

# LA Clippers Media Conference

Friday, April 14, 2023

Los Angeles, California, USA

## Ivica Zubac

Press Conference



**tournament, it used to be two days and you're playing on Wednesday. Now you've got like a week off. You know your opponent. What has this week off allowed you to do?**

**Q. Obviously we've been talking about Kawhi coming back, but that Western Conference Finals series you didn't get to finish it either and the way Deandre Ayton played in that series, you know, it's a big matchup for you. How are you looking back or looking forward to the series and your role in it?**

IVICA ZUBAC: I can't wait. I mean, that's how I finished three years ago. We lost Kawhi and then felt like we was kind of figuring out how to play them, and I went down, so it was tough for me to watch from the sidelines in those last two games. I just want to go back at it. We lost that series. It was the Conference Finals. We get them for the first time after that, so it's going to be fun. We're looking to come out, compete hard, be aggressive, bring out the energy, and try to win the series.

**Q. When you hear the team always talks about physicality and that's going to be big for the mid-range perimeter players that Phoenix has, but what does physicality mean for you in your role in the series?**

IVICA ZUBAC: Just set a tone on the glass, control the defensive rebounds, crash offensive boards, set good screens, hit bodies, box out, be good weak side, help early, whatever big men got to do. I feel like controlling the rebounds, trying to get us extra possessions, set good screens for my guys. I think that's what physicality means for me.

**Q. By the time you guys play on Sunday it'll be a week between games. Will that be beneficial at all or how has that been?**

IVICA ZUBAC: We'll see. We'll see on Sunday. I think we could have used it. We could have used an extra few days, and we're going to be well-rested, healthy, no excuses. Both teams coming in with a week of rest, I think it's going to be really good for the series.

**Q. What have you been able to focus on with so much time in between games? Before the play-in**

IVICA ZUBAC: Everything, whatever we did before but more. We was able to scrimmage a little bit that we couldn't really do before. We could kind of break down each day, like each day -- one day we're going to do defense, this coverages, the other day we're going to do the other coverages, offense we're going to do the next day, Thursday we watched personnel film and how they play.

You can break down every part and you can use every day for like every aspect of the game. It's really good. You get to prepare more. You get more time to study their game, their players. I think we used it really well. We got today, tomorrow, so we're going to be well prepared.

**Q. How did you see Kawhi deal with this last season, coming off last year and getting back in the swing of things, dealing with all the different injuries?**

IVICA ZUBAC: I mean, I don't know about the injuries. He had an ankle sprain. But he's been really good. He came into the season in shape, and unfortunately he had that -- healthy and in shape and unfortunately he had that ankle sprain, but he took his time, recovered, got healthy again 100 percent and came back. I feel like he's playing the best basketball that he ever played, and I'm really confident in this team when we got a guy like that on our side.

**Q. You guys were really good in 2021 when you were on the court in that Suns series. It seemed like your communication with Pat was really good in particular about him feeding you those guards and you protecting the rim. What's your communication been like with the guards you have now about that particular thing?**

IVICA ZUBAC: Kind of with Pat, we played for so long, it was automatic. We was reading each other. It wasn't really -- it was communication, obviously, but on the court stuff happens so quick. Sometimes you've just got to read your guys. Like if Ayton would set a hard screen and then Pat would be late so Chris Paul would sneak that



pick-and-roll. That was kind of my sign to kind of late switch that pick-and-roll to take away that mid-range. It worked really well that series with Pat and T-man. It's something that I've been -- after that I've been working on with T-man, and I feel like we're been doing it good against them, so it's going to be interesting. We'll definitely see how it goes in this series, but that's kind of after -- after a lot of time when you play with certain guys you kind of read each other, and that's where I'm at with T-man right now. I can't wait for it. I feel like that we've got a really good connection defensively and offensively, but defensively we read each other really well. I like being on the court with him, yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

