

# LA Clippers Media Conference

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## Lawrence Frank

### Press Conference

LAWRENCE FRANK: So what's going on? Who wants to start this fun stuff?

**Q. I'll start. First of all, good to see you.**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Great to see you as well.

**Q. I guess the main thing out there is the status of Kawhi. He's been out all year. Update on the status.**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Well, I think, one, he feels great. Two, his plan is, look, he wants to participate in everything. And I think, three, organizationally, we're going to be cautious. So it will be a step-by-step approach.

I think the last time we talked, you know, kind of updated just kind of his process of his rehab and everything is very, very encouraging, exciting, and need to say inspiring.

We were talking a couple days ago, but he comes in at 7 a.m. And just from the time he steps into the building to the time he leaves, many times four or five hours later, it's all purposeful work, whether it's in the performance room, whether it's on the court, whether it's film study.

You know, Kawhi is all about one thing, and so, you know, a lot of encouraging news. And also, again, organization, we know what the big picture is. We know what our goal is, and we will be very cautious and take a methodical approach.

**Q. As far as the caution, methodical approach, what do you envision?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I think when you're dealing with a major injury, you can't predict. I know with him, he wants to do everything, but we'll just kind of let's see how he feels each day. We have an outstanding medical team, and we're playing the long game with it. So it's hard to -- we're not going to get into predictions, what he will do or he won't do.



I know he wants to do everything. We'll figure out, is that best for his body? One day it may be. The next day, we'll have to reassess. We'll rely on the feedback we get from Kawhi, obviously from the medical team. It's too early to predict. We have time before we need to get there.

**Q. Is he cleared for, like, 5-on-5 and everything yet, or is it still a ramp-up?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, he is cleared. For him, he'll say, look, I want to do everything. Again, we'll be very cautious in the approach.

**Q. You guys play 61 games before the all-star break again. You have a lot of guys who are older. Not just Kawhi, but a lot of your rotational guys. How does that factor into kind of how your approach will be, how much to play guys, when to play guys in back-to-backs in kind of that condensed chunk to start the season?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think if you kind of look at our roster construction, we've put a huge priority on our depth. We have a very, very deep team, a lot of talented players. We did it for a number of reasons, one of which is, you know, we have an expert coach in T-Lue, who has unique ability to be able to push different buttons at different times for different games. We wanted to give him as many options as possible.

Also, look, injuries are inevitable. We wanted to be in a position that when, unfortunately, guys do have injuries, we still can compete at the highest level.

And then third reason, to your point, because we have a bunch of guys in their mid-prime and guys around that age, we want to be able -- there's an urgency to how we approach every day. But also, at the same time, we want our guys to be able to be at their best when their best is needed, which is, you know, April, May, and June.

So to be able to give some of those heavy load carriers where they're not overtaxed at that time, yet there's enough continuity that there's rhythm there.

So it's a fine balance and kind of, you know, this has kind of been four years in the making for us, that step-by-step, to be able to do this. So we think with our depth, we're well

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suited to accomplish that.

**Q. You mentioned Kawhi's discipline. I guess beyond that, what did you notice the last 15 months with his recovery from this injury?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I mean, having been around guys when you suffer, you know, season-ending injuries, normally one of the things that you're worried about is just mentally, how do they take it? And when you're one of the best who have played, and to have it taken away from you, you're always interested, how are they going to respond?

What we've learned is the same mentality he had in his preparation when he was healthy, he just applied it to his rehab. And Kawhi has a thirst for knowledge too and to learn everything there is about the injury, about the rehab, the best ways to do it, innovative ways to do it.

And, you know, you just see the day-to-day approach, and that's what winning is all about. It's not the loud, sexy stuff. It's the every day, embracing the monotony and the daily grind of what it takes, in Kawhi's case, to get back healthier than ever, to get back better than ever.

It's no different from the team approach that it's the everyday steps of doing it, especially the days you don't feel like doing it, and especially when you know it's a long rehab and you're not going to get back on the court for 12-plus months. It takes a lot.

And just his habits are incredible. His mental toughness is incredible, just to be able to, like, push through those days where many just wouldn't.

