

# LA Clippers Media Conference

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## Paul George

### Press Conference



**Q. I'd like you to talk about your level of excitement, anticipation and enthusiasm going into this year, when in the past you've been picked to finish really high maybe and win the whole thing. It's that this year and even more so, isn't it?**

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah. I mean, when you look at our roster, you look at the health of everyone on this team, it's good. It's good to have that pressure.

I think the fact of the matter is not a lot of teams get that pressure going into a season. So for us, we honor that. We embrace that.

Very excited for what's to come this year. Since I've been here, I think we have yet to put a full healthy season with everybody in uniform. A lot of optimism there of what we can accomplish when we're all full strength.

Very excited. I think this year is definitely a great opportunity to win and win big, and I think everybody feels and senses that.

You know, day one, we're going to get after it.

**Q. You're real close with John Wall. How is the relationship as far as with him, and what can you expect from John this year to help get you guys over the hump?**

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, John is definitely a piece, I think, that was needed. You talk about how much we put on Reg's plate, especially with myself being out more than half of the season and Kawhi missing last season.

I think so much was put on Reg's plate to where I think the addition of John will help shoulder a lot of that, facilitating and play making.

I think what he brings and where the value is so huge for us is his transition game. That was like one of the things teams did against us was crash the boards, because there

was -- really there was no transition game from us. They wasn't worried about that.

I think with John, his ability to play and sprint up and down and get going in transition I think kind of keeps teams honest. They can't crash everybody. He rebounds as well as any guard.

He's definitely a piece that was needed, and I'm excited. That's been a brother of mine for a long time. We came in this league together. I'm happy that -- I'm sure Clipper Nation will embrace him and this will be a great home for him.

**Q. We saw you and Kawhi kind of pose together over there and laughing and having a good time. How excited are you to play with him again this season after not being able to at all last season?**

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, I mean, real excited. I'm more excited, obviously, with him being healthy. That's first and foremost. I seen his whole work throughout the whole -- the second he got injured to the work he put in this off-season, going into this season. I've been in that position of being out and having to rehab a whole season.

You know, I got to watch from the outside to see how much work he put into this year. Really excited for him to get a chance to do what he loves to do and get back on the court. Obviously after that, it's the excitement of getting to play with the best two-way player in the game.

It's just exciting, stepping back on that floor, being full strength, both of us healthy again.

I think it's back to what Clipper Darrell envisioned when we first got here. He'll get a chance to see it again, so we're real excited about that.

**Q. You and Kawhi, this is year four together, and obviously when you got here, standing on stage like this, y'all were new, but it was y'all's team in a way. But things are different now, and Lawrence is embracing the leadership that you two showed over the off-season, getting the guys together. Seeing you weren't able to play in the game the team was eliminated in, what was that mindset not just to get**

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**ready to work for what you needed, but also to connect with him and lead this team like y'all have been here for four years?**

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, I think both of us kind of internally had a promise, I know I did for myself, to bring a championship here. Then when you look at how close we were two years back, the year Kawhi got hurt, how close we were, I didn't want to give everything -- or leave anything on the table that I could have done more.

I thought it was very important this summer to keep guys connected, stay together, get workouts together. It was more just off-the-court stuff. I didn't really care about the on-the-court stuff. We'll get to that when camp starts.

But it was more just getting guys together, being able to laugh. Norm and RoCo was new additions, so kind of wanted to speed them up on the team and make them comfortable from jump.

We've been here. This core has kind of been here for years now, and when you look at the teams that win and are very successful, it's teams that have been together and gel and connect.

That's kind of where my mindset was this summer, just stay together, build the chemistry, the camaraderie.

I thought we got a lot out of it. Definitely going into camp tomorrow, I think we know one another. We know what to expect. We know how to pull the best out of one another. Just iron out any wrinkles we got going forward.

**Q. What's the focus going into training camp tomorrow? What are some things you're ready to tell the guys, like hey, we're going to leave it all on the court this season and really like from your off-season to like training camp, what is like the main focus for you?**

PAUL GEORGE: I think the main focus for the team, our depth is so good. Our team is so deep. I think we just can't take that for granted, the minutes that we get. I think in a way we should have the Team USA approach where you go hard for those minutes that you get.

If we can do that, that gives T-Lue the ability to keep us fresh, keep the rotation going.

But I think really that mindset of Team USA. You take the best guys, and of course everybody is good and they're all on teams, everybody is the star of their own teams. But when you put us all together, it's how do I make you better now and how do I shine with this environment.

You know, our team is -- talent-wise I won't say we would compete with the top USA team, but talent-wise we're pretty special. If everybody just takes their minutes serious, we attack with 100 percent, and when we're tired, we ask for a break and know that we've got somebody behind us coming in to bring that same energy, I think it should be a lot of fun.

It should be a lot of fun with this team, and should be a lot of good nights being a Clipper fan.

**Q. I'm just curious, last week we talked to Lawrence and he said that when Kawhi went down, the goal was to -- how can we be a better team by the time he comes back. How did you make that -- I guess if it was a change for you, and how do you think you're better? Besides just the different players you have here, how are you better equipped to play for a championship now that Kawhi is back?**

PAUL GEORGE: I mean, you can't say that without looking at the roster. Our roster has definitely gotten better. I mean, that's probably the biggest reason.

