

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Nicolas Batum

Press Conference

Q. Ty said yesterday was more of a defensive day for you guys. How are you guys from your perspective taking these days to prepare for the Suns?

NICOLAS BATUM: You know, just like get back to zero. Got to figure out how to play against those guys, how we're going to stop them individually. They've got a lot of great players but also as a team. It's going to be a great series, a tough series for sure. It's the Playoffs. Especially in the west, so it's not going to be easy, but if we want to move on, we've got to be ready for any aspect, every play, every move that they're going to try to do, we've got to find a way to stop it. They have so many good guys who can really do a lot of stuff with the basketball, so we've got to be ready for those guys for sure.

Q. You were in the Playoffs two years ago, obviously missed it last year. How exciting is it to be back in that hostile environment, all that?

NICOLAS BATUM: I mean, this is pretty much why you play basketball and why you play in this league, the Playoffs. Preseason is cool, regular season is good, but you're really playing to get ready for this all season long, to get a good seed, to get ready for April 15th technically. We're finally -- it felt like a good long preseason pretty much, now it feels like real basketball starts, so all the intention is changed, like everybody watches basketball now. Everybody is going to step up their game because everybody got the same goal, so yeah, that's what you play for.

Q. Two years ago you beat the Mavs, beat the Jazz, it was you basically filling next to Marcus in places, going small, forcing those centers to play a different kind of way, and it felt like that didn't happen as much in the Western Conference Finals against the Suns and you guys haven't really played a lot that way this year. How do you look at your role going into the series compared to the Conference Finals two years ago against the Suns?



NICOLAS BATUM: I don't know. We'll see. It's different. It was a different playoff, different matchup. I don't know how to answer that question. But just whatever they ask me to do, I'm going to do it. I don't really know how to answer that question, to be honest. We'll see what happens.

Q. Knowing Monty the way you do, are there things that you see that he likes to run are things that you guys talked about when you were in Portland together?

NICOLAS BATUM: It's different. It's different, but I know he wants to win, that's for sure. He told me that like right from the start. Ever since he got there they've had success. He changed the culture of that franchise as soon as he got there, and you add KD to the mix, good for them, I guess.

But no, it's going to be a matchup. It's going to be a matchup on the court. You've got two great coaches facing each other, as well, Ty against Monty. It's going to be a great series.

Q. You guys have defended Luka, Jokic, Booker, Donovan Mitchell. Where does Kevin Durant rank as far as tasks ahead of you?

NICOLAS BATUM: I respect all those guys, but he's in a different category. KD is different than all those guys. Those guys are great, but KD is KD. He's a champion, one of the all-time greats, one of the best small forwards we've ever seen in this league, in this game overall. It's not easy when you face a matchup like this.

We've got guys, also, got Kawhi, also, who's had a pretty good career, as well. Like I said, it's going to be great. Going to be a great matchup for sure.

Q. What does "Playoff Kawhi" mean to you?

NICOLAS BATUM: Winners. The guy is a winner. You can't really -- in this league people talk about oh, Playoff Kawhi this or Playoff Kawhi that, he's going to turn into MJ or whatever. He has that reputation when in big games he's going to step up, like two years ago before his injuries he was barely warming up and he was putting -- the



efficiency he had in the first round Mavs for like guard, wing guy, thinking numbers compared to Shaq. It shows you like when he turns into that mood, he can be dangerous for sure.

Q. Knowing you guys are shorthanded, what type of confidence does that level of player, of Kawhi's caliber, bring to this team, knowing that you still have a shot because Kawhi is on your team?

NICOLAS BATUM: I mean, you can't really -- he knows we've been there two years ago and we still won the series anyway, and we have some at least two, three games against the Suns we were very, very, very close, too, because like he's our guy, go-to guy, but we're here. We've got you, whatever he needs, whatever he wants, everybody got a role, so we're going to do our best to try to make his life easy without PG.

Q. Because of the time off between the end of the regular season and the start of the series and how much preparation you guys are going through on a daily basis, is there such a thing mentally as being overprepared for something or even a playoff series or playoff game at all to you?

NICOLAS BATUM: Not really, no. Maybe can be an advantage, too, because at least we know the matchup. Like Denver doesn't know -- Denver won't know until Friday night, so it can be an advantage to just get ready right now and prepare yourself. At least you know, you don't have to wait for a week who we're going to get. At least we know so we can start preparing for that.

Q. With you guys being down PG, with them having KD, not many analysts are picking you guys. You've been in that spot before. Does that add any motivation heading into this series?

NICOLAS BATUM: No, not really. Just the court stuff matters. All this talk around -- don't really pay attention at this time and don't really care as a player. All that matters for us is just what the coaches going to tell us, game plan, and just get out there and play.

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