worry that it leads to a lack of continuity?

TYRONN LUE: It's something that I have to talk to with the medical staff and performance team. I can't answer that question right now, but the most important thing is the health of our players and whatever is best for our team, best for our players, that's how we'll handle it. I can't really comment on it because I don't know.

Q. How soon after what happened in the playoffs did



you decide you needed a new coach or make a change? Was it immediately or did you give it time before having conversations with Doc?

STEVE BALLMER: Oh, no. I definitely gave time. You want to let things sink in. Doc and I needed to have some chats. I mean, he's an incredible person and incredible coach. After a few chats we decided collectively that it was probably right to move in a different direction.

It's very important to me that we not do anything in the heat of the moment. That's not rational, like, "Oh, we lost a game." That's not sane. We took our time. Doc and I took our time together and arrived to the point we did, and then we took a little more time to be thoughtful.

While we loved Ty from day one, we wanted to make sure we put him up against the best around the league. So I would say we were thoughtful, and I'm going to blow the John Wooden quote but it's something about be quick but don't rush, and I know I don't have that exact, be quick but don't hurry -- I'm sure someone will correct me if I got it wrong, which I'm sure I did because I always blow it. But that's the process we took at the end of the season as we moved forward to hire Ty.

Q. You played with one of the most demanding leaders in Kobe, and you coached LeBron another great leader. With your two stars now on this team, kind of quiet and reserved, do you feel like you have enough leadership and do you need to see more from those two guys or anybody else?

TYRONN LUE: Well, leadership is different. You talk about our two players with Kawhi and PG, as you referenced, they lead by example. I mean, practicing hard and working hard every day individually on their game, and you're not going to have like the best players be the natural leaders at all times. It doesn't happen like that.

I think a lot of leadership has to come from me. I think it comes from Kawhi. I think it comes from PG and I think it comes from Lou and Pat Beverley. I don't think you can just say leadership in one person and put that demand on one person to do that. I think we have to do it as a committee.

They are great. I got shown different ways of leadership. They are going to show me different ways of leadership. I want to learn from Mr. Ballmer and Lawrence, as well.

Like I say, it's all collective, and I don't know everything, they don't know everything, but they want to get better as a group, and I think the biggest thing on leadership is communication and being able to communicate with one

another, myself, Kawhi, PG, Lou, Pat, Trezl, the and the communication will help the leadership going forward.

Q. What kind of qualities, I guess, how would you structure your assistant coaching staff? Do you figure on having coordinators, that sort of role? And then for Steve, you mentioned at the top you felt like there were areas that to get better as an organization, there are areas that have to be better and one was coaching. Are there other areas you've identified where you feel like you have to step forward to reach your potential?

TYRONN LUE: From me, as far as my coaching staff, I want to make sure that like I said, I have a defensive coordinator, offensive coordinator, player development, but being able to do multiple things, not just, you know, one thing or focus in on defense and that's all they can do or focus in on offense and there's all they can do.

I want to make sure that picking the coaching staff, we have guys that can do multiple things, because I want to build the best staff. I want to be the best coach. I want to see our coaches move on to be head coaches in the future.

So I'm just going through a process right now of just trying to figure out what's best for this organization, what's best for me and this staff, and kind of go from there.

STEVE BALLMER: On my side, I'd probably just under score two things. One we have already talked about today but that's player development. That's the role that Ty and his staff has, the front office. Everybody knows our situation with picks. We are just going to have to do better and better with all aspects of player development.

The second thing I would score is -- I don't know if it's -- yeah, we need to do better, but we're going to really need to be on our game when it comes time to do our roster. Given that we don't have a whole lot of picks going forward, how we sort of work in the margins and really find and develop talent and how we use our exceptions and our veteran minimums, there's a lot of work, and I would say we've made big moves, bold moves under Lawrence's leadership, but we are going to have to continue to grind in every area of roster development.

Q. Today, talking about chemistry and the lack of practice time being contributing factors with what happened against Denver. What did you see in the second half of those three games that might have troubled you about the way they played and about especially the inability to generate offense in Game 7?

LAWRENCE FRANK: Was that for me?

Q. Yes.

LAWRENCE FRANK: To echo what Steve said, there was great disappointment. Look, we pride ourselves on being a tough, gritty, resilient team and for many different reasons, we weren't. And I think that's something we all have to look in the mirror; that we didn't respond Denver's constant jabs to us; that we weren't able to be that tough, resilient group. So we have got to look deep within why that happened.

But also give Denver credit. It's not as much as we lost as they took it, and you have to acknowledge that they were the better team for that series. But with that being said, I think you're constantly learning, you're learning more about your guys. You're learning about your team. I think Ty referenced it. When you look at most teams that win a championship, they have to go through major adversity in order to get there.

Now, some are able to avoid that, but by and large, it's very, very hard to win a championship your first year, and it's no excuse. That was our goal. We fell short. We have to own that. It's a lot of internal review both from front office, coaching, players, in terms of what we need to do better in order to come back the type of team that we expect to be.

Q. Wondering, have you had any conversations with Kawhi or PG or any of the guys since you came to an agreement with the team or even during the process?

TYRONN LUE: Yes, ma'am. After the agreement, I talked to all the players. Everyone reached out to say congratulations. I've talked to a lot of guys on the team so far, so we're ready to get started. We're excited. We're anxious. Not knowing when it's going to happen is tough. But we're in great spirits and ready to get this thing going, and just kind of go on from there.

Q. It's been almost two years since you were a head coach, curious in that time in the year off and as an assistant, what were some of the ah-ha moments for that you made you want to get back into this role and like you mentioned before, helped you fully form who you are as a coach and even more evolved?

TYRONN LUE: I think the first thing, had a chance to step back and look at myself and work on me. I lost 35 pounds working out every day and changed my diet. I have a great work out regimen. That was the main thing was focus on myself. And after that, just kind of get back to watching the game and just seeing how the coaches performed, what they are doing in game situations, watching all the games

and all the talent in the league of how I could be better.

After Cleveland, after those first six games of the season and I was done, I had the whole season to just kind of reflect on what I could have done better as a coach, and what can I do and how can I keep improving, and just watching all the games and talking to a lot of coaches around the league; and having constant dialogue with Brad Steve expense talking to Rick Carlisle, talking to Steve Kerr, talking with Doc and just picking their brains on different things and different situations to get better, and that's what I want to do.

And then Doc reached out to me once, the Clippers signed Kawhi and PG and wanted me to come back and be with him and learn under him some more and help him out the best way I could. It felt good under Doc and Doc letting me go to Cleveland, I won a championship and go to three straight Finals, and now I come back and I can help my mentor out. We fell short, but we all learned something throughout the course of this process.

And like I said, I just want to keep continuing getting better. Just watching a lot of film. Watching a lot of games. Dissecting the games and a lot of after timeout plays, what you all ATOs, and just seeing everything, a whole overview of my career, what I can do better and how I can get better, rotations and everything.

And I'm still learning. I still want to be better as that, as well. It never stops. Like I said earlier, if you stop learning and stop willing to get better, then you might as well quit.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you all for your time.

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