**Q. Do you feel expectations this year?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Well, look, you want those expectations. Any time you have talented team, there should be expectations. You embrace them, and you always have to shoot for the highest goal. Our goal is not just to try to compete and win a championship this year, but be in the same position the following year and the following year after that.

It's an era we're trying to produce because we all know how extremely hard it is to win a championship. We all embrace the challenge but realize how fragile it is. All we have to do is go back two years ago to Kawhi's injury against Utah. Kawhi was playing the best basketball of any player in the world. Our team was playing at a high level. Unfortunately for Kawhi and for the group, he got injured.

I think with that, it reinforces the urgency you have to

approach every single day. Nothing is guaranteed. This league changes quickly. People forget quickly. And that kind of the hunger and the urgency we've seen from the group the entire off-season is how we've approached it.

You also might have to give credit to your competitors. The landscape is extremely challenging this year. I think you can make an argument that potentially a third of the league is a contender for a championship. So our focus has always been focus on what we can control and just embrace the daily habits that it's going to need, and let's just put our best foot forward and see if it's good enough.

**Q. The last couple years, you guys have kind of kept the same core. This off-season, what did you kind of see? Want to keep the same core again? Just kind of add and go from there?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah. We really value continuity. You know, the kind of the rotating rosters year in and year out, it's hard for guys to get a rhythm. Each player on the roster was -- they're here for a reason, and we're fortunate in that we feel we have, you know, the two best two-way players in the league, and we wanted to complement them and amplify their skill sets. So size, shooting, versatility, high basketball IQ, and just piece by piece.

The other kind of moment we had is once Kawhi got injured and we knew he was out for the year, internally our goal is we want the team to be better by the time he returns. So you could initially say, to your point, okay, we got Norm, RoCo, John Wall. But then, also, the development of Terance, Luke, Zu. The emergence of Amir and Brandon that we feel our roster is better.

Now, does that guarantee us anything? No, nothing. But we do feel the group is better.

The other thing, I think it's a reflection of Steve and the organization that he's built in that over the last two years, we've either signed or extended, you know, seven of our own guys, which is -- it's a reflection of Steve's commitment and the guys appreciating what Steve does for the team and, also, Steve rewarding those guys for their impact on winning.

**Q. (No microphone) what do you take away from things like that where guys get to play together for the first time?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think the first take away is this off-season, I try to compare it to this is -- I'm going into my eighth year with the Clippers. I've never been a part of an off-season as inspiring as the one we've had here.

I say that after giving the guys a couple weeks off, like, as you guys know, the players, the off-season is theirs. Many times, they'll train, personal trainers, different locations. Just kind of change the scenery.

We have had a full gym from the time that our coaches have opened the gym back up until today. And, you know, typically, it's usually younger players. This has been everyone. And it's been awesome that the guys who live in L.A. stayed in L.A. to train in L.A., and I think it's a compliment to our players, the fact that they're hungry and driven and want to continue to build those connections.

It's a credit to Ty and his staff, the fact that, look, sometimes, you know, they're like, hey, we need a break from the coaches. Not here. I mean, they appreciate that our player development staff and our performance and health and wellness staff, that the sacrifice and dedication that they've made, that they want to be here so they can get better.

Our players feel this is the best chance individually for me to improve my game. So that's been awesome just to watch, and it's an investment.

And then the guys who don't live in L.A., our staff visits them basically every three to four weeks. So to see the development of those guys as well, it's critical for us to accomplish our goal.

In regards to like a P.G. and John Wall, yeah, to go see those runs, look, we're all basketball nuts. We all love it, right? So it's like, well, where can we get our fix? I'm looking at the park here at a bunch of 10-year-old kids saying hey, you know, you never know.

But yeah, so it's awesome. You take it for what it is. But, yeah, you see some moments with it, and it's credit to those runs at UCLA that they're competitive. It's not just guys kind of going, you know, quarter speed. There's real competition there.

So, yeah, I think there are encouraging things and you love being in the gym.

**Q. Piggybacking off of that, I know this is kind of deeper on the roster, but (indiscernible). When you look at the roster, you're all deep but they're not that tall (indiscernible) so how are you approaching that position? How are you approaching what they're looking like in camp as well as how things might play out as the season begins?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: One, I think it starts with Zu. He's been extremely durable. His game continues to improve.

It's amazing, still young. He's just entering his prime, and we see Zu continue to make steps to improve.

I think with Moses, I think Moses knows who he is as a player, what he can do, and it's a matter of being an expert and a master at those skills. He's a big man. He's got really, really good size. He's able to run the floor, screen, roll, finish, play above the rim and protect the rim. It's huge.

Your point with Moussa is he's undersized for the position but plays with unbelievable effort and energy and has shown switchability. And yet, kind of as we study our roster, the strength of our roster is the fact that we have wings. We have a lot of guys in that 6'7" to 6'9" range who can play multiple positions.

Ultimately, we want to be able to give Ty the option to get your best players on the floor. So playing Marcus, RoCo, Nico, getting them minutes of five. You know, Terance is a Swiss Army knife. That we're not a prisoner to, okay, playing a backup five.

So I think we'll start the season evaluating with, you know, Zu obviously is a starter, having the opportunity to play. Even though, quote unquote, we call it small, think about the sizes, like the different potential lineups that T-Lue can put out there. You have a lot of size. You can put a lineup out there where with just the length, you're not really small.

Then we'll just continue to evaluate the position as the season goes on and to see if we need to address it in a different way. We'll be ready to. But we're looking forward to seeing what it looks like.

**Q. Do you feel like because the fact that you've got bigger wings coming back, talk about the rebounding being a real issue last year. Like we all saw it from the jump. Does the feeling that you have the wings coming back with those size kind of allay whatever concerns there are about the rebounding being better this year?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: The thing is when we're setting our team, you take last year, to your point, we also look at, okay, two years ago with Kawhi and P.G., what was the rebounding like? And, you know, Kawhi and P.G., obviously, impact our rebounding woes a great deal in helping us.

And then studying, okay, the different combinations on the floor. That's something T-Lue is a master. He's nonstop thinking about these things. He's thinking about substitution patterns in the first week of July of what it looks like.

So I think rebound-wise, we will be better. Size obviously helps, but I think playing different lineups will contribute to improving our rebounding. And, look, if it winds up that we need to address it, then we'll be ready to. But I think we have enough to be able to do a whole lot better, and I think it will be an everyday emphasis because our guys also know that rebounding-wise was a weakness of our group.

So we need to be a great block-out team. We need to be a great gang rebound team in terms of rebounding with five guys, not just relying on Zu to be able to clean it all up. I have a lot of confidence we'll be better.

**Q. Lawrence, what have you seen from Paul? Is Paul's elbow completely behind him, and how has his off-season been?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Paul, his elbow is 100 percent healthy. Paul has had an extremely purposeful, driven, and very productive off-season, in that his consistency of training has been off the charts. Plus, he continues to take more and more of an ownership and leadership role. You know, he had a lot to do with getting John Wall to come here. I'm sure you guys, whether it was -- you know, our players had player-led retreats. Paul was huge, him and Kawhi, behind that.

So the investment he's made both in the gym, in the weight room, his body looks great. Just the urgency that he's approaching it as one of the leaders and franchise players, so you see a lot of growth and development, and just an intensity of his training.

So I think he's had an extremely productive off-season.

**Q. Just to make sure with Kawhi, has he already participated in 5-on-5, or his first 5-on-5 will be at camp?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, his first 5-on-5. So, basically, Kawhi's done a lot of controlled basketball for a long time. Though 5-on-5 is viewed to the layman as a benchmark, it's more complicated than that.

Ultimately, he keeps trending towards being able to play in an NBA basketball game, and so he'll just continue to take those steps in camp.

**Q. Lawrence, with Kawhi, what's it been like collaborating with him as far as managing (indiscernible).**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I mean that's why you -- we have a terrific medical team. Everyone has the same goal in mind

so I think you just -- with it, it's constant communication and seeing where he's at. And then the next step will be, I'm sure, will be us, hey, let's -- you know, the toughest thing is when a guy really, really wants to go ahead and try to do everything, and you just assess it. You just have those conversations.

And I think what everyone can agree on, well, what's the goal? What's the best way to get there? And, you know, if it's close, you exercise some caution when you're coming back from a serious injury like this.

