

LA Clippers Media Conference

Sunday, April 16, 2023

Los Angeles, California, USA

Russell Westbrook

Postgame Press Conference

Los Angeles Clippers 115, Phoenix Suns 110

Q. Have to ask you about -- the three offensive rebounds -- face guarding Kawhi and you were trying to get it to him and you saw KD -- decided to take Book and get yourself to the line. What did you see?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Just saw the shot clock going down, Kawhi did a good job of screening and allowed me to get to a spot that I love. Been on the block and being able to put myself in position to make a play there. Had not been making all night but down the stretch, got to the line and knocked down the free throws.

Q. How did you get yourself --

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Yeah, I've been in the position before, regardless of what happened, the 46 minutes beforehand, whatever, 47 minutes beforehand, with the game on the line, trying to win games, take my time and knocking them down.

Q. You just said for yourself -- you did that all night, shot making, the offensive rebound, dead ball, the block and deflection, how did you -- I know the shot -- when you try and impact a game in other ways, how does the shot make you not --

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: My whole career, man, I've been priding of myself every season to do everything. I think I'm one of those guys that can do everything each and every night.

Like I've always told you guys, whatever's needed of me to win a game, I'll do it. I'm just grateful that T-Lu and the staff believe in me regardless my shots not falling and allowing me to make an impact on the team and win.

Q. The KD offensive plays, you were guarding him a lot of the time tonight. What was the key to guarding him?



RUSSELL WESTBROOK: You've just got to make sure he sees you. Make sure he knows that you're there. You know, like I told you guys, he's a hell of a shot maker. Make tough shots. One of the elite scorers of all time. Just try to make it difficult for him. Make him work a little bit more and that's it.

Q. How much do you think the team has benefitted from your Russell, Westbrook brand of energy?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: I would like to say a lot but you've got to ask them. I'm just grateful and thankful that what I bring to a basketball team and being able to do it last year, grateful for that.

Q. When it comes to a guy your size to hit the glass like that, there's athleticism and there's energy, but is it heart?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: It is. It's timing. It's the will to win. Be able to make plays. Understanding time, scoring, possession. At this position, humbly speaking, nobody a better rebounder than me.

Q. What did you think of Kawhi tonight, getting off early?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: His patience, his awareness throughout the game was amazing as you've guys have seen. He's been like that for us since I've been here. We had his back on the defensive end, and going into next game, we'll make sure we find ways to keep making the game easy for him.

Q. In the pregame, Ty said that usually Game 1 might be a feel-out game for some teams, but you guys don't have a margin for error. You guys had to come out with intensity. What is it like playing like that, knowing that you have to go out there and punch first?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Yeah, it's a good team, good basketball team here. You wait for the game, sometimes the game go by and you I think we did a good job today of setting the tone and giving ourselves a good chance to take on some of their runs but also stay solid to the game plan.



Q. You did this before, going 3-for-19 and you won with the Wizards. What is it about going 3-for-19 for you?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: I don't know. I don't know. But I guess that's a secret number. We won. We won both games, but s--- if it works, I'm good with that.

Q. The play at the end with Devin, he's diving, rolling his right hip, how do you get that block play and somehow set --

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Just awareness, and trying to make winning place, not giving it easy. I know they want to go quick, too, but just not giving in and giving up an easy two and being aware of the baseline. It's just a little bit of luck but also being aware of kind of what's going on.

Q. PG was obviously big in you getting to come here, and now with him down, how much does it mean for you to go out and step up more and try to get a win?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: It's important, especially for me, when any time I'm in a position where people just believe in me, and just not as a basketball player but me as a person, I just feel it's my duty to be able to bring everything I have, regardless of what happens and lay it on the line.

Q. Guarding these guys physically, how do you guys think you did in that regard?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: I thought we did a good job. I'll watch the film tonight when I get back to the room and see. We kind of had some slippage throughout the game and they made a run but for the most part, I thought we did a good job of sticking to the game plan.

Q. How can you be satisfied with just one road win --

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Oh, s, -- I've been in this position many times. Playoffs, it's a series, man. It's a first of four, no matter how you get there. Right now we up one but tonight, you enjoy it and tomorrow you erase it and get ready for Tuesday.

Q. How much fun are you having playing against Kevin Durant in the first round playoffs?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Man, I have fun every time I step on the floor regardless of who it is. I love to play basketball. I love to compete at the highest level and I'm grateful for that.

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