

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Los Angeles, California, USA

New Orleans Pelicans

CJ McCollum

Postgame Press Conference



Pelicans 105, Clippers 101

CJ McCOLLUM: I think this was indicative of where this team has come, starting off 2-13, being down on the road in a hostile environment against a very good team, a well-coached team and was able to come back.

Q. One of the first things you said when we got here is have y'all seen Brandon Ingram play lately. Was tonight an example of the level that guy can get to?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, he's one of them ones. He's a special player. He gets to his spots. I'm just thankful -- obviously I get to play alongside him and I'm happy about that, but I'm glad the world gets to see how good he truly is. I think oftentimes if you don't make the Playoffs people kind of forget about you or underestimate your talent.

Now he has the chance to play on the biggest stage, and he showed tonight how great he is. He can get to his spots, get to the rim, he can make plays. Defensively he's active, engaged, can initiate the offense, 6'9", 6'10" and now he gets to play on the biggest stage and I'm happy for him.

Q. Brandon seems like a guy that guys who play the game really appreciate what he can do. Do you think there's anything to that?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, I think it's just a skill set that he has and it's a skill set that he's worked on and developed from his time at Duke to now. He's a completely different player. Obviously more polished, more physical, more methodical with his movement, dribbling into his spots, the footwork, finishing around the basket, his playmaking. I think his IQ has kind of elevated and evolved. I think now you're kind of getting the best version of him every night and you're starting to really see the work ethic and everything that he's done up to this point coming to fruition.

Q. As a vet when the Clippers are kind of throwing

that punch, obviously we kind of heard what Willie was saying in the huddle. What do you try to say to those guys or what are you trying to do in those moments to settle the team down and into the fourth quarter to get things back on track?

CJ McCOLLUM: Normally I'd be talking a lot, but I'm battling some stomach issues so I didn't really talk a lot. I was just trying to catch my breath. Normally I would just tell the guys to understand it's a long game. I think I talked about it before the first play-in game. We're going to be up, we're going to be down; they're going to go on a run, we're going to go on a run. It's more about how we respond to it.

I think we level responded well. We didn't pout, we didn't put our heads down. They got up by 14, they were executing and they were getting into us, they were getting to the free-throw line, they were playing off of their fans, and we didn't allow that to affect us and we kind of steadied the ship and finished the game.

Q. What did you think about the way the guys responded in that fourth quarter after that punch that the Clippers delivered in the third and just being able to march your way back and get back into it late in the game?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, it's a sign of growth and maturity from a young group, which is surprising that you see that type of growth and maturity. Usually teams lay down and fold. I talked about it after one of our shootarounds how a lot of times when a team is facing an elimination game, they begin to let go of the rope, so to speak. In the tug-of-war they kind of let go and fold, and I thought that we did a great job of holding on to the rope and continuing to fight. It's like a tug-of-war game, continuing to fight, making sure that we're competing and making sure that we're defending, not giving up second-chance opportunities and then executing a little bit better offensively, and I thought we did that down the stretch.

Q. It wasn't just a young team kind of in this moment, it was a young coach. This was Willie's first experience doing this, and he said matching wits with Ty Lue felt like a heavyweight fight at some points. What did you think about the way he kind of rose to the moment in that fourth quarter and matched the



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adjustments Ty Lue was throwing at you guys?

CJ McCOLLUM: No, I thought he handled himself well. He showed great moxie, he challenged us, challenged me specifically to be more aggressive, more methodical, and I can appreciate that and respect that, and I think him having played for so long he understood the importance of this moment, he understood what this moment meant for our team and our young players and our franchise and our fans, and we want to really take advantage of this. We've got a long summer ahead, and we can rest in the summer, but right now we've got to fight and do what we can to kind of continue to extend our season.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the two guys off the bench. In just the time you've been here you've seen Trey Murphy make a huge jump. What did you think of the way for a guy in his rookie year to be able to come through the way he did in the fourth quarter?

CJ McCOLLUM: I think that shows the work ethic and preparation. He's been in and out of the lineup, he's been in the G-League some. Sometimes he's in the game, sometimes he's not played some in the first half, then didn't play a lot in the second quarter, then Coach throws him in. That's a sign of trust but also him being ready. He'd catch-and-shoot, got some offensive rebounds, got to the free-throw line. It gives us a different dynamic because of his ability to shoot, and I think the other team recognizes that. Tonight he stepped up and made some great plays for us.

Q. As far as Larry goes, he's only been playing with the team less than a month. What did you think of just for him to be able to do what he did tonight?

CJ McCOLLUM: He was great. I think that the first time out he told me, I'm here. I said that, I said, well, if I'm not going to show up, you have to. He did a great job of being aggressive. He was rebounding. He was athletic. I think he's just getting more comfortable, too, understanding he's coming off an injury where he wasn't able to practice, he learned a new offense, new city. We're both away from our families. So there's a lot of different variables that make this transition difficult.

I think he's kind of settling in, finding his rhythm, finding his basketball rhythm and getting more comfortable playing this spacing. Tonight he was huge. Without him, we don't win this game tonight.

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