

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Tyronn Lue

Press Conference

Q. Do you see a difference in Kawhi when he plays regular season versus the Playoffs?

TYRONN LUE: Well, I did, yeah. I've had the luxury to see the difference about his pace and just how hard he goes every single night. That's to be expected when you get to the Playoffs. The Playoffs, the energy, everything raises two or three levels.

Just excited, like I said, for our opportunity, going in pretty much healthy with everyone except for PG, and just excited for the opportunity to play against a good team.

Q. How do you see Kawhi in terms of being in and out of the lineup --

TYRONN LUE: Well, I just think it's more so than Kawhi, it's our whole team and medical staff, just making sure everyone is feeling their best going into postseason. It's a fine line you've got to walk, but just making sure we're as healthy as we can be going into the Playoffs.

Everyone right now, like I said, is feeling pretty good outside of PG, and we're ready to go.

Q. When you look (indiscernible) can play the small ball 5 against a good help defender his size, but they tend to like to play a center for the most part with their Deandre and Bismack combo. Is that something you're preparing for, KD at the 5, or are you -- without giving too much away, are you aware of that? Are you preparing for something like that?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, we've seen them play that way this year when KD got there.

Q. What about him at the 5 kind of creates some trouble?

TYRONN LUE: Well, a 5 can't guard him. That's trouble. But just him being on the floor is trouble. He's a great player. We've just got to be aware where he's at on the



floor at all times, along with Book, and just make it tough, make it difficult, show him different looks so he doesn't get comfortable with you running the same defensive coverages. So whether it's at the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, it's a tough matchup, so we understand that.

Q. You mentioned that PG is not ready to go, obviously, but seeing him on the floor, being able to catch and shoot at the very least, how encouraging is that as far as where he was when he got hurt three weeks ago?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, well, it's encouraging to see, especially from the nasty blow that he took. Thought it could be a lot worse than what it was.

So just seeing him be able to do some things and actually starting to feel better, that's good to see because you don't want to see your players get hurt and get injured, and it could have been a lot worse than what it was.

Q. You see the schedule that came out. The cadence is quick, playing every other day pretty much except after Game 4. As far as the potential return for Paul, does he need to clear some benchmarks? Does he need to practice? Is there something that you need to see before you would feel comfortable throwing him out there in any series?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, well, I'm not a doctor, but I really do lean on the medical staff because like I said, I think we have one of the best medical staffs in the league. We're definitely not going to do anything to hurt PG. Even if he does try to come back and he's not right, we're not going to let him go because we're not going to let him injure himself and make it worse than what it really is.

When he comes back, we'll make sure he's close to 100 percent without being able to injure himself even more.

Q. You said that everybody outside of PG is feeling good, so that means you do expect Marcus to be back and available for the first round?

TYRONN LUE: Yes, sir.

Q. Do you kind of see a role for him -- without giving



too much away with your rotation, do you see a role for him in the rotation this series?

TYRONN LUE: Yes, sir.

Q. Given how great of a two-way player Kawhi is, how do you balance or weigh the priorities of what you need from him defensively, what you need from him offensively on which player and all that?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, I think we need him to set the tone every night on both sides of the basketball, and when you're a great player, that's what's expected. He has the ability to do it on the defensive end as well as the offensive end. Just the way we start the game, having the physicality, having a defensive mentality, and then locking into what we're doing, not having a lot of game plan mistakes.

I know a lot of guys are going to follow his lead. Russ, as well; he's been here. So we're just excited for the opportunity, and there's going to be a lot expected of Kawhi, and I know he's ready to give it.

Q. Because of the trades that happen during the season, because of injuries that happen, Mason coming in as a backup center, do you wish you had more functional looks at the small ball lineup throughout the year than you were able to get with the current crop of players that are here?

TYRONN LUE: Well, we had opportunities, it's just PG and Kawhi was hurt a lot of times when we had to play small ball, so it really didn't look as good as it does when Kawhi and PG is on the floor.

We have enough experience with our guys, our core guys who's been here. They kind of understand how we play and what we need to do, and we did two years ago against Utah a lot, in that Utah series to try to go bigger out of the paint.

We'll just see how it goes throughout the course of this series.

Q. With Deandre Ayton living on the offensive glass, the put-backs he can get, does that limit the opportunity for a small ball lineup because of how much he can punish a group like that?

TYRONN LUE: I mean, we've got to see. He did it two years ago. But let's see if he can do it again. He has the capability of doing it, but we just can't go into it being scared because of offensive rebounds and not trying what's best for us.

It could be some points in the game where he does hurt us on the glass. He's physical, he's big around the basket and he gave us problems two years ago.

Q. You mentioned earlier this week that the defense was more of a priority in this series, but offensively as encouraging as things have been, what are some things you want to make sure the team keeps in mind when it comes to attacking Phoenix?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, I think the biggest thing, just not getting stagnant. I think throwing the ball to Kawhi and just standing and watching, or Russ has the ball, standing and watching, we've got to continue to -- small, small pick-and-rolls, swinging and following, getting to the next actions. The last four or five games we haven't really been good at that. There's been a lot of standing around, a lot of watching. We've been working on it the last five or six games, just continue the action. Once we call the play and that action is done, like we've got to continue to keep playing.

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