I think when Kawhi went down, Lawrence's or the team's, T-Lue's approach of having T-Man play for minutes, Luke play more minutes, Amir get minutes. A lot of our young guys I think grew so much when Kawhi went down, to where now if we're faced with obstacles, he's pretty confident in the group, and I think the group is confident in each other, having given those minutes and put in those positions.

Last year those guys were in some tough games. They were in games that came down to the wire, and they won some and they lost some. But I think being put in those positions as a young player, it helps with your confidence going forward, and it helps with your maturation as a player going forward.

So I think it was a lot of value. Granted, you don't want to see your best player go down with an injury at all for that matter, but there was a lot of value, I think, gained from Kawhi being out and myself being out. I think there was a lot of minutes there, as well.

And then the new guys that came in, Norm and RoCo, Norm didn't play as much because of injury as well, but RoCo got a ton of minutes, and we got to see what RoCo looked like. It was almost a gift within the curse that we were able to see what we have and be proud and happy about when we're healthy what that will look like.

**Q. As far as your wings go, you all have the ability**



**now with a lot of size on the wings. What's your expectations defensively of what you all can do this season?**

PAUL GEORGE: I mean, we can switch everything. I think that's the beauty and the scary part about our team now. We can switch everything and still not give up a basket.

A lot of times when teams are switching, there's still a weak link that the team will try to isolate and go at. You can't do that with us if we switch. Our speed, our length, our athleticism, and I think just our individual defensive IQ and our hands, quick hands, quick feet, across the board, we've got guards that rebound like John, I think it's going to be a real problem.

Then when we get a stop, we go on the other end, there's pressure for teams to guard that. If we've got a personnel on a court that's all wings, it's tough for teams to have to guard that and match up against that.

It's going to cause some coaches -- it really might transcend the league to where the game might go to five out wings on the floor. We could be that kind of team that teams try to emulate because of the success hopefully we have doing it.

**Q. You mentioned sort of your experiences with injuries and having to miss a ton of time and then come back. What were the challenges when you came back? Obviously athletes get injured and have to come back, but to come back and have the responsibility of being a leader on the team and obviously so much is being expected from Kawhi, what is he going to experience, and what would you advise him if you were advising him?**

PAUL GEORGE: I think first and foremost, you're talking about my situation when I came back from my leg injury? I think for me, it was just trusting myself within that injury. I think it was helpful that I played those couple games that season.

But for me it was just being confident that once I stepped on the floor, it's out of my control. I can't play scared. I can't play timid. I can't play thinking about not playing my hardest because I think that's when the injuries occur.

But I think for Kawhi, hopefully he doesn't have to go out there and hopefully with our roster we put enough around him that he doesn't have to go for 40 the first night or go for 50. He can come out at his own pace. He can play at his own pace. We'll all make it as comfortable as possible for him from jump.

But I think honestly, it'll be like a kid in a candy store, just enjoying that feel of running and the atmosphere and doing what he loves to do.

Honestly, I hope it's just not too much pressure on him from an organization standpoint, from a locker room standpoint, that he can go out there and he can just deliver and be himself.

**Q. How do you think the league has handled the Robert Sarver situation in Phoenix?**

PAUL GEORGE: Not as well as they could. I think it should have been from jump that he -- it's more than a year suspension. You talk about the situation here, we've been fortunate to change ownership.

But I think the way they addressed that, obviously there was a lot more harsher comments and things being said with the situation here, but I just think regardless of how little or how much he said, there's just no room in our league, in this world for that matter.

You know, people will say, you guys get paid this amount of money and you guys get this. But that still doesn't mean that we're not affected by that. This was coming from a person that you ultimately are playing for and won titles for.

That should have been a big -- I think it was just a slap on the wrist initially. The league should have come down for sure much harder.

I think we're fighting now to push that out. But I think from jump, it should have been a no stance on that type of ownership from the jump.

**Q. If you could use one word to describe your mindset going into the season, what would it be and why?**

PAUL GEORGE: One word? Focused. Focused, I think. Understanding the opportunity, the window, and I think that's how I approached every day training was just a focused, locked-in mentality to bring the best out of myself, to get the best out of myself.

My window is shrinking to be a champion. That's the biggest -- I think that's the one word I can say to sum up the mindset going into this year.

**Q. How would you describe the level of competition in the Western Conference, particularly the Pacific Division?**

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, I mean, it's tough. It's tough.



Obviously the Warriors, number one. The best team in the league, and rightfully so, defending champions.

The Lakers, the cross-town rivals. Obviously the Lakers. The Lakers are the Lakers. They're going to be a challenge.

Phoenix have been a top team.

Ourselves.

Sac is a young up-and-coming team that could give you a rough night.

I think when you look at the west overall, every team is going to be a challenge in some way or another, whether it's when we play them, the night we play them, off a back to back, or it's just -- we've just got a handful on that night. Everyone is going to be a challenge.

But I think that's what our depth is for. I think that's why our depth is going to be a big piece of how we can survive in those rough wild, wild west games.

But we look forward to the competition. I love being competitive and competing. I'm ready for it.

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