

Los Angeles Clippers Media Conference

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Tyronn Lue

Press Conference

Q. Obviously some news came out about Kawhi. Just what, when did you find out about Kawhi's knee injury and I guess what's the vibe of the team been like in the last 12 or 24 hours that you guys found out about the injury?

TYRONN LUE: Just know he has a right knee sprain. Being optimistic about the situation. But our team, we understand that it's part of the game. You lose your best player like that, it's tough that it happened, but all season long we have been having next man up mentality, we know it's the playoffs, but we're ready, the guys are geared up and we understand the task at hand.

Q. It seemed like Rudy has had a tough time getting going as a roller in this series. How would you evaluate the job that you guys have done on Gobert in that department and what's the key for you guys to continue that?

TYRONN LUE: I think the switching has helped us out. I think switching 1 through 5, not allowing him to get down hill, throw the lob to Rudy, because he's a great, dynamic roller. So we have been doing a good job of making sure we switch 1 through 5 and try to get under Gobert before he slips out of the pick-and-rolls. And if he does, our low man has been there and has been activating. So just the switching I think has caused a lot of problems for Gobert's rolls.

Q. Wanted to know, have you talked much with Kawhi, how he's doing, how he's taking it, if he's communicated with the team at all?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, he's a little down because he wants to be here. But that's part of the, it's part of the game, he understands that. But he wants to be there for his teammates. We understand what's going on right now, so he's going to cheer us from afar and we'll get back on to it tomorrow.

Q. Following up about being optimistic. From what



the medical staff showed you, what is the best case scenario for Kawhi's potential return?

TYRONN LUE: No potential return. We're not sure about that. We just know that we're optimistic, trying to wait for everything to clear up, get the testing back in the next 48 hours or so and kind of go from there.

Q. I got to ask if you made a decision on who you want to start tonight for Game 5?

TYRONN LUE: Yes, I have.

Q. Would you be able to share it?

TYRONN LUE: No, not right now. (Laughing).

Q. The main question I have for you is regarding PG. Because obviously it's a next man up mentality for everybody, but there's only one Paul George. So in terms of your conversations of preparing him for a pivotal road game, a Game 5, I know he said Monday night he's down to play all 48 if necessary. What has kind of been the tenor of the conversations with PG over the last, really today?

TYRONN LUE: It's not about PG, it's about our whole team stepping up and preparing for this game, myself, my coaching staff and all the players. So it's not just on PG. PG wants to play well, of course, but we are going to need contributions from everyone who plays tonight. It's not going to be a one-man show, it's going to be a team effort and we understand that. So we just going to take it from there. Guys just step up, take their shots, be aggressive, making plays for one another like we have done all season long.

Q. Obviously when you lose a player of Kawhi's caliber, the margin for error goes down. Just curious when you look at your game plan what you feel like you guys have to be extremely precise about tonight?

TYRONN LUE: I think our defensive game plan. I think coming into the game with a defensive mindset, understanding what we're trying to do, what we're trying to take away, and we have done great job of that in Games 3 and 4.



So no let-ups. We know we have an all-defensive team guy that's down, but the other guys have to step up and be prepared, understand exactly what we're looking for on the defensive end.

Q. You mentioned earlier about being in next man up situations. Specifically how much do you feel like that's going to help you in Game 5 tonight, just having that muscle memory of being in those types of situations for your team?

TYRONN LUE: I think it's going to help us out a lot. We have gone through it all season long. Kawhi missed a lot of games. PG's missed a lot of games. Pat Beverly and Serge missed a lot of games. You know, Marcus Morris. So our young guys, they have gotten an opportunity to play and step up and play big roles in big games. Luke Kennard and Terance Mann, Pat Pat. Guys have just stepped up and found ways to win, so it's not any different right now. We need guys to step up and play and play in that role.

Q. Obviously you talked about the next man up mentality. Do you have a -- have you had a conversation with your players or do you even discuss seizing the opportunity. With Kawhi out, obviously this gives other guys an opportunity to step up and show their value, show what they're worth. Do you have that conversation with the guys or just, it's just next man mentality, let's get it?

TYRONN LUE: No, we talked about it this morning before our film session. And just guys just stepping up and doing what they have been doing all season long. Nothing has changed. We've played without Kawhi. We've played without PG. We've played without a lot of guys, and guys have stepped up and we just found ways to win and nothing's any different tonight.

Q. The chatter today, and I don't know if you heard it or not, is pretty much everybody's counting you out. Do you use this as motivation?

TYRONN LUE: Not really. I mean, I've been counted out my whole life. Probably a lot of these guys have too. But I don't use that as motivation. Like, we're in Game 5 for the second round of the playoffs. That's enough motivation right there. We have the chance to do something special, win a big game tonight, and that's our main focus.

So I'm not really worried about the chatter. We have been counted out in the first series as well. So we're ready to go and we're ready to play Game 5.

Q. Curious about, did Kawhi travel with you guys at all at first? I know he may be back in Los Angeles right now. What happened there because he wasn't listed on the injury report initially?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, he came with the team and then he went back.

Q. I guess, when something like this happens, I think when you were in Cleveland, Kyrie went down with the injury, how do you not let this sort of affect a locker room atmosphere kind of thing?

TYRONN LUE: It's going to affect you, your team. It's your brother and you don't want to see your brother go down, whether it's your best player or 16th, 17th player. You never want to see anyone go down and we understand that.

So, yeah, of course guys are going to feel a certain way, but then we also understand that we got, we have a game to play tonight and that's what we're focused on right now.

Q. I know you've said over and over again that it's going to be a team effort, but the matchup hunting you guys have been doing in this series has primarily used Kawhi as the one who punishes the matchup. I just kind of want to know how much more physical does Paul George have to be offensively tonight for you guys to be successful?

TYRONN LUE: PG's going to have to keep doing what he did the last couple games. Taking his shots. When Rudy's out there, he's in his deep drop, taking his threes. And just playing the way he's been playing, nothing any different. We want to attack the same way. Of course, Kawhi's out of the game, so we got to do a little bit more movement sets to try to keep them off guard and keep them off balance.

But not any more pressure on PG, he's been playing great, I like where he's at right now and now we need the other guys to step up and play well.

Q. Obviously Reggie is not shy ever about anything. And then Kawhi recently said that he was impressed with Terance being like not afraid of the big moment. About those two guys and sort of this stage and this opportunity for them.

TYRONN LUE: Well, Terance is a young player, we have seen in Game 7 versus Dallas that he stepped up and had a big game, wasn't scared of the moment at all. And Reggie, all season long in big games, throughout the course of the pressure in the playoffs, the couple games

we had here in Utah. So Reggie loves this moment, he loves the big stage, he's not going to shy away from the moment and that's what we need out on the floor tonight.

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