

Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Coach Rick Carlisle

Postgame Press Conference

Clippers - 126, Mavericks - 111

COACH CARLISLE: We're very disappointed with the result of the series, obviously. I thought through the course of it there was a lot of growth, a lot of very valuable experience. But losing in the first round is something that we don't like doing.

And, so, I do think there were some strides made. I think there were some positive things that have come out of the last couple of weeks. Today, their hot shooting from 3 was probably the story of the game. We didn't have a great day shooting the ball.

I had thought we competed very well. We just didn't play as well as we needed to. And, so, that was, in my view, the biggest thing here. So, once again, I think all in all there were many positives to this season, but not as many as we'd like.

Q. What do you think Luka proved in this series? And when you have a player of that caliber, what do you think the next steps are to get to a situation where he's making deep playoff runs, you guys are making deep playoff runs with him?

COACH CARLISLE: Even before this series started, I think he's proven he's a top 5 player in the world. This series certainly validates that. And we've just got to keep building the team around him. And this is going to be an important offseason on many levels.

We have a lot of guys who are free agents or who have opt-ins or opt-outs with their deals. So there's a chance that there will be a lot of change, but we don't know. We don't know. And so time will tell on a lot of that stuff. But Luka is an amazing player.

I don't think there's anybody that would dispute that. And we've just got to keep moving this team forward. And offseason will be big.



Q. You mentioned those strides that the team has made. Where do you see, I guess, the most growth over this course of the stretch run at the end of the regular season and in this playoffs?

COACH CARLISLE: Well, a lot of it is just the experience of getting in a highly intense series that has got all the usual stuff in the playoffs -- personal things, chippy things -- all that kind of stuff. You're playing the same team two years in a row. Our guys are, I think, are realizing what rivalries what makes rivalries in this league.

And I believe that they are seeing the number of little things that you have to do well to be able to advance. And so it's a process. These things take some time. But I think that there were some valuable things that came out of this series and they came out of the series in the bubble last year as well.

Q. In Game 6, the Clippers only got four points from their bench. Today they got 24 from their bench. What surprised you about their bench play today?

COACH CARLISLE: Their bench stepped up and had a great game. Look, we saw everything in this series. We saw massive lineup changes. Beverley started the first two games and then hardly played the rest of the series. We made significant lineup changes. There's a lot of ebbs and flows. There's just a lot going on in a playoff, in a seven-game playoff series that goes seven games.

But I thought in the first half, Rondo hit a 3 and then Mann hit two 3s. And Kennard hit a couple in the second half. And when role players step up like that, those are difference-making type situations. Their guys did a good job.

We just didn't have a good day overall. Luka had a great individual day. I thought KP played very well. And, look, I've been really encouraged by the last three games of the series, with KP's -- his defense has been, has taken great strides. He looks like he's finally healthy. He's moving well. He's shooting the ball well. He's just playing the game well. And so that's very encouraging thing.

Finney-Smith had an amazing year. Hardaway had a great year. And we had a lot of guys, bench guys, that have had



really good years, too. But we've got guys that are banged up. Kleber has just not been right. Been very difficult for him. Some nagging thing. So it's an important year for him to get himself healthy.

And so I go right down the list. Everybody's given us something really important this year. But today's a disappointment. There's no two ways about that. We're not happy about losing.

Q. Given your timeline with the franchise -- you've been here forever -- you haven't had a playoff win since 2011. Why do you feel like you're the right guy to continue on and lead this franchise in the future?

COACH CARLISLE: That's a question you'll have to ask Mark. I obviously do. But I'd text him and see what he has to say about it.

Q. In the NBA's 75-year history, obviously there's never been a season where COVID hit teams and you guys were hit pretty hard, very hard, as a matter of fact. When you look back and you start making these evaluations on what happened this season, how can you factor in the COVID factor and what this team might have been had that happened, the potential of it and maybe how that wasn't realized?

COACH CARLISLE: That's a profound question that I think a lot of teams could be asked. It was a constant this year. Every day you were reminded of it with multiple testing on game days. Head coaches after the All-Star Game were tested on game days, too. That led to us not have masks on during the playoffs if we were fully vaccinated as head coaches.

But there was always a reminder of it. And while it seems like we're getting to the other side of it, it's not over yet. It's not over yet.

With that said, the NBA's done some amazing things to make the bubble work and to make this season work. And so it looks, as round one comes to a close here, that this thing is going to come in for a safe landing as well with another champion being crowned.

Hat's off to them. So much has progressed and so much has happened through all this. And we've all learned a tremendous amount.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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