

LA Clippers Media Conference

Monday, September 27, 2021
Los Angeles, California, USA

Tyronn Lue

Press Conference

Q. I'd like to find out about your enthusiasm for the upcoming season and how much that enthusiasm or excitement is curbed because you don't know the status of Kawhi.

TYRONN LUE: I'm very excited, just having a chance to coach these guys again. Some of the new additions we have, like Bledsoe and Justise Winslow, I'm just excited to get back to it.

I thought last year we achieved some things we wanted to achieve, but our common goal is to win a championship here. But our guys really did a great job last year of just building each month, each game, and getting better and better.

With the status of Kawhi, we don't know. We'll let him take his time and continue to do his rehab. When he's ready to come back, he'll come back. We've got to coach the season like we don't have him and just continue to keep building from there.

Q. Will this cause you to make massive changes or philosophy in changes from an offensive standpoint?

TYRONN LUE: We'll do some things different, but I don't think massive changes. We can do some things we did last year but also incorporate some new things for our new players and some different things. A lot of our offense was based around Kawhi and P.G.

Now, having Kawhi out, we don't know how long but having him out, now we've got to do some things differently, run some more stuff through Reggie, run some more stuff through Marcus, also in P.G. We're going to do a lot of the same stuff, but we're going to add some stuff as well.

Q. From what you saw with Paul last year, his overall season and the way he played without Kawhi, what sort of things do you see him carrying over in the long term this season?



TYRONN LUE: Just being one of the top players in the league. I think we saw that in the playoffs last year when Kawhi went down. P.G. was having a great playoffs anyway, but just Kawhi went down, to step up and beat the No. 1 seed in Utah in the last two games, games 5 and 6, and to play the way he did throughout the playoffs.

He's carried teams before. He's a great player. He's been a top player in this league. This year we need more from him, more leadership, and to continue to play the way he played last season.

Q. The way you guys played small last year when you didn't have Serge and it obviously worked so well in the postseason. Starting off without him available to be on the court, does it make it easier knowing you have a lot of the guys who have come back from that roster have that experience of playing small and what you can do until Serge gets back to full health?

TYRONN LUE: I think Serge will have a great season once he gets healthy. He was big for us last year. Same thing with Kawhi. We want him to rehab and make sure he comes back 100 percent.

But playing small last year, we did get some experience. Guys know how to play that way and that style of basketball, but it's not something we want to do all the time. We like having Zu and Serge out there and being able to go small when we need to.

I think the guys understand how we want to play small, but we've got to do it a little bit better with Kawhi being out because now guys have to step up and do different things.

Q. Last year it was so structured with the protocols and the daily testing. I know it just started, but how do you expect it to be different in terms of the daily obligations you have? And do you anticipate this team being fully vaccinated by the opener?

TYRONN LUE: I'm not sure how it's going to be different. Whatever the NBA comes up with, that's what we're going to do. We have to be able to adapt at all times. We talked about that last season, and our guys did a great job with that.

So whatever the rules are, we're going to follow those rules, and that's what we're going to do.

Q. You and your coaching staff took this team as far as they've ever been in franchise history. What are you going to do for an encore? No (laughter). Actually, how do the expectations change now that you've had so much success, and how does that change even though you won't have Kawhi for part of the season?

TYRONN LUE: Expectation doesn't change for us. We understand that we've got to continue to keep building, continue to keep getting better. We understand that. But our expectations don't change. You still come out and try to compete to win a championship. In losing a guy like Kawhi, I know things seem like it's not possible, but anything's possible. Our guys have shown that last year.

Like I say, he went down and we won games 5 and 6 against Utah, the best team in the NBA at that point in time. We've just got to keep competing, keep preparing, and every day get better and better, and we'll live with the results at the end.

Q. As a follow to that question, obviously, there were so many highs and lows in the playoffs last season. What would you say is the biggest thing you learned about your team?

TYRONN LUE: Very resilient team. No matter the obstacle, guys are able to get over the top of it. We played all season with guys in and out of the lineup. Kawhi and P.G. were hurt. Marcus was hurt. And our young guys and different guys stepped up every night.

So we understand that. So that's one of our biggest things, like we're not going to complain. We're going to have a next-man-up mentality. I know it's cliché, but that really is our mentality. That's what we live by. That's been our motto the last year, and we're going to continue to keep doing that.

Q. With the compact schedule that you guys have this year, not having Kawhi, how do you manage guys like P.G. and Reggie who played heavy minutes, were successful, but how do you carry that over the course of an 82-game season?

TYRONN LUE: We have to be smart about it for sure. That's why I think we got the best sports science team in the league, and they're going to let us know when guys are in that red zone or guys need a day or two off, and we've got to be smart about it.

Reggie, Nico, Marcus, P.G., they all played a lot of minutes last year, so we've got to be smart about it. But we want to win games in the course of doing that, but we've got to be smart about their health as well.

Q. I know you said you don't know when Kawhi is coming back, but do you allow yourself to kind of think like, hey, we hope we have him back for the playoffs or maybe the end of the season? Or do you operate like we've got to play without him and we can't expect him to come back?

TYRONN LUE: I hope he comes back October 21st, but the reality is he's not going to be ready then. We don't want to force him or put any pressure on him. We want to make sure he's rehabbing, doing everything he can to get back as soon as possible, and if that's next season, that's next season.

We don't want to force him to come back too early. We want to make sure he's 100 percent when he does come back.

Q. Are you going to have him with the team even on the road?

TYRONN LUE: We're not sure how the rehab is going to go. I think it's better to rehab when you're at home because everything is right there. You don't have to try to adjust things and try to make up certain things on the road.

I think for the first half, the first part of it, he'll probably be back home rehabbing because it's a lot easier.

Q. Ty, at the end of Game 6 against the Suns, you really thanked your coaching staff effusively for supporting you last season. That coaching staff is a little bit different now. What went into bringing the new guys in, and how do you kind of see things going as far as delegating tasks?

TYRONN LUE: The guys we've got this year, I think, but Brian Shaw, someone I played with at the Lakers, he taught me the ropes. When I first got to the NBA, he kind of taught me that the dos and don'ts of the NBA. I've always leaned on him ever since that. We've always been good friends. He's been like a mentor to me.

Also, he's had a relationship with P.G. in Indiana. They had a good bond together, and they still go fishing ever since the Indiana days, two or three times a year, which I will not get involved with that. So he has a great relationship with P.G. So losing Chauncey this year and bringing in B. Shaw, I think will be good for us.

Jay Larranaga, I had a chance to work with in Boston, when I was there under Doc in Boston. Jay is a guy who thinks outside the box, a really good communicator and a hard worker. He's done a really good job being under Doc first but also under Brad Stevenson, who I really respect as a coach. We've been talking about a lot of things Brad did to try to implement here because I really respect him as a coach.

Like me as a coach, I want to keep learning from different coaches, different styles of play. This year, this summer, I watched a lot of overseas basketball and a lot of clips and different stuff because they do a lot of things differently.

So I just want to continue to keep learning and keep growing. So Jay and B. Shaw is two great additions for us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports