

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Nicolas Batum

Terance Mann

Press Conference



Q. First of all, Nico, welcome back. Terance, welcome in. Nico, what went into your decision to come back, first of all?

NICOLAS BATUM: That's a pretty easy decision. When I played last year, to me, when I came in, I had no expectation about myself. Turned out that's pretty great individually and collectively. So it was a pretty easy decision for me to come back. I know everything. I know everybody now, coaching staff. I've got more confidence about the new project. So all good, easy.

Q. What was your summer like in total? I know you have the France medal that you guys won and all that. What was the entire summer like for you?

NICOLAS BATUM: Pretty busy. I don't think I had a lot of time off. You know, I've got a chance to play basketball at the highest level in the NBA and the Olympics. So I can't complain about that.

Q. Terance, last season, it seemed like your jump shot, your three were something that you needed -- or you thought was going to improve working with Shaun Fein and the player development staff, it seemed to be that way. This season in particular, is there something you're working on, as much as last year, is there something you're kind of trying to improve now?

TERANCE MANN: No, nothing specific. I just feel like my game is an all around game. So I just fine tuned a couple things, sharpened up some tools. But I didn't work on nothing too specific, just kept working on my jump shot and other teams that the team needed me to do.

Q. How important or valuable do you think that player development staff was to help you refine that shot? I know we talked a little bit about it last year, but was it an arduous process that really helped you with the player development stuff?

TERANCE MANN: Yeah, they were important, and it was big time. They helped me a lot, especially with confidence, a lot of reps, a lot of game-like reps, a lot of shots I would be taking in the game throughout the off-season, throughout the beginning of the season, just working together with them, playing five-on-five with them when I was out of the rotation and stuff like that. So they played a big role last year.

Q. Nico and Terance, what were your take-aways from Paul's leadership and performance last season and when Kawhi went down? How do you think that can translate into this upcoming season?

NICOLAS BATUM: That was great, especially for himself. That proved to himself he can really lead this team without Kawhi. We had a big expectation, so we're going to rely on him a little bit. We've all got to do better, do more, especially without Kawhi back. I'm pretty confident in P.G. leading the way for us all year long.

Q. Terance, with you, one thing that really stood out to me last year with you is that you are seemingly unfazed by all the success you started to have, especially in the second half of the season. With that said, from where I sit, you might have a bigger role this year coming in. Do you have to make any mental adjustments coming in understanding your role could be bigger given what you were able to do in the playoffs the second half of the season?

TERANCE MANN: I mean, not really. I'm just going to play my game and be where they need me to be this year. I'm not really thinking bigger role, more expectations and whatnot.

I'm just going to go out there and play my game. You guys know I play hard. That's what I'm going to continue to do.

Q. Nic, I talked to you at a couple points last year. You said when you were let go from Charlotte, you didn't think anybody would call or didn't know if anybody would call. I'm guessing that situation changed this past summer. With that said, what stood out to you about the Clippers that you thought, I don't want to walk away from that, from a team standpoint?

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NICOLAS BATUM: I got a great connection with the coaching staff, with my teammates. Like last year, like somebody told me I got the most minutes played last year. I mean, it was pretty crazy where I came from. So they let me be me. Nobody put pressure on myself about coming back.

I know the project. I know the goals. I know what we have at our core. We have the same group, and I liked it. Why go anywhere else? They gave me a chance to be a player again, so I want to come back and have fun and keep winning.

Q. Nic, just, again, building off of this summer, you had a very physically interesting year last year, playing a lot of center in the playoffs, and I know that can be like taxing. How did you kind of take care of your body over the past off-season to get ready for what the team's going to ask you to do playing the four or the five this year?

NICOLAS BATUM: My off-season was different from last year. Last year I came off from a year I didn't play much. Then I got like eight months off-season. I didn't go to the bubble, so I had a lot of time off. This summer, I can say I'm tired because I played basketball, so I'm good. I can't complain about that.

I took some time off after the Olympics. Tried to workout, get stronger, get ready for the next season, but I'm going to be okay.

Q. Terance, how would you describe your relationship with Coach Lue, and how much did that relationship help you develop into the type of player you've become and what you were able to accomplish in the playoffs last season?

TERANCE MANN: We have a great relationship, real transparent. He lets me know what he expects from me, and I take coaching pretty well. I just go out there and do what he tells me to do. Just him having the confidence to believe in me and let me play my game, let me be aggressive. Telling me to take more shots, be more aggressive defensively.

Just having him as a head coach was big time last year for me in my development. So it was nice to be part of it.

Q. Coming into the season, Lawrence told me last week that Serge is limited to noncontact and obviously Kawhi is out. You guys played so well in the playoffs when you were shorthanded. It's a hard ask to play that way for a long stretch of the season, but what do

you feel like is replicable that you can do again, the way you succeeded in the playoffs, playing small, playing fast, that you can kind of bring out now for maybe the first few months of the season?

NICOLAS BATUM: We're going to build from it. We know what we did last year. We've got new players also, a couple of new players to bring in, but we've got a lot of guys who can play basketball in the NBA. So a lot of guys can play as a pro, can play ball, so I'm not worried about that.

We know each and every night we've got someone to step up. He's a perfect example. In Game 6, I don't think anyone expected him to get the big game that he did. So we're going to have like guys with big nights. P.G. is going to be the man for us, Bledsoe, Reggie, all those guys. So I'm really confident about that group.

Q. You laughed at Nic's mention of how many minutes he played last year.

TERANCE MANN: That was crazy, yo.

Q. Flesh that out for me. Also, as a young player, playing with a guy like Nic who also can do so many things, what have you learned from him?

TERANCE MANN: I'm just real fortunate, and I'm glad that I met Nic Batum so early in my career because he's just a great example of like a guy who works hard, doesn't complain, is focused, will play hard every night and always wants to win and will do whatever it takes to win.

That's me, and I just see a lot of myself in him. I'm just fortunate to be able to have a vet like this and just -- he plays so many minutes, and I would tell him all year, like just go sit down. What are you doing? You're making me feel old. He's just moving like a young guy.

After the season, we go so deep into the Western Conference Finals, and he's like I'm about to go play in the Olympics. I'm like what? It's crazy. They do well. They get a medal. He becomes a Knight over there. This guy is crazy, and I'm real fortunate to be around him so early in my career.

Q. Nic, that's got to make you feel good, right, to hear that?

NICOLAS BATUM: Yeah, he knows what I think about him since day one. I talk to him like during training camp last year, so I'm really happy it's just the beginning for him. Just beginning. We only see 10 percent of Terance Mann right now. He's going to be great. You know that. You



know that.

Q. You guys had a very emotional playoff run, highs and lows. I feel like it would build a lot of chemistry and camaraderie. Was there some kind of take-away you guys had coming close in a run like that where you were down 0-2 so many times?

TERANCE MANN: For me, I think it just showed us who's who and who we have on our team and what we have in each other. I think, when you go down 0-2 so many times, it brings a lot out of you. I don't know if that was your first experience with that.

NICOLAS BATUM: Same.

TERANCE MANN: You build with your team because you're down and guys come out of their shell. Guys have to do better, and you watch guys lock in and get better throughout the playoff series and do better. So we found out a lot about ourselves, and that's good that we have kind of the same core going back into this season because we know what we expect from each other in the highs and the lows.

Q. What's the vibe around the team? Just with the whole Kawhi situation and his injuries and the unknown of when he might be coming back. What's the confidence of the team, and what's the mindset without your best player, to start the season at least?

NICOLAS BATUM: We were pretty close to something special without him, so we know we're good. We can do some good stuff without him. We can be way better with him. So we have to be great until he's coming back. We've got guys all around who can be great, great coaching staff.

So all we have to do is go out there, play hard and compete because we know we're still a good team anyway. When he's coming back, we're going to be an even better team, but we're still a good team.

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