

# Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Los Angeles, California, USA

## Coach Tyronn Lue

Pre-game Press Conference



**Q. (Indiscernible) Kawhi get on second-team defensive team? How do you assess his season overall and how would you compare it to last year on the defensive end?**

COACH LUE: I don't know. I just know in the playoffs, like I said, the last two games against Luka, games 6 and 7, he's the primary defender on the ball. You see who Kawhi Leonard is. I think you saw the last game against Donovan Mitchell, taking a challenge, a one-on-one guarding him, you see what kind of defender he is and what he does defensively.

So I don't think we call him first-team, second-team, third-team; it's about when you need the guys the most can they produce and can they get stops when you need them to. And that's what he does for our team.

**Q. You mentioned not that long ago how your conversations with Zub and Patrick Beverley went when they weren't playing as much in the first round and how you would need them in this round. I feel like the role's kind of reversed with Rajon Rondo a little bit -- he hasn't played in the last two games. How have those conversations gone with him as far as keeping him connected into what you're trying to do in this series?**

COACH LUE: They've been good. They've been good. Just staying ready, understanding the opportunity, what we're doing and matchups but they've been good. He's been okay.

**Q. Nic Batum yesterday was talking about that he's basically learning a new division in the playoffs and (indiscernible) the challenge and obviously he's up for it. Have you asked a guy to do that before? And what do you make of him approaching that challenge?**

COACH LUE: I mean we had Channing Frye do it back in Cleveland in 2016 of going from a 4 to playing a 5. And we kind of pulled it out in the playoffs. It was huge for us.

And I think the same thing with Nic, being able to switch 1 through 5 and now playing the 5, trying to keep him up to speed with some of the plays. But he's been phenomenal being able to switch, being able to space the floor, guarding 1 through 5. So, he's been phenomenal. He just needs to continue to keep (indiscernible) and do it slowly. As of right now he's been doing a great job.

**Q. Obviously rotations can fluctuate from game to game, even quarter to quarter, but based on what you saw of the guys in Game 3, do you kind of anticipate this to be your nine-man rotation going forward in the series?**

COACH LUE: For right now. The way we played, the way we performed the other night, it was great. So why change it. And then just kind of see what happens, go with the flow of the game. And if we need certain players or certain pieces you try to plug those guys in when needed.

But right now the juice we had defensively and how I was able to try to take them out some of their (indiscernible), things they wanted to do, I think right now that's the nine-man rotation that we set up right now.

**Q. What's impressed you most about how the Clippers have handled adversity throughout this postseason?**

COACH LUE: It started all season long. I think with so many injuries throughout the course of the season and so many different guys stepping up, like Pat Pat and T-Mann and Amir Coffey and Luke Kennard -- even Cousins when he first got here he didn't know a lot of plays but he stepped in, playing a huge role.

I think all season long just handling adversity throughout the season of guys being injured and hurt. Those guys have a chance to play in big games. I think we have won big games when our backs were against the wall. We came out and performed. Nothing's really changed in the playoffs. Right now coming out 2-0, getting that Game 3 was huge. But tonight will be a bigger game for us and I think we're ready and prepared for it.

**Q. Similar to a counter puncher, it appears your team responds best when their back is against the wall and**



**they take the opponent's best shot. How have you changed your coaching staff considering your guys appear to play best that way, if at all?**

COACH LUE: It hasn't been different. You don't really want to be the counter puncher; you want to be the aggressor. First two series, we came out, got down 2-0 and our backs were against the wall and we have to perform at a high-level. We've done that.

It's not something you want to get used to, digging yourselves holes like this. But give Utah credit. They won two games on their home floor. We didn't play well. We understand that. We still had opportunities to win both of those games.

With that being said we still have to take care of home court tonight. And going forward, we know we have to win one game on their floor. So we want to take care of home tonight like they did and then put the pressure on them going back home for Game 5.

**Q. Speaking of counter punching and everything, your Cleveland teams in '16 and '18 were pretty good too when their backs were against the wall. Are there any similarities between the two squads and how they responded to adversity?**

COACH LUE: I think when your back's against the wall you're able to make some adjustments. (Indiscernible) perform at a higher level. The situations we were in, versus Dallas being down 0-2 and then going to Dallas, that was a tough situation to be in. I haven't been in that position before. We got down 2-0 to Boston in the Eastern Conference Finals. They won those first two home games and we were going home.

A lot of differences as far as on the road and at home. But for the most part I think any team, when your back's against the wall, to be able to perform at a high level just shows you who you are and who you are as a team. That's who we are. Our backs were against the wall in the second round. And we've got to come out and perform tonight for Game 4 to try to tie the series up.

**Q. As a follow-up, you guys, it seemed like the only pitfall defensively Saturday was the number of wide-open looks they hit on 3-pointers. How can you adjust for that? Was that just a byproduct of playing zone mostly?**

COACH LUE: I think mostly just trying to slow down Donovan Mitchell. And in Utah he had two great games, so coming home for Game 3 we want to make sure we take the ball out of his hands and make him see different

defenses. He made some good passes and they got some open shots. But when you double team the basketball you're going to give up something. And we know this team shoots 3s at a high clip. But first priority is to slow down Mitchell.

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