

# LA Clippers Media Conference

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## Lawrence Frank

### Press Conference



#### Q. What do you think?

LAWRENCE FRANK: We are super excited to have drafted Moussa. We've been following Moussa for a while, and through this Draft process, it's really been a unique opportunity to spend really a lot of time with Moussa in a short amount of time.

So we had the opportunity to interview him in Chicago. As you'll find out, he's an extremely engaging young man, grew up in Paris, came to the states, was at IMG, obviously McDonald's All-American, went to Michigan, and you know, you only get 30 minutes with someone but he just has an unbelievable energy and spirit about him.

The way we looked at him is he's a guy that has an unbelievable motor who has shown the ability to switch and guard multiple positions and brings a little bit more athleticism. He's kind of an undersized five, four, but where the game is going for the bigger players in this league, you're either rim protectors, you have the ability to switch or you can do both. And we want to be able to build his game and be able to start with the platform of a great motor who has really, really good feet and then build up his game.

So we brought Moussa in last week. He was coming off his 19th workout and he was in Utah, finishes the workout and he's like, my ankle is hurting a little but I want to go through. Well, his ankle was hurting a lot, and we wound up -- we went to dinner but said, you're not going to workout. It doesn't make sense. This is your 19th workout.

After we spent time with him that day, we said, hey, look, we have a couple guys coming in next week.

He said, "Well, I have got two more workouts and they are back on the East Coast".

We said, "Talk to your agent and see if you want to come back and compete."

He goes, "Well, I love to compete."

So flew back to Miami where his agent is based, went workout for two teams, flies all the way back here for his 21st workout, and his motor was everything it's always been.

And to me, lie when we talk about the qualities that we value, it all starts with your actions and it was just so impressive just to see, you know, on your 21st workout, to be able to bring the same energy and the same intensity that you had in your prior workouts, we saw some special qualities in him.

And he's very much a development player and that's how we look at it, and no different than some of our other young players. You need to start with a base. We like to have a balance of different skillsets that can fit together, and grow with these young guys, and we have an unbelievable, you know, coaching staff, player development staff, Agua Caliente coaching staff and we thought Moussa has both the character traits on and off the court that we felt we could really build on.

So we are super excited to have Moussa, plus I've got my man, Mark Hughes who is a Michigan guy. So that Michigan fight song is going to be, I guess, sang in a couple different languages now.

#### Q. Did you guys give him a contract?

LAWRENCE FRANK: We won't comment on the contract until the appropriate time.

#### Q. Forward or a center?

LAWRENCE FRANK: It's a good question. Obviously with Dickinson this year, he played more at the four.

I think early on, his advantage, especially offensively is going to be at the five. If you look at his dimensions, it's very similar to some of the other fives in this league, and I'm not saying he's the -- he's a different type of player. But you know, he's the same height, length, as guys like Isaiah Jackson, Daniel Gaffey forward, different in how he plays.

I think probably playing some five and also what we saw in

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the workout, he has some really good grab and go skills. He has some good passing instinct. The shot, it's going to take time. There's a base, so I think to exclusively play him on the perimeter, probably won't be playing to his strength. I'd probably say more five, four.

What was intriguing was we saw the ability for him to guard two, three, four, five, and just those -- the feet, you look at his body, it's going to fill out. He's probably 212 pounds now, so I think taking the time to continue to build up his frame while maintaining his vertical and lateral quickness, and explosion.

So I think going in, that's kind of how we view it is, yeah, it's a little bit of an athletic dynamic to our organization, some switchability. He's a really good balance to some of the other guys on our roster.

And also just similar to when we drafted some of our other younger guys, just the infectious energy in a long, long season, and it just -- it has a multiplying effect, and when you talk to all of the different people who have been around Moussa from IMG, at Michigan, some of the people in Paris we spoke to, it's all consistent. It's just who he is, and I think that, along with kind of the positional development, will give him a really good chance to be successful.

**Q. Does Nico know him at all?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Well, it's very funny. The day he worked fought for us -- Nico is a nut, by the way. Nico comes in every morning at 4:30 to workout and Nico watched a workout because we had two French men, we had a very good player, Ismael Cam and we had Moussa and then we had another player, European player.

