

# LA Clippers Media Conference

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## Kawhi Leonard

### Press Conference



**Q. Coaches will often say they don't know a player until they coach them. From a player's standpoint, does that work for organizations, as well? And in your previous two years with the Clippers, what did you learn that you thought, this is a place that I want to be long-term?**

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, I made my decision based on at first, obviously, family, being closer to my family, being in the state of California. Once I got here, I learned who works here, like you said, who was in the front office, and just kind of building chemistry with the staff and people in the front office.

A big part of it was just winning; know what I mean? They want to win, I want to win, and I'm home. I'm comfortable with the guys on my team, and I just felt like it was a good situation still.

**Q. Can you take us through what sort of progress you've been able to make with your recovery, what the next steps are and your outlook on if you can play at all this season?**

KAWHI LEONARD: What steps I've been taking with my recovery?

**Q. Yeah, what have you been able to do so far, and what's next?**

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, just trying to get healthy is what's next. The same stuff you usually do for a specific injury. Work on it, lift weights, make sure you don't compensate, and you're strong and stable. Just keep following that path; that's all I can do. Just take it one day at a time.

**Q. What do you anticipate being able to return? Is there any sort of timeline that you're looking at, or what's the process there?**

KAWHI LEONARD: No, just day-to-day. Just working with

the staff day-to-day, and then when that available date comes, we'll be ready for it, and it'll be out in the public.

**Q. As somebody who loves the game so much, how challenging is that, having to take things day by day?**

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, it's very challenging, since being injured and not really feeling like I was injured. That's the challenge of it, just seeing how quickly I can get better and how much stronger I can get than what I was when I'm healthy. That's where I pretty much turn my mindset to. Now just watching games as a coach, being in the coaches' meetings and trying to make myself relevant as possible.

**Q. To build off staying home and committing here, you could have come back on a number of different contracts of lengths; why did you want the long-term, the four-year? Why was that the contract you wanted to sign to come back here?**

KAWHI LEONARD: Because I wanted to play. I mean, the best situation for me to me was to do it one and one and then opt out and sign a long-term five-year deal, but there's a lot of concerns that that brings up for you guys and your job and it creates storylines that I'm going to leave the team. One thing, I wanted to secure some money, and I wanted to be able to come back if I was able to this year. If I would have took the one and one, I probably would have not played just to be cautious and opted out and took a five-year.

I'm here. I'm here to be a Clipper. I'm not going to another team unless something drastic happens, but I'm here for the long run.

**Q. What are your expectations for Paul this year? He talked about being No. 1 option, a role he's done before in Indiana, but the way he played when you were out, what did you see from him, and what do you think he'll be like this year?**

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, he finished it off great. He gave it all he had that last playoff run. It was even hard to watch them, like I said, just being hurt. But they did their thing. Everybody did, stepped up, played in a great way, did a good job. Yeah, and this season, it's going to be



different. I'm not there to really start training camp, but I think he's motivated enough and knows what he can do. He always knows -- he's been proving himself over the years in this league, from becoming a defender to a leader scorer to a two-way player.

But he's going to do good. His expectations need to be better than mine, so it's all about him and his mindset. Doesn't matter about what I think he should be doing or how he should play, I'm going to definitely give him feedback to help him get better, but it's all based on him.

**Q. What have you thought about some of the acquisitions the franchise made this off-season? I know Bledsoe has been in the league quite a while now. What do you think he can contribute to this roster? What are you intrigued by him?**

KAWHI LEONARD: The experience. Like you said, he's a vet. Been on a defensive team before, can score, can score. Led a team in scoring, I believe, or second. Good point guard, plays with pace, can knock down shots. He's gotten better with his three-point shooting.

You know, just that, just bringing his leadership, his energy he brings on the floor. He knows how to win. We'll see. Training camp starts tomorrow, so let's get it rolling.

**Q. I know in June you mentioned you're not on the web and paying attention to what people will say about what it looks like on the court, what it looks like when you're not playing, but when it comes to building camaraderie with this team, being a part of this team, how are you planning on making your presence known even while you're recovering and getting ready to play yourself?**

KAWHI LEONARD: Like I said, just watching games, watching film with the guys, seeing what I see that they're missing at times, being in some of the coaches' meetings, knowing what the game plan is going into the game, and just making sure we follow the game plan as well as possible, as we can. Offense, just moving the ball and running our plays, execute. The same thing that I pretty much do in game, but just now just waiting on the sideline, waiting for them to get out at practice or just being in tune with them.

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