**Q. (No microphone).**

LAWRENCE FRANK: That's a good question. Yeah, and that's why where it's amazing when I just compare it to when I first came into the league to where we're at medically is not only do you have expert practitioners, which you had back, you know, when I first came in the league, but now you have data. And it's objective data to be able to, to your point, in terms of the soft tissue injuries, typically they come because of compensation issues.

I don't want to come close to being a doctor, okay? But I know enough that I can repeat stuff. So with that, because you have data to see exactly, you can compare and see where the progress is made. So you don't compromise, whether it's Kawhi or anyone else on our team, that you don't put them in a position where they're in -- as much as you can control where they're more vulnerable to a soft tissue injury.

To your point, you're not just rehabbing a knee. You're rehabbing the entire body. And Kawhi is, I mean, he is one of one. You know, just his size, his strength, his speed. You want to make sure that he's ready and put in a great position because we want to take a long run here, and that's why, again, along those lines, we'll be cautious with the approach.

**Q. Let me go back to P.G.'s leadership. I felt like when Kawhi went down, he was already a leader, but I think he even elevated it more and carried it through.**

I know you were talking about a full gym, but there were those retreats. Somebody said he paid for those, for everybody came there as well. Discuss what else talk about specifically what we've seen out of P.G. and will that carry over with Kawhi being back in the lineup.

LAWRENCE FRANK: It speaks so much of just an investment. When we talk about leadership, leadership is serving, not being served. And I think Paul embodies it with his actions and what he does. And the ownership of the team is if you think, like, four years ago, when we got

Paul and Kawhi, it was more of a destination place. Now this is home. When it's home, you want to make this the best home it can be.

And Paul's concern for others, to your point, in terms of paying for those guys to be there, organizing it, and not only just like the daily activities of what they did and the daily different types of workouts. Whether they're doing a beach workout or whether they're doing yoga or the types of drills they were doing, that was all Paul.

And working with Kawhi, we're very lucky. You think about our two star players, they really, really appreciate and respect and care about each other, and they don't compete for whose team it is.

Many times when you have young, rising stars, one of the things that boils beneath the surface is they're sometimes competing against each other for the team. Our guys are competing with and for each other with one goal in mind. We're very, very lucky that our two star players have that sort of connection and appreciation for each other. You just see continued growth with both those guys.

But in relation to Paul, I mean, I think he's done a really, really good job of embracing being a Clipper and embracing doing something that's never been done in the history of this organization.

**Q. You mentioned that the team already has a ton of depth. How important do you think that kind of leadership helps to kind of further that depth in some of the younger players, helping their development?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think, you know, your best players, along with your head coach, they unite and inspire with their actions and what they do. And so when you see someone like Paul, someone like Kawhi, how they work or how they lead together, how they bring people together, well, if I'm a young player and that's what I'm seeing modeled, it's like, okay, that's how things are done here.

It was amazing, like, when John Wall came here. And John with Reggie, these guys have been in the gym near every day since, like, when John came here in July. John's like, I've never seen it like this before because everyone's very professional, yet it's a fun environment. They just work. They do their jobs. They enjoy it. And, like, it's consistent.

So I think that's the culture that our best players and T-Lue has established here is, look, we're going to work hard every day. We're going to build the right habits. We're also going to have a joyful atmosphere. I think everyone else just kind of falls in line.

The other thing that's really unique with the young players, when they're able to pick the brain of P.G., Kawhi, Reggie, like the learning and the transference of all the knowledge and the experiences and the mistakes that maybe they made when they were younger players or the things they learned from their mentors and just passing that knowledge on, I think more important than the words are the actions. Marcus taking Brandon and working out with him, and different vets taking Jason Preston and educating and teaching him. You know, John Wall taking Moussa and Brandon. It fosters a really, really uplifting atmosphere.

**Q. (No microphone).**

LAWRENCE FRANK: As you know, we love Pat. Obviously, the Lakers will be very good. I think the entire Western Conference will be good. Our focus will be on us in terms of competition. We have respect for 29 other teams, but, yeah, we love Pat, and it's good to have him back in L.A.

**Q. (No microphone).**

LAWRENCE FRANK: To me, I'm more focused on ours.

**Q. The depth you have, who else are you looking at to maintain -- are there any other guys you want to manage throughout the year, make sure (no microphone)?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Yeah, I think the thing you look at, one, is basically the way it works is our medical staff has an individual plan for each player. It's based on their age, based on their health, the loads they're carrying, the minutes they're playing, the stretches that they're playing.

It's not like you put together a calendar for the entire year. You look at where they're at. You look at the schedule for the next couple weeks or month and figure out what's the best way to manage their health.

I think it's a delicate balance because you want the urgency of how we want to attack every day. You want the continuity so you have different combinations getting enough minutes over the course of the year. And yet, you also want to be able to pace your team correctly so you're playing your best basketball when it means the most.

I think we'll look at everyone. But, obviously, those guys that are in their 30s, there will be an individual plan for each player to where they're getting the appropriate amount of rest based on all those factors and put it together from there.

**Q. Lawrence, what do you expect off John Wall? He's got such an extensive résumé.**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think the first thing that stands out about John is just his daily approach. His work ethic and love of the game is off the charts. The energy we get from both John and Reggie daily, it's uplifting. He's a hooper. He's a baller. He loves it. You talk to him about AAU basketball. You talk about women's basketball, the WNBA. He's all in.

To your point, he's obviously played, you know, 40 games in, what, three years or whatever it's been. So there's an unknown. Based on what we've seen, we're encouraged.

With John, you see a guy who can change the pace of the game, a guy who can put pressure on the rim, high level passer who can deliver the ball to different people, different places, and someone who we feel can be a switchable defender.

I think we'll continue to learn more and more about John. We'll see where he's at. Similar to what we do with all our players, we'll take it day by day and see what he can do. But we will prioritize. We want John to be really good in the regular season and exceptional in the postseason. So we'll just kind of prioritize his health along the way.

**Q. Several players who have been open about dark times they've gone through in their playing career mental health-wise. John most recently. There's a robust program in the NBA. As a team, what do you have available for players to make sure they stay in a good place?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: Mental health is critical. It's something we've prioritized really since we've been here. So have a director of mental performance, Dr. Sarah Hickman. And then from there, we have a team of different mental health professionals, whether it's, you know, psychiatry, whether it's from a meditation or mindfulness, different healing things, and then you also have outsourcing of people that don't have an affiliation with the Clippers.

But mental health is a wide, wide spectrum of things. It's definitely a priority. It's something we talk to our guys a lot about and give them resources. We talked about it over the years. With -- call it Generation Z -- one of the things that is different than, quote, when I grew up is people are just a whole lot more open with being okay with being vulnerable. I think it's great role model. We talk about, like, P.G. in the bubble. You talk about John. Cov has talked about it. To me, it makes them understand, yeah, we all go through issues. They range on the spectrum.

But it's totally the right thing to do is to get support, get help.

When I was growing up, you kind of hid it. You didn't share it. It wasn't looked -- it was more looked as something you just do. It's amazing and awesome that our guys are role models in that sense. Not just for younger players or younger people. It's for their teammates and others that, hey, look, I've been through some major stuff. I got help. It really helped me. Like it's a great, great, great sign of strength.

**Q. You talked about the possibility of doing something the organization has never done before this year. You've been through a number of training camps in your career. Curious, is there a different vibe when you go into a season with a team, whether it's New Jersey or Boston, where you think there's a chance of doing that? What's the vibe like this year that remind you of past stops if you could do it?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think there's always an excitement. All teams will be super, super jacked up. All of them. And all of them will think, you know, you'll have 15 to 18 teams think they can win a championship. Yeah, the other groups think they make the playoffs. What happens is somewhere in between, I don't know, Thanksgiving and Christmas, reality sets in.

And now the thing is this. If you go back and you look at even teams that, you know, have won the championship over the last ten years, like there's some patterns to their starts. But also, like, I mean, there are also some teams that wound up in the finals that, well, after 20 or 40 games, like, you didn't see them as finalists.

So I think everyone's excited. You know, like, we're -- you know, it's like Christmas, you know, coming up next Tuesday. Yet what happens to me, what I enjoy is what do we look like in January? What do we look like in February? What are our habits daily?

That's kind of how we evaluate things. It's not as much outcome-based during the course of the season. Are we doing the right things. We have a bunch of different micro things to study to see if we're as good as we think we can be.

Appreciate you guys.

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