

LA Clippers Media Conference

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John Wall Robert Covington Press Conference



Q. John, I'm just curious, what have you heard from the guys about Ty and his coaching style and the approach that you'll be going with this year?

JOHN WALL: Ain't really talked to the guys about it. I just stay back and watch and observe from over the years of him being in Cleveland and him being here. I think he's a hell of a coach. He's a guy that won a championship. Knows what it takes. He knows how to challenge his player, don't back away from that, and I think the most important thing is just accept whatever role he gives you and just go out there and compete, every day try to make each other better, build some team chemistry and some camaraderie.

Q. John, you talked about earlier just about the mental health that you were dealing with, and how much do you feel like that is not only the awareness of it, but also helping other players including your teammates to be able to be open about their mental health and making sure everybody is balanced and ready to go when it's time for them to hit the floor?

JOHN WALL: I can't really speak for everybody else. I guess for me, if you haven't checked the story out, you should check it out. I think it's dope. I think it helps us. It's Black men that just go out there and took our pride. I think we are very prideful, and a lot of times we think we can accomplish everything by ourselves until we really hit some reality and it gets tough.

Hopefully my story can help a lot of people and inspire a lot of people to not wait until it's too late. I wish I could have told the story a long time ago, but I didn't go through that until the last couple years. So people that we have lost in the past, you think of those and them and they family, but hopefully I can help some people that's going through it now and in the near future.

Q. Do you feel like everything that you've been

through, like this gives you the best opportunity to win and you have something to prove? Do you feel like you guys have championship aspirations? And if this isn't it, you may not get another chance like this again?

JOHN WALL: Yeah, I've got a chip on my shoulder. Anybody would, I mean, having played last year and come back and play this year. Like I said, happy I get the opportunity to play the game that I love, that basketball is my sanctuary, when I step between those four lines. Whatever I go through off the court I kind of cancel it out. Like I said, whatever role T-Lue want me to do I am willing to accept.

I think I'm a better man, a better person, I'm a better father, and whatever my role is on this team, I'm just trying to come over here and help them win. We all got an ultimate goal to what we're trying to do. We got Kawhi that has two championships; we got T-Lue that's won as a coach. We're all a little older now in our careers and that is the ultimate goal is to try to win.

So it starts tomorrow taking every day, every practice like we a championship team, and hopefully we can get that goal.

ROBERT COVINGTON: I ain't even got to answer that. You hit that on the head. Like he said, we're older in our career, more mature. We've been through a lot, and like he said, the amount of stories on this team and guys that have the aspirations, we've got a leader that's won a championship. We've got a head honcho that won two championships.

It's championship DNA in the building. It's just enough for us to grasp in on and us to learn and to develop our own skills and sanctions for everything that we're doing.

And we can learn from the guys, and like I said, take every day as a learning lesson and step.

Q. Mr. Covington, Robert, you were kind of baptism by fire last year, came in roughly 20 games. A lot of numbers suggest that you were as important as anybody during the season last year. That was in a quick kind of turnaround for you. Now that you've had

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a summer, you've gotten to know the roster, you probably have an even more defined role. Your comfort level going into this year and how you can make a similar impact that you made last year. I don't know if you're going to hit 11 threes in a game again, but I wouldn't mind if you did.

ROBERT COVINGTON: Coming into this new year, this new season, I can say for these guys that I watched them put in a lot of work. This summer wasn't my ideal summer. Went through a lot myself.

Coming into this last month since I got here, I've been so much at peace and joy that I've fallen into a different level of love and passion and tapped into a different skill set than I've realized, is that my joy and my upbringing around is so contagious that I want to make everybody around me better, and by any means necessary I want to do what it takes to win.

It don't matter, it don't have to be scoring or anything. It's just doing whatever it takes to win. Like you said, that's my role and that's what has made me prevalent in this game. It's what made me a key piece to wherever I've been.

I stay with that mindset, and I stay with a deeper level of understanding now that I have a deeper purpose. Like John touched in on being a father, it's so much more joy to it than seeing your little one in the stands and watching daddy do his job.

Q. You both have been very outspoken about your individual mental health journeys and the things that you guys have done. Norm mentioned he has a mental health coach. What do you guys think was the turning point for athletes to be more vocal in the mental health side of things to let people know that you guys are also going through things, where 10, 15 years ago athletes weren't doing that as much?

JOHN WALL: Pandemic for one, and I think also -- I don't know why, but just because we make a lot of money and we're famous they think we don't have the same problems regular people got. We still a regular person. At the end of the day, we just wake up and get an opportunity to we play the game we love and make the money to take care of our families, but we still go through all the same emotional things y'all go through.

That's one thing I don't think a lot of people understand and a lot of people respect. But I think for me, like just hearing one of my close friends, DeMar DeRozan and Kevin Love come out and speak on depression. Just hearing that.

And then also the platform we have with social media.

We're able to touch a lot of people. Like everybody is a accessible now because they camera phones and social media, so I think that gave us a platform to go out there and speak on it a little bit more.

ROBERT COVINGTON: Absolutely. It's a crazy world we're living in right now. It's a crazy world we're living in.

Q. RoCo, when we spoke to you during the end-of-season conference, you said winning was a priority heading into free agency. You nipped that in the bud real quick, signed the extension. What led you to signing that deal so quickly just to move on?

ROBERT COVINGTON: I mean, the amount of love that I was shown here in the short amount of time, how much the organization accepted me and made it very vocal from top to bottom that they wanted me to come back. Having that security and that feeling behind you, like that makes you want to be a part of it, and like I said, not only the organization but team, like people in the city.

All of that played a huge factor in it. Like you said, it's about -- to me, I've made a lot of money in my career. That's really good. But it's not about the money. It's about like actually winning. At the end of the day we always want to have that on the back of our resume. We want to be called a champion.

So this I feel like was the best opportunity, and now that we've got another crazy addition in John, that makes us another like deciding factor that's going to be -- make us more critical as a team and a contender. So all of that plays a huge factor in it.

When me and my agent got to talking, it was a no-brainer for me.

Q. John, if I could ask about the opener when you were screaming, "I'm back." What led to that kind of reaction, and how excited are you to lace up and go out there knowing you're going to play for the first time in a very long time?

JOHN WALL: I just feel like for my whole career a lot of people don't give me my respect. I don't know why. It is what it is. Like I say, I've got a chip on my shoulder.

But that's not the reason why I'm happy to be back. I put in a lot of work. Everything I've been through the last two, three last years, I don't think a lot of people could have got through that.

True testimony to myself, my team, my family, my kids, the mother of my kids. Just having great people around me.



Me maturing as a man, becoming a better father, a better person. But just let the world know like you're going to see a dog. That's what you got when you signed me.

And I think a lot of people that was there was shocked at what I did. You seen that and then seen it -- like RoCo just said, the team that we have here, a lot of great veterans we have here, it can get real scary.

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