

# Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

Tuesday, May 25, 2021  
Los Angeles, California, USA

## Rick Carlisle

Postgame Press Conference

Mavericks - 127, Clippers - 121

Mavericks

COACH CARLISLE: In the third quarter, our two best players, Luka and KP, really stepped up the defense. And it set a completely different tone in the second half.

To be able to hold them to 19 in the third quarter, that set us up for an opportunity to win the game. So Luka and KP at the defensive end, you could talk about all of Luka's spectacular stuff. Offensively, KP did some really great things offensively, but those two guys defensively were the difference in the third quarter. And when those guys play that way at the defensive end, it brings our defense to another level.

**Q. What do you like best about what you're seeing on the offensive end of the floor right now?**

COACH CARLISLE: I like the recognition. I like the offensive energy. We are striking a pretty good balance of inside/outside. I got a look at the metrics of it for the first couple of games to get a better idea.

You can always attack the rim more in the playoffs. I think that will be an emphasis for both teams going into Game 3. Look, to this point, we've been very focused and very determined. And we've just got to make sure that that continues. It's a seven-game series, regardless of what the score is in wins, losses after two games. And I told our guys, enjoy this one tonight.

Plane tomorrow, and we get off that plane tomorrow and we've got to refocus and get ready for Game 3. Looking forward to it, looking forward to competing. I know we'll have a great building, a building with a lot of hungry fans that haven't been there in a long time.

**Q. You said that this was a business trip coming to Los Angeles. What was the message and mentality coming into tonight's game to play with the sense of**



**urgency coming out and starting this first quarter strong the way you did tonight?**

COACH CARLISLE: Well, you know, we're a young team, but we have some experience under our belts from last year, and we have some other young veteran guys, Josh Richardson, Tim Hardaway Jr. that have played in playoff series before.

These guys know what it's about. And, look, frankly, we didn't have to get into a lot of cliché type stuff. Our guys are hungry to compete. They're hungry to play for each other. We've done that well for the first two games.

And again, the challenge is always, you know, when you win a game or two games in a playoff series, you know, how do you measure up against the human nature curve, when a lot of teams will have let-downs. And one of our real challenges will be to keep up this level of intensity and this level of fight.

**Q. You mentioned the second half defense. What was Kawhi doing so effectively in the first half when he scored 30 points? And what were you guys able to discuss at halftime or take advantage of in the second half to kind of slow him down?**

COACH CARLISLE: First half he was doing whatever he wanted. It was a combination. We had some loose offensive possessions. And they were just running it down our throats and just driving it through us. We looked at three clips of it at halftime. And the coaching staff challenged the team to make a stand defensively.

If we're going to have a chance to win this game, we've got to stand in there and we've got to make these guys come through us. And, look, they're a great team. They're still going to score points. But they weren't taking the liberties that they were in the first half. And the third quarter defense, that group that started the third quarter, really helped set the tone.

**Q. He didn't score a point. But Dirk's in the building. I'm wondering how that came about and how good it was to have him there to, I don't know, for any kind of moral support that there might have been?**



COACH CARLISLE: I saw him and Jessica in the hotel yesterday. It gives you a profound lift when you're in between two, first two games of the playoffs and you see that playoff warrior who we've been through so many battles with.

And he said that he was going to be coming to the game, which was great news. And I certainly believe that him being there tonight was a lucky charm for us. It never hurts, never hurts.

**Q. You said earlier that you didn't have to rely on cliches to motivate your guys tonight. But when you saw the way the playoff sort of bracket baked itself out with the Clippers losing games to position itself to be in this matchup, does that provide enough motivation to the guys and you don't have to say it or do you mention something like that?**

COACH CARLISLE: This time of year you shouldn't need extra motivation. NBA playoff basketball is a self-explanatory adjective. It is raw passion. It's all about team. It's all about one thing. And that is a group of guys getting together and making a stand on every possession.

If you can't get excited for that, you know, you should be in some other line of work, because they're not pulling people off the street to do these jobs.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports