

Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Donovan Mitchell

Postgame Press Conference

Utah Jazz - 117, Los Angeles Clippers - 111

Q. I was wondering if you're feeling okay. There was a couple of plays that, a collision with PG late in the game, it looked like you got banged up. One earlier that looked like you might have pulled something. How are you feeling, and then additionally, can you just talk to me about Bojan's defense on Kawhi?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: I'm great. No problems.

Bojan's defense was superb. He's been taking that role and taking that challenge. We make jokes with him all the time. We look at Bojan and say, We pay you to shoot, you know, but he's giving us both. So, yeah, he's accepted the role of taking that head-on. He's going to do what he does offensively and his energy and his, like, force and obviously, we have Royce and Rudy who are our star defenders, but when you have a guy like Bojan, JC like we're all picking up, like that really gives us a boost. That's really what changed the complexion of the game.

Q. So you checked out midway through the quarter, and then some of the other guys start stepping up, whether it's Joe hitting a layup, Royce hitting a three. Can you just speak to the confidence you have in the other guys as they were able to kind of take things under, into their hands, and go on that momentum-shifting run?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: I have the utmost confidence in the world. I think we all do. I think the fans, I think y'all do too. We get out there, and we're going to have our stretches. It's going to happen. We missed 21 straight Game 1, and then we couldn't buy a bucket this game when they went to zone. So it's going to happen. I think the biggest thing for us is our will. And I completely trust my teammates. They trust me to do what I do. So it was no surprise to see them go out there, get stops, score, and then to get us up 10, Joe stepped up big-time, Bojan stepped up his defense, Royce has been a dog, so serious, we all know Rudy having 20 boards. But the



biggest thing is we do it collectively, even when shots aren't falling, and that's, I think that's the biggest thing for us is continuing to take it step by step. And as far as trust goes, I think we all trust each other to the maximum level and that's why we play the way we play.

Q. What are some of the adjustments? I mean, everybody talks about the team that's down making the adjustments, but what are some of your adjustments that you guys can make heading into Game 3?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: Well, one is the one that's obvious, is that we play against the zone. We got stagnant. They slowed us up. And credit to Ty Lue and the staff for doing that. But we haven't played against zone in a long time and for us to just find ways to get into the paint and do what we have been doing. And then on top of that, we wasn't getting any stops. So we got to continue to get stops and do what got us up 21 or 19 or whatever it was. So I think that's really a big thing for us, continuing to move the ball, continuing to do what we do. But getting stops is huge. They're a talented team. They're going to hit shots. But the looks they were getting and the way they were getting their buckets, I feel like we can control that a little better than we did in that third quarter especially. We're going to expect heavy pressure from them, physicality like it was tonight, and just continue to do what we did and get out there.

Q. Besides the zone, it looked like they threw a lot of defensive coverages at you. Was it difficult to diagnose some of that and how did you overcome it?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: No, I mean, I think for me, I said this before, being in the league, I know it's only been four years, but you see everything. I've seen every coverage. It's just a matter of me making the right reads. It's about how aggressive they are and physical. You got Pat picking up full court. You know not to play with the ball if Pat's there, like simple mistakes that I've made myself that I don't make, that I can't make, especially in the playoffs. So I think for me it's just a matter of finding my guys and us knocking down shots and sometimes the shots go in, sometimes they don't, but I think seeing those different things and expecting them. I kind of knew that coming into the game, they were going to throw different looks, and



they're going to probably do the same thing again in Game 3, so just got to be ready and watch the film and do what I instinctively do.

Q. I know you say you're fine, but we see you limping out there, so I have to ask, is it pain? Is it soreness? Is it your knee? Is it your ankle? I mean, kind of a thigh? Tell me what's going on.

DONOVAN MITCHELL: I got hit and it hurt. I'm fine now. I walked in here. If you want me to sprint for you, I can. I'm good. I think the biggest thing is just, you know, shit happens. I'm thankful it wasn't bad and move on and get ready for Game 3.

Q. You've talked a lot about this year about sort of what you learned from the experience last year when you guys were up 3-1. When they make a run in this game and they actually take the lead there, does any of that help you there? When you are up and have you it and then all of a sudden they come back, do you sort of know how to dig in there?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: Yeah, there's going to be adversity. We're not going to always blow them out, blow teams out. It's the playoffs. It was great being up 21, but at the end of the day, they executed like they should. They have been here before. They have guys that have been to The Finals, been in the playoffs, have rings, have championships, so this is nothing they haven't seen before. So for us, it's, like, okay, they made a run, but how do we counter that. And I give our group, I think when I came out at the seven-minute mark that group going on that run was huge, and I think not just for myself, but as a team, I think we understand how to handle these things, and I think that was what you saw today, tonight. And I think definitely the experience level in the bubble helped. We understood, okay, this is what we're doing, having flashbacks of certain instances, and we kind of relate and having the same core group, we know exactly how these things work. So for us it's continuing to do what we do and understanding they're going to punch back and we got to continue to fight and continue to do what we do.

Q. You've talked about how much the game has slowed down for you and obviously the playoffs are very intense, physical, all that stuff, but this year with all of the playmakers that you have around you, how much has the pressure kind of also come off of you a bit? Are you having more fun with this team just hooping with these guys despite the intensity of what's these games mean?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: Yeah, I think, what did I make? One shot in the fourth quarter and, like, two in the second

half? I think for me it's like I don't feel like I have to go out there and do everything. I think that's a credit to the teammate, my teammates, credit to what guys we have on this team because they can go out there and make plays. Everybody has elevated their game each year, so for me, you look at the way Joe came out in the fourth, Bojan, JC, like, I don't feel like I having up there, walk it up, do everything. And there are times where I will have to do that. That's just part of my job. But for me it's great to have a group of guys that trust you and you trust and you just go out there and play and have fun. And obviously it's the playoffs and this is a high-intensity series, but at the end of the day I'm playing the game I love with guys that I really love and enjoy being around. So it makes the journey fun, ups and downs is going to keep happening, but we enjoy it, I enjoy it.

Q. Over the course of your career you probably had more big second halves than first halves, but you have had some big first halves and I'm wondering how much of that is just the flow of the game, the shots come and you get hot and how much of that is you thinking now is the time I need to make a mark on the game?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: I think tonight was that was my mindset going forward, starting off the game strong. I think my lack luster performance in the first half on both ends of the floor was huge for them going out there and they get, what, we got down 13 where it was an uphill battle the whole game. So for me it's like, okay, I'm going to make my imprint and I think tonight was through scoring. Some nights I'll be giving up the ball, if they blitz or trap me. Some nights may be like tonight. So that was my mindset, I'm going to continue to be aggressive and pick my spots, but I think tonight was just kind of like an, okay, like let's go out there and try and just be aggressive and make the right plays and those are the looks I got and once you see a few go in you start to feel good. But at the end of the day I only took two free throws which I'm pissed about to be honest with you because I feel like I could get to the line, I settled for a bunch of jump shots, and at the end of the day that's really where I pride myself is being able to make the plays and get it to the free-throw line and I can get my assist numbers up too, for sure.

Q. Which one do you think has been your main point of emphasis on offense tonight?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: I think trying to get down hill, but I didn't get to the free-throw line enough. I was able to hit the three ball, I was able to hit shots, get into the mid-range and based on how they were playing me make certain reads, but there are definitely things I can do better. I had three crucial turnovers. I pride myself on being able to take

care of the ball when the ball's in my hands. So for me just being aggressive, tonight it was through the three ball, so was last game, but trying to get to the rim, trying to create and find those gaps is I think is what I kind of saw in film and I'll continue to try and do.

Q. What did you think about them going back or going to their big lineup to start the game and how much does that kind of present an opportunity for you in terms of attacking in the pick-and-roll with Rudy?

DONOVAN MITCHELL: That's kind of what most teams do throughout the League, so I think if there was one defense I would say we're most comfortable with it would be that probably. So for us it was getting back to our roots -- they started out small first game, so we worked through that. But like I said, like somebody said earlier, they threw a bunch of looks at us, but for me it's finding ways to continue to be aggressive. I only think I hit big fellow one time on the roll, I got to be able to find him more, be able to find him, be able to find my guys. And they're going to trap me, they're going to do certain things, so I got to be able to make those plays and make those passes and at the start of the game they would drop, so I went out there and did what I did, but they switched immediately. So it's going to be so many different things you're going to see and part of the playoffs is just adjustments I got to make adjustments of my on and get ready for it.

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