

LA Clippers Media Conference

Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Los Angeles, California, USA

Tyronn Lue

Postgame Press Conference

Suns 136, Clippers 130

Q. Ty, what do you feel the team did so well to give yourself a chance to win this game?

TYRONN LUE: First of all, I just want to thank our fans. They've been unbelievable this year sticking behind us, the inconsistencies of lineups and different things. They stuck behind us 100%. I want to say thanks to the fans. They were great all year long.

My whole three years here the last three years have been great. I want to thank my coaching staff second of all who put in work every single day and helped me in every way, shape and form I need. They're always there for me. I couldn't do this by myself. I want to thank my coaching staff.

Then I want to thank the players for the everyday grind for nine months to get to this point. No matter who's in the lineup, who plays, those guys play hard for me every night. So I can't ask for much more than that being the head coach, just having guys that are going to compete and fight for me every single night, that's all you can ask for.

Then I want to thank the organization. Mr. Ballmer, Lawrence, Winger, just thank those guys for the opportunity, putting me in this position, all the support they've given me the last three years. I want to thank those guys as well. It's a collective group that's put in hard work for a lot of days. It's good to have that feeling.

To answer your question, just kind of got away from us in the third quarter. They went on a hell of a scoring barrage. It was tough for us to slow 'em down. Then I didn't have very many timeouts left, so we took a couple early. Then we only had two with five minutes to go in the third quarter.

Give them credit. Like I said, Booker was tough all series. We couldn't stop him. We had no answer for him. We tried to blitz. We couldn't get him. We tried to fire. Couldn't get our fires. He was really elusive. Can split,



dribble around. It was just tough, tough for us.

But I like the way we competed. I liked our physicality. I liked a lot of things we did. In that fourth quarter, fighting back, a Russ layup with a chance to tie it up. We missed a layup. I never (indiscernible) our guys' effort in the locker room. Like I said, we ran against a good opponent. Monty did a great job. That's it.

Q. Pardon the thought, but this was a tiring season. It's been a trying three years. How do you get yourself to a point where you can reflect and give yourself time to get through what you need to continue on after this season?

TYRONN LUE: For me, I think the encouraging thing, with P.G. and Kawhi healthy, we haven't lost a series yet. It's always in the back of your mind, What if. It's easy to say 'what if' because a lot of guys get hurt. It's just been our luck the last three years.

If you look back to my first year taking over, we did some really good things. Kawhi tears his ACL, then he misses the whole next season. But we haven't lost a series with our whole team. That's encouraging.

I think just taking some time and let our coaches get a break, let everybody get a break, reflect on the season, come back and just try to be better than we were this year.

Q. When you think about your time overall, since you took this position, would you say you've been dealt an unfair hand or do you enjoy the challenges that come with the injuries and ups and downs?

TYRONN LUE: I would never say unfair hand. I would say I've been dealt some bad luck with our two star players. As easy as it is for me to say, We missed... It's harder for those guys. You think P.G. and Kawhi want to be hurt in the Playoffs? I feel bad for though guys because they want to be out there helping their team compete. Unfortunately the last three years we haven't had that.

I feel bad for those guys for putting all the hard work in. Kawhi, the all the dedication he put in from the ACL, coming back, playing his best basketball since January 1st, then for this to happen. I feel bad for those guys.



It is what it is. Like I said, back to the drawing board. Come back next year and hopefully we can have a healthy team.

Q. Beyond the injuries, what sticks with you about the way this season didn't live up to your high expectations?

TYRONN LUE: What else could be? I mean, yeah, our two best players got hurt. Take Steph and Klay off of Golden State, take KD and Booker, Greek Freak. Take the two best players off of any team in the league and see if they can win in the Playoffs. I guess a team is picked to win it.

No letdowns. Like I say, I'm proud of every guy in the locker room, scrap and compete every night. That is all you can ask for when you are shorthanded. You take the two best players off of anybody's team, they're not going to win. I don't care how you look at it. They're not going to do it.

That doesn't mean you can't compete, fight, play hard, play right every single night. Like I said, I really thank our guys for doing that every single night even in tough situations we had to go through.

Bringing Russ here really, really saved our season as far as making the Playoffs, having this run we had in the Playoffs. He really saved us. Hats off to Russ for bringing it every single night.

