

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Russell Westbrook

Postgame Press Conference

Suns 136, Clippers 130

Q. Russ, the kind of year you had, changing teams in the middle of the year, what did this season mean to you?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Man, it started off difficult honestly. I'm so grateful and blessed to end up in a situation where I'm just allowed to be myself, be able to be brought in with open arms, allow me to go out and play and compete. I'm super grateful just for that.

I'm happy and blessed to be able to finish another season. Not the result that myself or nobody wanted, but just for me personally it's been a roller coaster mentally, emotionally. Not just for me, but for my family, for my close ones, even my kids, man. It's a lot of emotions for me honestly.

I'm just grateful to be able to be sitting here, being able to finish the season. I thank God just for allowing me to do so.

Q. Two years ago when you had an opportunity to come to Los Angeles, never asked you about what you thought about the Clippers back then, and now what have you learned from this organization that you didn't know?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: A well, well ran organization from top to bottom. Been in the league a long time. You understand the value of the small things, the staff, the people that they have here to take care of the players day in and day out. It's something that I really noticed since day one.

Not just that, but a happy and enjoyable environment is something that you don't see everywhere. Happy to come to work, being around people that actually enjoy their job, enjoy what they're doing. That's trying to keep all of us as players, not just that, but making sure we have everything we need to be successful on the floor, so...



Q. How hard is it going to be making a decision this summer on what you're going to do next?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: You know what, this will be probably my first time actually in my career being able to make situations, make a decision.

One thing I do tell you is that I love it here. I love the people, just the fans overall embracing not just me but my family and close friends. I know, end of the year, a lot of things have happened, but I'm grateful. I definitely love being here.

As far as making a decision, I guess I'll cross that bridge when I get there. I don't really know my process because it's kind of my first time doing this. So we'll see what happens.

Q. We know you're a family man as well as a man of faith. What will you be focusing on in these next few months?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Those two things never waver, family and my faith. I'll continue doing that. Those things guide me in the direction I want to be in.

As for body and different things of that nature, I'll take a little time off. Just find ways to be able to mentally stay ready, physically stay fit, get my mind ready for next year.

Q. Not everybody makes it to the NBA, but what do you have to say to people who may resonate with your story and what you've been through this season?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: I know it's simple, but if you are a person of faith, I lean a lot on my faith, understanding that everything happens for a reason. With that, even when the bad things happen, understanding that there is a light at the end of the tunnel regardless of how hard it may seem in the moment.

Understand that the people you have around you are very important. I've got an amazing, amazing support staff. My wife, my mom, my dad, my brother, my friends, people that actually love and support me, genuinely care about me. So many other people I can name around the world, the league, that supported me since day one.



Having that kind of support always kept me going regardless of how bad it may be. I always take things as a positive. Any time negativity is getting brought up, made-up narratives, I know who I am as a man, as a person. People who know me know who I am. I keep my head forward, stay focused on the goal at hand and keep embracing the moment.

Q. What enabled the Suns to do what they did in the third quarter? A lot of teams would have given up after that third quarter. What does that say that you fought back?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: It says a lot, just the culture of our team, our guys. Suns a tough team. They're going to be a tough team to beat. Had a great third quarter. Throughout the whole fourth quarter, we stuck with our principles, kept fighting.

It just showed you how much and how important guys care about the next person next to them. Kept competing, didn't give up on any plays, give ourselves a chance.

Q. What do you think you've proven this year?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: I think I am a player that makes mistakes like anybody else. I miss shots like anybody else. I turn the ball over like anybody else. But I also do a lot of things that a lot of people can't do. I've done a lot of things that people haven't done in this league. With that, it's a healthy balance.

I don't know what scale people put me on. One thing I won't allow, I won't allow other people to put their own expectations on me. What I mean by that is that people around the world, media, sportswriters, fans, they have an expectation of what they think I'm supposed to be doing. But I don't live by that. I live by understanding what my value is, what God has gifted me a gift to be able to play basketball, use this platform for other things.

I'll continue playing the best way I know how to compete and leave it on the floor. When I'm done playing, if people say cool, we appreciate you, and if they say they don't appreciate me, don't matter to me either way.

I'm grateful for an opportunity to be able to play in this league. I never take any day for granted, man. All this wasn't even supposed to happen to me. I grew up in the Hood in South Central L.A. To be able to be here 15 years later, saying I play in the NBA, a blessing for so many people, inspiration for so many people around the world.

I'll continue to keep my head high to continue to inspire

people globally.

Q. When did the peace of mind aspect kick in that I can be me, I don't have to worry about this happening, when did that weight lift off of your shoulders?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Once I got traded immediately, to be honest. From that moment mentally I was in a better place.

Q. The first thing I asked you was about your personal fan base, how supportive they have been. What is your message to the fans?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: Man, just thank you. I can't say enough how appreciative I am of people that support me through ups and downs and understanding that I'm human like anybody else. As human beings, we all make mistakes. We all try our hardest to be the best that we can be. With that, I'm just grateful for the people that support me.

I also want to thank the people that didn't support me. Without them, it wouldn't drive me to be some of the things I'm able to do, as well. I'm grateful for everyone. I'm just thankful to be able to finish the year healthy and grateful, looking forward to next year.

Q. What do you think you can do with Paul and Kawhi with a full season healthy?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: A lot (smiling). I feel like I can really them out, make the game easy for them. I think once I got here, I don't know how many games we played all together, but it started off slow. Took some time. Just helping them make the game easy for them. I know I can make the game, get a whole season, whole camp, whole summer to reevaluate what we want to do as a team. Hopefully can make that happen.

Q. What will you three be capable of doing?

RUSSELL WESTBROOK: We only have one goal, and that will be winning a championship. I think we have all the intangibles to be able to do so offensively and defensively. We can guard anybody when we're all healthy and have a team full of healthy guys. I think we all understand that. I hope Y and P understand that as well.

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