So Nico wanted to watch. He had vested interest, and he was -- I think I'm not going to put words in Nico's mouth, but I think he was impressed with Moussa. There was probably a little bit of a French bias there.

But it was great having Nico there. What's really, really nice during these work outs is many of our players will watch, so we always get feedback from the draft prospects that, man, this is really unique and not used to like the players of the team watching and many times what you see is they will pick our players' brain and ask him different questions, and then our players will always give feedback and say, you know, based on the workout, you know, whatever.

So it's a really nice draft process, and you know, doesn't answer quite the question, but I just want to give tremendous props to the front office and scouting group.

Trent Redden does an unbelievable job, along with Jason Piombetti and our whole scouting group and the entire front office.

For the scouts, as you guys know, this is their Super Bowl. We didn't have a sexy first-round pick, but we've been very fortunate in the second round to find some really good players and it's a credit to our scouting staff and the work they do. Just grateful to have a good, hard-working, smart group.

**Q. Curious the process that led you that draft guys --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, you try to learn from things that work, don't work, and also, you have to -- put it in proper context. You know, selecting those guys where we selected them on team we selected them, and sometimes the deck is really stacked, and you know, with the league as we know, like the bigger positions, if you're not a range shooter, it's the athletic, rim roller, guys who have some sort of vertical presence or it's those range-shooting fives.

But it's defense that really gives them a chance, and especially on a team like us that has so many versatile wings that offensively when we are fully healthy, we should be really, really hard to guard.

It's for us, the way we looked at Moussa, a little bit quicker twitch, a little bit more athletic, a little bit switchable, and centers, some of the elite centers have great size but there's a lot of guys playing five that ten years ago would not be 5-men. It's changed.

To answer your question, I think with me and Dan, we learn the good and the bad in terms of with it, and everyone, you kinds of have to look at each situation in itself.

But in regards to Moussa, I think it was the motor, No. 1, the athleticism and quick twitch, and the switch ability, and said, all right, he's a development player. He played one year of college basketball and let's really kind of build on those skills and then build his offensive game up and let's see how far he can take it.

**Q. When you talk about a developmental player, do you start with offense or defense?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think it depends. I think the way we look at it is we kind of always go with the best available player, and sometimes there are a bunch of players so close, and then sometimes if it's a tie, you go for it.

But I think you look at the player's strength, so some guys, their offensive skill package is what they do best. And



then, okay, you build that, and now to stay on the court consistently, you have to become somewhat of a two-way player. The balance isn't going to be equal. Very few of those guys, like Kawhi Leonard and Paul George, and if you look at the skills that are valued in this league, shot creation is probably No. 1; shooting is two; and then you have to look, okay, if you're neither a shooter or a shot creator, what's going to be your niche in this league.

And so that's why you pivot when you look at the center position, the bigs that can figure out defensively to be able to guard mull positions and to be able to give you a vertical presence either offensively, defensively or both, they usually find a way to have a piece in the league.

And like I said, Moussa, we are going to work to get him there. He's a development project, and I think we have really good awareness of where he's at, and I think we'll have a really good plan and vision to where we're going to take him over time.

**Q. Do you expect he'll play in the Summer League?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, this dude worked out 21 times. I'm just hoping he laid down for a sec. But that's the expectation, but also, I want to see him. I want to make sure he's in one piece.

**Q. How many players did you interview?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Great question.

**Q. A range, if possible?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I'd say, I'm guessing probably 26 to 30, probably in that ballpark. I may be off. And we go and we visit and we see guys, as well.

Many times when you're picking where we're picking, it's a challenge. Now we are fortunate in terms of the equity that guys like Jason and Trent have built with the agents that we're able to workout some really high-quality players and some of the other players we go and see and visit as well.

**Q. Is the front office mixed on these guys when you get the tape? How does that conversation go?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: If we're not mixed then we're not telling the truth. If everyone is saying, "Yeah, that's the guy!", then we've got problems.

You encourage that and you want it because -- you really encourage different views, if you're not getting difference of opinions, I don't think you're really challenging each other, and you just want to support it with evidence and stay

away from the "I think" or the random things.