Q. It's hard to focus on one player, but can you talk about the performance Nicolas Batum.

TYRONN LUE: Nico was great tonight. With his ball pressure on CP, rebounding the basketball, to make some open shots. We had chance to take a lead by one on a three if he would have made it. He missed it. I thought he was great all night.

I thought everybody who played tonight really contributed the best way they could. Like I said, we just got a couple breaks, missed a three, missed layup by Russ that didn't go our way, we lost the game.

Q. On Russ, do you feel validated at all with how well he played, how important he was to this team?

TYRONN LUE: Yes, ma'am.

Q. What do you foresee for him next year with you guys or otherwise?

TYRONN LUE: I think for us, just having a great owner in Mr. Ballmer to let us explore some different things, having a chance and opportunity to get Russ. He was onboard. I know Gillian was onboard. Lawrence and those guys were onboard, so that made it easy.

Usually when I ask for something, they usually try to make sure they get it done. It was huge for us. So I hope everybody can see just different situations, different teams, different situations where guys play differently in different spots.

Hopefully guys can see that Russ still has a lot left in the tank. Hopefully he's back with us next year. Then again, this has opened eyes for a lot of the teams, give him an opportunity if he can go out there and really get paid. But I want him back for sure.

Q. You answered a variation of this earlier.

TYRONN LUE: So why you asking it again?

Q. I am asking a different way.

TYRONN LUE: Asking a different way, but you want the same answer? I'll try.

Q. It has been a long year, personal off-the-court stuff, not a question of commitment, but how hard is it to go through this grind and how committed are you -- that's not the best way to word it - but going through this again next year hoping with better results with injury luck and everything?

TYRONN LUE: Well, for me I think the grind starts with my family. Like I said, having the deaths in my family I had all season long, that kind of was tough situations. For me, like the game has given me everything. I never want to cheat the game.

Sometimes you can make wrong choices as far as not going home to some funerals with family members and staying here. Knowing you lost five games in a row, you don't want to let your team down. A lot goes into it.

For me, it was some tough decisions. If we would have won six in a row, of course I would have gone home. For me, I thought I didn't want to let the team down. Like I said, sometimes it can be too much. Maybe I should have gone home. I don't know.

This game has given me everything, given my family everything. I never really want to cheat the game. When times get hard, that's what people look to their leader to see what you're going to do. Are you going to come out of

this, fold, make excuses. I'm not that type of person. So I can take all the heat. I can take all the criticism. I can take tough times.

When your team sees you go through tough times, you're still in the fight with these guys, that's why they compete hard for me every single night.

Q. I'm sure you've learned a lot about this team over the course of the year. Three new guys in addition to Russ who came in and played big minutes. If there was something you say you had to learn about this team from a roster standpoint, how do you feel that helps for next season?

TYRONN LUE: I think having the training camp, having a training camp and get a chance to understand what we want defensively and offensively. 21 games left in the season, it's tough. It's tough to try different things for those guys to be up to speed, what we do.

Eric Gordon was great for us since he's been here. Toughing it out, playing through a hip injury. He could have gave up. He could have quit. But that's not in his DNA. Those are the guys that we want here to be L.A. Clippers, is guys that want to fight hard, want to compete no matter what the circumstances are.

Being down 3-1, everybody knew he was hurt, but he still wanted to play and give it a go. Mase has been phenomenal for us all year. Bones, I think once he gets a training camp underneath his wings, understands how we play, put in some different plays for him, he'll be a lot better.

It's tough. As tough it is for coaches, it's tough to be a player traded with 21 games left, having to fit in, learn everyone. It's even tougher for those guys.

Q. You talked about decisions you could have made or not made. Are there things you look back on, I wish I could have done that differently this year?

TYRONN LUE: No. Do you think I should have done something different?

Q. No.

TYRONN LUE: You paused.

Probably a lot of things, but I don't know right now. Any time you lose a game, you think about what I could have done differently, what I could have done better. It starts with me first. That's how I look at everything. It starts with me first, then you kind of go down the line.

I mean, probably a lot of things, but I don't know right offhand.

Q. There's been speculation because it's been a frustrating year that you might walk away. You talked a lot about next year. Do you expect to be this team's coach next year?

TYRONN LUE: Yes, sir.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports