

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Los Angeles, California, USA

Minnesota Timberwolves Coach Chris Finch

Postgame Press Conference



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Q. Where do you even begin to describe that game, just all the ups and downs and what you guys survived to get to the end there?

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah, couldn't be more proud of the guys. It's an emotional win for us. We laid it all out there. We fought through a lot of adversity, but we kept fighting. Every time the game looked like it was going to get away from us, we kept hanging in there, making enough plays until we were able to find like an offensive rhythm, but tonight was all about the defense. It was outstanding. Executed the game plan to perfection. We were the more physical team, and that's what we set out to be.

Q. I think you were down seven or so when KAT gets fouled out. What did you see in your guys to summon whatever it took there to get through it?

CHRIS FINCH: Well, to be honest, it wasn't KAT's game. Really opened up the floor a lot, and we were able to get by their defenders with a lot of drives, race to switches, get to the heart of their paint. We knew when we put him back out there we were taking a risk early, but we figured we'd go then, and if we lost him we would have been playing pretty well without him, so that gave us confidence.

Q. D'Angelo has been through it a little bit lately. To see him come through the way he did, what can you say about his performance?

CHRIS FINCH: It was awesome. He kind of got us kick-started there in the second quarter with a lot of really smart play, kind of calmed us down, making shots, got the ball moving. He hadn't made that pull-up three in a long time, but we never really told him to not take it, and we wanted him to stay confident in it. He actually surprised me a little bit that he took it. But he loves the big moment.

Q. What did you think of him defensively tonight?

CHRIS FINCH: He was great.

Q. Seemed like he took his game to a different level there.

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah, it was great. Everybody sat there and guarded. We knew it was going to be an iso game. We knew we couldn't hide anyone. We knew where the damage was going to come from. Our guys did a really good job of just sitting down and trying to win that battle, and for the most part I thought we did, and he was really outstanding.

Q. Was Ant exactly who you thought he'd be in that moment?

CHRIS FINCH: You know, I didn't know what to expect from some of our guys. Ant loves the moment. He was awesome. He got us off to a great start. He stayed patient when the game was going away from him. He really, really did. We told him to keep attacking, and he did in the second half there. They didn't have a matchup for him and got to the hoop, got a couple fouls drawn and that kind of stuff.

When they go heavy switching, we want the ball in his hands like that.

Q. It's probably not like that during the regular season, but it seems like the defense goes like this, but it's good when a big opponent comes up or whatever it might be. They seem to just lock in. Does that give you hope as you head into the Playoffs?

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah, we're going to have to have all of our games with this type of intensity. The guys asked me last night, what's the one thing that I could take -- PB asked the group, he asked me in front of the group, he asked, what's the one thing we need to take to bed tonight, and I said, it's the attention to detail. It has to go to another level for us right now. The competitiveness has to be there or we won't even be on the floor. The attention to detail was outstanding tonight.

Q. You talked in the lead-up to this matchup about not wanting to overreach and get away from your identity

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at all necessarily to match up with them. Why was that so important tonight in the win?

CHRIS FINCH: We have confidence in who we are. We know offensively we've got a lot of weapons out there. As we talked about tonight, it wasn't KAT's game, and that's fine, he's done a great job carrying us all night. We knew how they were going to guard him. We could never settle into a rhythm with him, and we just had to go away and other guys were able to get involved, and that was kind of the key to the game really. Other guys stepped up.

But for the most part we got out, we played with really good pace, spread the floor, and I was really happy with our shot selection.

Q. Especially early in the season you could get either one from D'Lo, either play making or scoring, five assists and one point in the first quarter and then I think it was 26 and 1 the rest of the way. Did you think he recognized what was going on with KAT and kind of flipped modes there?

CHRIS FINCH: Well, for sure. We all did. We had to -- the game had to go in a different direction, and that's fine. We had guys that are able to do that.

And then we can't risk trying to -- we tried to get KAT a little bit moved. We told him just has to find his stuff in the flow right now. We didn't want to risk upsetting the rhythm that we were building, and he was great with that. He went and tried and got a couple put-backs. But this night is about his teammates, and that's why you have a team, because a lot of people step up.

Q. Talk about Vando, no Taurean behind him, playing the kind of defense he did with very few fouls today.

CHRIS FINCH: Yeah, he was outstanding. He just was into the ball, was into George. He's such a tough cover. He makes hard shots. But we just kept battling him and battling him, and he missed enough at the right time to give us an opportunity to take control of the game.

Q. Seemed like this game had everything that maybe in the past would derail this team, officiating, runs by another team late in the fourth quarter, and you come out with the win. Does this kind of encapsulate all the strides this team has made in terms of mental toughness, overcoming adversity in these kind of moments?

CHRIS FINCH: I'd like to think so, yeah. To your point, we've shown moments late in games, but it never felt in the huddle, never felt on the floor that guys were not willing to

claw back. It never felt like that.

Even when we couldn't take the game up, there was just missed lay-ups, and missed free throws, we were getting the things we wanted, we just couldn't finish the play. I took great confidence from that. It wasn't like we were being nudged into tough shots. We got a lot of really good shots.

Q. Just in general, what does officially making the Playoffs mean for this team and this organization?

CHRIS FINCH: Well, you know, it's been well documented. But I don't really care about that. I only care about this team and what we've been able to do since the middle of February last year. We've got great energy around here, and this is great for us because now we can keep learning what we need to do to keep growing our successes.

Q. I know we've talked about it before, but could you feel in the building tonight what this meant to everyone, like the energy and everything that the fans just seeing you guys rise to the level that you did?

CHRIS FINCH: I mean, it was incredible. Walking out there for the jump ball you could just tell that it was going to be an electric night. Crowd was into it from the jump. They really spurred us on when we were down a bit. We made great plays that brought them to life, and it was unreal. Our crowds have been great. They've been building all season. We've said it many times, like probably the most flattering thing that is said to me is that I like to watch your team play, and that gives me great pride.

Q. Just your initial thoughts with you guys being matched up with Memphis now in the first round.

CHRIS FINCH: You know, they've had an unbelievable season. They're playing with great confidence. We've had a couple tussles with them. We split the series. We've been breaking them down and studying them, so we'll just regroup when this is over, but we don't have any great early thoughts on them right now.

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