

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Los Angeles, California, USA

New Orleans Pelicans Coach Willie Green

Postgame Press Conference

Pelicans 105, Clippers 101

Q. Going into the fourth, just took a huge punch from them. How did you guys collect yourselves after that happened?

WILLIE GREEN: You know, the biggest point in all of this, and I talked to the team about it, is keeping God first in everything that we do, and giving him the glory when we have an opportunity, especially on this platform, and that's what it was, just having faith in each other, staying connected, knowing that we took their best shot, and we're only down 10 or what have you points going into the fourth quarter. Guys just fought, and we're so proud of that type of effort, and that win tonight was big time.

Q. Your season as a whole has been an insane ride. How good does it feel knowing you're going to the Playoffs?

WILLIE GREEN: It's an unbelievable feeling. So grateful for Mrs. Benson and Griff and Trajan and Swin, our coaching staff, our medical team, our performance team, and then our guys. They're great. That's how you withstand tough times is with character, and we have extremely high-character individuals in our organization, and it's been a joy to go at it with them.

Q. What do you think about the way Larry battled tonight?

WILLIE GREEN: Larry was a monster. We kind of figured it was going to be a Larry game, the way they play. Ty Lue's adjustments is to go small, and Larry has the capability of guarding a number of perimeter guys. He's big, he's strong, he can rebound the ball. You guys saw it tonight, he had 16 rebounds. That was huge for us. We don't win that game without his effort.

Q. Trey, you're telling him all season to shoot the ball. Was it nice to see him do that tonight and just look



really composed out there?

WILLIE GREEN: It was awesome. I'm so happy for Trey Murphy. He has been just working all season long. Corey Brewer and Trey have just been in the gym, Coach Spoon, getting shots up, working on his game, watching him. This is a preparation-meets-opportunity moment for us as a team, for me as a coach, for our staff, for our organization. It's what we talked about when I first got there. It's like, we want to build something special, we want to build a sustainable program, and we feel like we're moving in the right direction.

Q. I know you talked about having to tell Trey to shoot it all year. Did you have to tell him anything in that moment? It looked like he was kind of locked and ready as soon as you put him in.

WILLIE GREEN: I had to tell him don't shoot it a couple times, which I love. At the end of the game he had a couple of open looks that time-score situation, get the ball back to Brandon and get it to CJ, and then you probably get it again.

But look, he did what we needed him to do. He came in the game. He shot the lights out. Herb, José, Trey, I'm playing three rookies on the floor, but it's a credit to them. They put the work in and they earned this opportunity.

Q. What was that like for you just kind of going against Ty Lue and trying to match small for small, I'm going to bring J.V. in, I'm going to go to Tony Snell, I'm going to pull him, I'm going to go to Trey? What was that like for you trying to match wits with him in that moment?

WILLIE GREEN: It was like a heavyweight fight. Seriously. He was making adjustments. He took his bigs out, we were trying to adjust to them. It didn't work for us, we put our bigs back in. That didn't work for us, either, so we were throwing darts at the dartboard just trying to figure it out, how can we find an environment that we can play in on both ends of the floor because they're tough. They're tough to match up with. Powell and Jackson and Morris and those guys are really great individual players, and they play together. It was hard.



But we just stayed with it, and that's the important thing, stayed with it. We fought, rebounded the ball, and we made some shots.

Q. What did you see in Brandon to start the game? Seemed like he just had a different kind of look in his eye in that first quarter.

WILLIE GREEN: Brandon Ingram is the truth. He just brought it. He had that look in his eye from the time we got on the plane, shootaround. He's been locked in. He has been waiting for this moment, for this type of moment. His preparation is off the charts. This summer he went six, seven hours a day. He believes in his teammates. He's just all you want and more in a player, in a person.

Q. After this exhilarating victory, how do you ride this moment into the Playoffs?

WILLIE GREEN: Right now we just focus on enjoying our night. Phoenix is definitely going to be a challenge. We know Phoenix, I know Phoenix well, but I'm not there yet. I'm not there yet.

Q. You obviously had your head down trying to get back into this thing, but can you appreciate where you've come from starting the year and where you've ended up?

WILLIE GREEN: It's hard when you're in it. Like you said, you put your head down, you work, you try to improve, stay positive, and just try to continue to enjoy life, so you just can't realize what happened until maybe sometime when I step out of it, but right now we'll enjoy tonight, have a good meal. Tonight we'll start working on Phoenix.

Q. What does this mean to the city of New Orleans and the fans of New Orleans?

WILLIE GREEN: We're so grateful for the city of New Orleans, our fans, our community, the culture there. It means a lot. We're excited and grateful that we can bring playoff basketball back to the Smoothie King, so we're looking forward to having some games there next week.

Q. With Brandon earlier, what he did all season, seems like you've taken the approach since day one of -- like in the past they've tried to get him to shoot more threes, where you were just, hey, man, you be you. What went into that thought process?

WILLIE GREEN: Just exactly what you said. That's who he is. In order for Brandon to be the best version of Brandon, we have to allow him to be him and create offense around what he does well, and that's what we did.

We tried to put him in different spots, move him around. Like I said, it was a lot of him. He's that type of guy where he can do it all, and he put it on display tonight.

Q. We got to see the speech you gave the guys going into the fourth quarter. Seemed like it was a lot of passion, a lot of energy in that speech. What was your mindset going into the fourth quarter seeing where the game was headed after that third quarter?

WILLIE GREEN: It was. It was an emotional game, a ton of highs and lows. But for us, our mentality is that we're going to continue to fight. We're not going to fade out. That's what I wanted our guys to understand, is that they've earned this moment. They've earned this opportunity. It's just there for us to go take it, and we have to take it, no matter who is on the floor.

We knew that team was going to be tough, but our mindset is that we're here to win the game, and just reminding them of all the work that they put in and challenging them to go out and be the best versions of themselves.

Q. You've talked all season about the resilience your team has shown, the toughness they've shown, but what's it like seeing this from such a young team coming up in these moments and responding on this stage?

WILLIE GREEN: It's incredible. Once again, these guys, we keep God first in everything that we do. We try to treat each other with respect no matter what our record is, and every day that they come in the gym, they compete, and that's from top to bottom, all of our players, all of our staff. We just stayed with it, and it's incredible to see the results, so we're extremely happy. A lot of work to do tomorrow, but definitely going to enjoy this one.

Q. You mentioned that you guys expected this might be a Larry Nance kind of game. What are some things that he does well that kind of catered to this matchup or this game, and what does it say about him to have this kind of performance with the season on the line at stake for you guys after he's only been playing for like a month or so, actually been on the court in games?

WILLIE GREEN: When Larry first got here, we knew he had to have surgery on his knee, but he looked me in my eyes and he said, I'll be ready to play by the end of the season. That said a lot about him.

Watching him on the floor, he's high IQ basketball player. You can put the ball in his hands and he just makes the right play over and over and over again, and that's on both ends. Defensively he's talking, he's communicating, and

he just allows us to have different looks out there offensively and defensively.

We can play J.V. and go big, we can play Jackson, and we can go small and play Larry. I think it adds a different dynamic to our team.

Q. A lot of times when teams are trying to make that leap, they have to make baby steps. How much does it help you this team now gets to play in an actual series, and what can that do for the franchise moving forward?

WILLIE GREEN: It's going to be great for us. We're looking forward to lacing it up on Sunday against Phoenix. I don't want to say that -- I didn't know what was going to happen this season in terms of like where we were going to be, but I definitely believed we had a chance to do something special from the very beginning that I got here, and this team reminded me a lot of Phoenix, young, hungry, but high-character guys.

The future is bright.

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