It's like, yeah, this is -- you break down a player's game. This is why I think this player is better than this player. Because rankings are hard, and we've gone through this. When you study how you evaluate players, it's normally not the evaluation that you win or lose on. A lot of times, it's where you rank them. It's very, very hard.

You know, when you do all the re-drafts, you see, it's a really difficult process. So yeah, there's always difference of opinions, and then ultimately, you really -- one of my favorite words, you pressure-test everything. And it's not like -- so even if I'm high on a player and someone is down on it, you really encourage them to like let's flip it. Like, what do I like about the player? What don't you like about the player? And when people point out different things to each other, it forces everyone to go back and study it and dig deeper.

We use the term strong convictions loosely held. We want strong opinions but at the same time you have to have an open mind that you could be wrong.

So continue to challenge each other and support it and what you love is when people get super, super passionate about a player, and then, you know, like this is why I'm so passionate.

We really try, and it's very hard, but you try to learn from some of the mistakes that we've made in the past. You also learn from the biases that you have and one thing that's a challenge is we all have blind spots; if we knew what they were, you wouldn't be blind to them.

So we try to take all of that. It's such a -- and all teams go through it, it's a very, very thorough process but it's something that's the lifeline of your program. It's an extremely exciting time, exciting night. It's the culmination of a lot of work.

But to answer, your opinion, not everyone is saying yeah. Like I said, we probably would just be kidding each other.

**Q. You mentioned playing Summer League, kind of wondering what your Summer League roster will look like?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I'm sure sometime in the very near future we'll release it. All those young guys have been in the gym. They come in Monday through Thursday. One thing that's been really, really nice, we've had anywhere from nine to eleven guys every day in the gym and it's an unbelievable atmosphere. I credit our players, our player development staff. They come in and they work. Our

performance staff is doing a great job with our players and it's a great balance between veteran players, young players, and you just see an urgency and a drive.

I think after going through the year we did where there are a lot of positives but yet ultimately the goal is to be the last team standing, you just get a sense of a great urgency to try to maximize the opportunity we have in front of us.

But I'm sure like I said, in the very near future, we'll put out who is playing in Summer League.

**Q. The urgency you talked about --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Well, one, first, you have to take individual ownership of your own career. I mean, these guys are pros. And they each have very much a vested interest in doing their part, as part of a larger group.

But we have had great veteran leadership, Kawhi, Paul, Nico, Marcus, and like plus, we're going to see, like we went, we've seen Zu twice now in Croatia, two separate people. We've seen Marcus a couple times in his hometown. And then guys have been getting together. They get together as a large group. It's been really cool to see.

So I think, yeah, we have great veteran leadership, but also, I think we really have a bunch of guys who are really, really invested in trying to do something special.

**Q. Inaudible.**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, he continues to do great. He's maniacal in his work ethic. It's fun to see. I'm glad afford the light bill because he's putting in the hours. But yeah, he's doing great, and he continues to progress, and it's great seeing him on the court.

**Q. Is he doing five-on-five yet?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: No, he's just kind of following in terms of just -- I think he's on course where he's developing really well. But like five-on-five isn't something I think that he's doing at this point.

**Q. Your core, as you think about last year -- how much is wanting to see -- and evaluate what it looks like and how do you approach --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think our No. 1 goal on free agency is we would like to try to retain our free agents, is first. I think we have a pretty good sense of, you know, how we are going to play. I mean, I think we just go back to two years ago, and then we have added some real

significant pieces to that.

And then even though we haven't had the benefit of seeing what it looks like, I think you just have to project a little bit. We are really, really fortunate that Steve has given us the resources to put together the type of team that we have, and you know, and then we continue to assess, okay, how can we continue to upgrade, how can we get better.

You know, some of those things, you may have to do without the benefit of seeing the group together, and you just have to take some educated swings and figure out, okay, how does this player and this skillset fit at this time of their career.

And I think you want to have a balance of, you know, of veterans and youth and guys that fit in the middle, but ultimately, what we're trying to do achieve, it's going to take a great deal of sacrifice, and you want to make sure you have the right blend, you want to make sure you have players who really feel driven to do something that hasn't been done before and that have a chip on their shoulder.

