

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Los Angeles, California, USA

Kawhi Leonard

Press Conference



Q. What's this week of practice been like for you guys?

KAWHI LEONARD: Just getting prepared, going to Phoenix and playing those two games. Just trying to be mentally focused as much as possible.

Q. How much of a role have you played in just trying to get your teammates up to the speed that you are as far as level of preparation, attention to detail, all those things?

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, with anything we do on the floor, just making sure that we're buying into what's being taught and coached on the floor. Yeah, just making sure that we clearly understand what we're doing, not making it too confusing.

Q. Ty and your teammates talk a lot about the extra level you take it to when the Playoffs come around. Is that a mentality thing for you when you get to the Playoffs, trying to be more aggressive, getting to your spots more often?

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, it's just trying to win a game. Things get more magnified, I guess, and people start to pay more attention to what's really going on. Yeah, it's just trying to win a basketball game really. Whatever the outcome is, it's just trying to put full effort in.

Q. Ty spoke about mental mistakes and game plan mistakes being the biggest things heading into this series. How have you used the last couple days to fix those things?

KAWHI LEONARD: We won't know if they're fixed until we play, but just making sure that, like I said, we're bought in, attention to detail, and making sure everybody knows what we're doing, even the guys that's on the bench, so they can help us when game time comes. We need everybody's mind in the game and everybody seeing what's going on.

Just having focus in the practices and trying to see what the Suns do well and trying to force them into their weaknesses.

Q. Kevin was very complimentary of you when you are dealing with your knee injury. How much are you looking forward to -- I know you're focused on the team aspect, but how much are you looking forward to the one-on-one matchup with KD, a player of that level?

KAWHI LEONARD: I mean, he's a great player. These are the fun parts of it. Just going out there, getting to compete against a guy like him that's been doing it year after year. Yeah, everybody is going to have to take the challenge, not just me. It is a team sport, so...

Q. What do you think were the keys to being able to have a successful season you had after missing all of last season with the injury?

KAWHI LEONARD: Just staying focused on just getting through it, just knowing that it's going to be a long season, and just staying focused and just getting stronger throughout the year and just making sure that I know it's a goal set and a plan set to get through the season healthy. That was my main focus this year, just trying to get through the season healthy, and I'll see where my game play goes after that.

Q. Just being the two-way player that you are, having to deal with KD on the defensive end and having a little bit more of a role on offense with PG out, what are some of the challenges for you there and how do you approach that?

KAWHI LEONARD: Just what you said, he's out, but we've still got other players on the team that can help. It's just like any other game really. It's another basketball game. There's just a title on it now. You have a chance to get an ultimate goal for a team. I mean, that's just the focus level. It's not just starting now, and it's been like that throughout the year, throughout my playing career, trying to play both ends, and just hopefully there's carryover.

Q. As a master of the mid-range yourself, what impresses you the most about KD's mid-range game?



KAWHI LEONARD: Him making the shots. That's what it's about, how he gets to his spots, shooting over guys, two hands throughout his whole career, and it's very impressive. Like I said, year after year, he's doing it, and he's doing it at a high percentage. Yeah, both ways, left, right, shooting over everybody.

Q. When you had an injury and everything, could you see this point or was it hard to see this point of getting back to the Playoffs, playing basketball at the highest level? And how does it feel to finally be back here?

KAWHI LEONARD: It wasn't hard to see. I didn't feel like we weren't going to make the Playoffs. I mean, if you're talking about the aspect as a team, I mean, we'll see. It's the first year back, and it's a challenge, in front of me, in front of everybody on the team, we'll have to just figure it out.

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