

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Paul George

Press Conference

Q. I got a question for both of you. Paul, I'll start with you. Coming into this season, obviously, we don't know what Kawhi's situation was going to be. Question isn't about Kawhi, it's more about you, your mentality going into this season. Does it change? You've had two different kind of mentalities coming into as a Clipper, one was rehab, last year was kind of a redemption tour. You did what you needed to do on both fronts. Has it changed at all now what you're thinking about this year? Do you look back to your time at Indiana and how you were running the show? Tell me about your mental prep for this season.

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, coming into this year, I saw what I needed to see, and I think this group proved what we can accomplish being down Kawhi. So that was just enough. That was enough going into this summer knowing what I need to bring, what I need to add, what I need to work on. I'm ready. I'm ready for the fight for this year.

I've been in this position, so it gives me a level of comfort being the number one guy to start, and I'm ready to lead. Like I said, I saw what I needed to see. We trust one another.

Honestly, year 12, I couldn't imagine any other locker room I would want to be a part of than this group right here. Now it's just about putting it to the floor.

Q. Reggie, the spectrum of emotion for you over the last ten months, from being a starter to being on the bench and then to doing what you did really three-fourths of the season to getting a two-year contract with the Clippers. Can you just describe the feelings that you've had ranging in those ten months, knowing now that you're going to be a Clipper for another couple of years at least?

REGGIE JACKSON: It's been fun. Emotions come with the game, roller coaster up and down, dealing with wins and losses, but it's been pretty steady since being in this locker room, like I said, being welcomed, what was it, 2 1/2



years ago.

It's flown by, getting acclimated with that group, coming back for last year, being able to just play basketball. So no matter what my role is, I'm just happy to be able to play this game and especially be by this guy, who I call a brother in Paul.

To reiterate his sentiments, I feel the same way going into my 11th year. There's not another locker room I would want to be a part of. I'm just fortunate to don this jersey, like I said, to lace up with my brother and to lace up with these guys. Just trying to come out here and be the best I can to help the team in any way.

Yeah, I'm just looking to have much more fun. It's been a helluva ride since I've been here. I've been very blessed to have my health and be able to sign for another two years, and like I said, be able to get to do it with this guy and with this organization. Being part of this locker room is a blessing.

I'm sure you all got to see last year I had some newfound energy. I'm excited to get back and just continue to try to leave it out there on the floor.

Q. Paul, you talked about your role, and of course we can talk about it and we knew about the excitement that you have. Will you, in part of your leadership role, want to be more of an offensive personality, a scorer, because you don't have Kawhi?

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, I'm looking forward to taking on all facets, whether it's scoring, defending, play-making. I'm looking forward to taking on the whole facet of the game. I'm really going into this year as this being one of my most complete seasons as far as doing a little bit of everything.

I think I proved it and showed it to myself during the playoffs in that run, that stretch against Phoenix, whether it was rebounding, pushing the tempo, play-making, scoring the ball. That really just fed my appetite even more.

Again, it's just I feel like with our group it just -- we didn't want that to end last year. We wanted to continue playing. So it was just fun. It was fun. It was a fun moment, fun experience that this group didn't want to end.

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I just want to tackle and take on everything head-on and kind of just do everything on the floor.

Q. Paul, to follow up on those questions, what are the things specifically that you draw from your time in Indiana being the number one guy that can apply to this season knowing it could be a full season?

PAUL GEORGE: I think the biggest thing you take away from being the number one guy is just how to control the game. That's the only thing I can apply being the number one guy. I mean, I've seen it all from doubles, traps. You name it, I've seen it.

I do think what you do take away from being the number one option on a nightly basis is how I can control the game and impact the game and play the game, slow the game down how I want it to go.

So that will just be my approach. How can I -- how can this game be a Paul George game? All of that is just going to come from, how do I help my teammates? How do I make them better? How do I be a good teammate? So all of that is just going to come into effect. But I think mostly it's just how I can control the tempo and the pace of the game.

Q. Reggie, after the season you had, I'm sure you had different opportunities to go elsewhere than this, but you talked so much after Game 6 against Phoenix, you were very emotional about why this place kind of revived your career. What was the decision like? How hard was it in the end to decide to come back here? Nic said his decision was very easy for reasons, for coming home, feeling like this is family.

PAUL GEORGE: Don't lie (laughter).

REGGIE JACKSON: I could make something up, but, no, this was an easy decision for me. Sat down with my brother, my agency, actually talked to this guy a little bit figuring it out, what may be out there. But honestly, for the most part, I felt like a kid waiting on Christmas. Just hurry up and figure it out and get it done. Get the years out there, whatever it is, the numbers, my agency and front office. I was like, hurry up. Please figure it out.

Shoot, it took me like a month and a half to even leave after the season. So vacation was home. Like now this is home. Now it's vacation. I didn't want to go elsewhere. I was in the building working out constantly, training still, whenever Paul hit me up, make sure I was doing workouts with him.

Unless they didn't want me here, I think I was going to be a

Clipper. Even then, I was just going to bring my bags and sit on the front door and ask for anything.

No, it was never really that much of a thought about me being elsewhere. It was please hurry up and figure it out and let's get this on the road. I couldn't wait for this day, really for tomorrow to get back to it, but I couldn't wait for this day to be back.

Q. Reggie talked about how different things feel for him from where it was this time a year ago when he was deciding whether to come back. For you, you were only a couple weeks removed from you guys leaving the bubble. How much different does it feel this time around? It's only been a year, and yet so much has gone on for you. Can you describe your state of mind coming into this year after, what, the last 12 months?

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, the whole year was a lot of up and down and just a lot of moving pieces coming into last year. Now this year there's a lot of consistency, just in my life alone, my approach. There's a lot of consistency. I know what I'm doing. I know what I'm getting into. I know what I'm facing.

So it's night and day, night and day. I feel like I'm a lot more clear headed, a lot more focused, and just sharper coming into the situation.

Again, I can't reiterate any more than saying I'm just ready. I'm ready for this in whatever capacity it is. I'm ready for the challenge.

Q. P.G., you came back from a serious injury, much more than Kawhi, but Kawhi is looking at an extended period of rehab. I was wondering what your conversations have been like with him, what can he expect being out, and then what has he said to you?

PAUL GEORGE: That conversation is disclosed. We appreciate and love that we can talk amongst each other, but that conversation is disclosed.

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