And so like I said, we'll continue to try to make the best decision we can in order to give this team the best chance they can, not just this year, but for years ahead as well.

**Q. Any trades --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I've said this before, I hate trades. It's the worst part of the job because we have all good guys. I mean, you're around our guys. Like they are all good guys. So, look, it's part of the job, so it's not, you know, one where you're looking for any sort of sympathy.

But you know, your job is every decision that we make is, how does it help us compete and win a championship in so it's really, really tough when you do it. So you almost, like you're happy when you don't. And so I'm glad we did not make a trade. I'm sure many of our guys are glad we did not make a trade.

But I'm also happy that we are able to kind of -- able to obtain kind of one of our targets during the Draft process and looking forward to working with Moussa and looking forward to free agency as well.

**Q. Teams using their trades to acquire players recently, what's the process like internally to discuss whether or not it would behoove you to use a category --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I think you're always looking. The DPs are valuable tools and I think you do everything in your power to explore different options, and to see if it

makes sense to utilize the tool or not. Many times, DPs get unused. But it's part of your job to do all the due diligence to figure out using the DP, does it help make us a better team? Does it fit within the larger goal of what we are trying to get done?

And so yeah, I mean, we'll continue to explore all different ways to try to get the group better.

**Q. Free agency or trade possibilities, where do you rank leadership qualities --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I think you look at it all. And you know, you start first with the question: How does it player's skillsets with the group; does it enhance the group; does it help connect the group; is it a young, emerging player that may have a pathway to play; is it a veteran who provides a skillset that maybe we need; is it a player that has unbelievable basketball character, and yet has great self-awareness and knows where they are at at their stage.

So I think you really, really study it, and I mean, any time you put a player in the locker room, whether it's through the draft, free agency, trades, it is a statement to your team what you think of them, right, because that is their sanctuary.

So in terms of basketball leadership it is very, very important to understand the basketball character of the player.

So basketball character may be a little bit different than what you hear of in terms of character. Like basketball character is like can you be counted on every single day to do what you do at the highest level, and are you -- how committed are you though those habits.

You know, the bond that you form with your teammates, like that's part of basketball character. Like, can you be the same teammate when things are going bad for you as well as when things are going good for you.

And I think all those things are leadership skills. Innately, regardless of the types of players, your best players are always your leaders one way or the other because that's what the other player is going to look to. We are really, really fortunate in that our two best players really, really, really enjoy each other. Like they have a great bond with each other, which is, I won't say unique but it doesn't happen everywhere.

Those guys set a great tone of, we work, that's what we do. We work. There is not a lot of talking in terms of hyperbole. It's, we are about our work.

And we have an unbelievable head coach in T-Lue in that he connects with all the guys and brings everyone together. People use buzzwords like culture. It's all about your people. Your people create your culture, and so yeah, we look at all those things and try to study, if we are going to bring this player in the locker room, how does it fit.

We are also very much involved in that process, T-Lue, our best players and Steve, and make sure everyone is comfortable with who we are putting in that locker room.

**Q. Talk about RoCo re-signing, and speaking out about the mental health stuff, in general with players, that's come up more with organizations during COVID --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: First of all, we are super excited that we were able to extend RoCo. It was great, and we talked about it right before, where he expressed -- we felt the same way and getting a deal done prior to free agency, I think is a win/win for both sides.

We talked a lot about RoCo and his impact; his defensive play-making off the ball; his ability to make open shots at a high level. Even he showed some different drive-and-kick skills that benefit the group that become contagious.

In terms of mental health, it's one of the things that I'm very, very impressed with the generation, all these guys now seem young, that's scary that I'm getting a little bit older. But when I look at our guys, whether they are in their 20s or their 30s, so much more open to being vulnerable, to showing that needing help is a strength, not a weakness.

I think it's great role modeling for all these young people who look up to professional athletes. Because it was different, you know, when I was growing up it was one of those things that if you had any mental health issues or questions, you really kept it under wraps which is really unhealthy.

I think it's really powerful when our players, we talk about PG in the bubble, and I'm proud of our guys in the sense of when they are going through things, they are so open to share.

There's tons of support in their circle and in our organization, but it does take strength to show the willingness to be vulnerable.

**Q. With Ty Lui, what he would like to have as a coach, the process -- the improvements -- how liberal is he?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Ty and I speak almost every day, if

not once, maybe twice. We are always talking about our team, the players, the organization. When it comes to the draft, he trusts our group to be able to pick the players that we feel best will represent the Clippers, are the best fits. He does that.

In terms of free agency, where he sees, you know, and knows a lot of these guys, he's much more active in the free agency process. Like Ty doesn't have time to watch, you know, 25 Michigan games. But he has a great feel for all NBA players, and we are constantly kind of collaborating, talking. I'm getting his input, insight, talking to him, his staff, because it really is, it's a partnership.

It's something that's done collaborative and no different than the question that was asked earlier. You're not always going to agree on everything and every player but ultimately at the end of the day, you have great respect for each other and you align behind the decision.

So with the draft, Ty is super supportive of it. Whoever we pick, he rallies behind. Ty, he loves these young players and sure he's looking forward to another young guy and helping him develop, and Ty very much can relate to when he was drafted and can go back on that experience and the fact that he's been in those shoes is really powerful to these guys. Yeah, he's a great partner.

**Q. How involved in free agency, over the years since they have been with you, are they active, or is it just do your job --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: They are great partners. There's a lot of give and take and talking, and the thing that is terrific, they have great insight. They passionately care. They care about the type of people that are in the locker room. They look for people who work, have great habits, are pros, can contribute to winning, are great in the locker room but yet at the same time are very respectful that, hey, at the end of the day it's our job to make the decision but their opinions are very, very valuable.

You have honest talk, and I think that's what partnerships are about. Sometimes you see it the same exact way and sometimes you see it a little bit differently. But there's that mutual respect that, hey, that decision is made; we're behind it and we support it.

But it's great to see how invested they are in the organization and what it means. You know, it's a shame, I know you guys say, heck, give us 24/7 access so we can see this.

But it is really, really cool just to observe how committed, not just Kawhi and Paul, but the coaching staff, the players.

It's like the season ended. Took like a quick little respite and they are right back at it. It's fun to watch.

**Q. On the trades, there was a report yesterday -- can you just talk about --**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I don't comment on rumors because there is zero truth to the rumor. Luke has been terrific. Luke had an unbelievable season. I think we've talked about this before. Luke has had a little bit of a pattern if you go back to his first year at Duke, Detroit and the Clippers, that it takes him just a little bit to adjust, get comfortable and then he just hit the ground, takes off.

He had a great year. Obviously led the league as the premiere three-point shooter. He added more movement off the ball to his game.

And now, I don't know if you've seen Luke lately, his body looks great. He's in the gym, minimum four times a week. At times our guys will play pick up and play five-on-five with the player development staff, and you know, Luke looks terrific. We just expect Luke -- he's just entering his prime, so I think the best is yet to come.

**Q. What is the conversations like generally about whether or not making moves in the draft is of the utmost importance and something you should do, and have you weighed that?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I think what you do is it's all about the players that you're targeting and what value you place on trying to move up, move down. You know, the assets that you have, seeing a bigger picture that you don't have an unlimited supply of assets.

So you know, last year, we're extremely aggressive because of how we plan the roster and what we wanted to do.

This year, looking, we're hoping to retain as many of our free agents as possible. We realize you look at the roster, that we're really grateful that we potentially have great continuity and you just weigh all those variables, and you're competing against 29 other teams who may also like those players, too.

So much of the process, there's an unbelievable amount of preparation, and we have a great strategy group. I mean, the work they put into it, and the things that they bring to the table are invaluable, but there's so much that goes into the Draft process for all teams, and then your preparation leads to, hopefully, a night where because your preparation, you're not making any decisions based on emotions; they have been well thought out.



Because what you don't want to do is make critical decisions that you have not beat up repeatedly, both the pros and cons of. And yet you also want to be opportunistic that when things come about, you've dealt with it. Our group does a great job making sure we are extremely prepared to be able to make those types of decisions.

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