

LA Clippers Media Conference

Thursday, June 22, 2023
Los Angeles, California, USA

Lawrence Frank

Trent Redden

Press Conference

LAWRENCE FRANK: First of all, thanks for your patience staying to the draft and appreciate you coming out. We are extremely excited with the two young men we were able to draft tonight, Kobe Brown out of Missouri, an all-SEC player, someone that checks the boxes we look for. We start with the mental makeup, his competitiveness, toughness, high work rate, loves to play, has got great plane to play the position. He's a skill guy. He's able to pass and shoot.

He made huge improvement in his three-point shooting this year, that was the big thing, and style of play change. He was fortunate to play for two terrific college coaches in Quantum Martin and Dennis Gates. Coach Gates plays more of an open, I call it a Princeton-offense-on-steroids-type of approach, five out. Really, really took advantage of Kobe's strengths and his size and the ability to play different front court positions. So you saw they would put him in different actions, pick-and-rolls, ball skills on the NBA level, I think we'll see the ability to drive out, close out, be a connector, again, his shooting, to be able to shoot 42 percent from three.

Defensively they switched one through five. Now, it's a different level as good as the SEC in terms of going to the NBA but you saw his smarts. Trent and I were fortunate to take him out to dinner during the draft process and spent time with him. Terrific, terrific young man from Huntsville, Alabama, played for his dad who was his high school coach. So we were really, really excited to add Kobe to our group.

I'll pass it off to Trent to talk about Jordan Miller.

TRENT REDDEN: Jordan graduated University of Miami after starting George Mason where Jason and our staff first noticed him. At University of Miami, he obviously played for Jay Larranaga's dad, our assistant coach, and so we knew what kind of character the kid was at a high level, and then the style of play that he played, the ability to pass,



make decisions off the bounce, and be competitive in the ACC in terms of raising the level of a team that went to its first Final Four this past year, the Sweet 16 the year before. He's won every step of the way and really attracted us to him and we're lucky to have him in the fold as well as Kobe.

Q. Trent, I guess, these two younger guys on a much more veteran team, wants to win now, how do these two fit in?

TRENT REDDEN: Well, I think team building will -- I mean, having good, young players is always critical. I think even more so as we enter this new CBA and with some of the restrictions of the second apron that it's going to be very, very important to get good players on good contracts.

We build our team around our two stars, but you have to have complimentary skillsets, and so it's very, very important for these guys to play well, to earn T-Lue's trust so they are able to get minutes, and we also know because we do have a lot of good players and very fortunate to have a great G-League coach in Paul Hewitt and we are seeing investment of guys like Terance Mann, Amir Coffey, Brandon Boston, Mousse Diabate, Jason Preston and now for those guys, you know, especially for guys like some of our young guys, it's an opportunity for them to hopefully compete for rotation spots, and Kobe and Jordan the same process.

I think also their versatility. The more positions you can guard and the more positions you can play, it gives you more chances to get in the game, and I think both those guys will come in here and do everything in their power to make a lot really positive impression their on the coaching staff and team mates.

Q. Kobe and Jordan in the same draft.

TRENT REDDEN: That's pretty good.

Q. So when you look at these young guys, guys that you mentioned as young players, there's only so many spots and you're seeing to giving some guys an opportunity to get minutes and getting opportunities and everything, with Kobe and Jordan, where does that start next month? Where would you like to see



**those guys focus on specifically and possibly I am
playoff between now and training camp?**

LAWRENCE FRANK: A lot of it, again, is with T-Lue, the coaching staff and the player development staff is, we'll get the guys in here pretty quickly for Summer League practice.

And we spent some time, you know, a good couple weeks and we started to put together an individual development plan, and it's total 360. It's not just on court but off the court. I think for both those guys, usually the speed of the game is usually the biggest adjustment.

But also, getting in the best shape of your professional lives because you're going against the best of the best. So I think for both those guys, that will be critical.

And then learning T-Lue's system and the great thing is, like our Summer League team we're coached by Donte Jones, so it's great opportunities for our coaching staff to be able to take elevated roles.

I always love when the assistant coach becomes a head coach because the empathy they have for the head coach when they realize how incredibly hard of a job it is, but also for our young players; they get an opportunity to learn from the beginning of what it takes to be a pro.

Q. I know you guys touched on what you want to see from them but maybe these guys, coming into the league -- they won't be asked to score right away, what do you want to see from them to help impact the game when the ball is not in their hands?

TRENT REDDEN: I think what they both share is high basketball IQ. They both got to play a good amount in their systems in college, so they served as connectors and glue guys already, even though they scored. Their defensive versatility that L touched on and their overall competitiveness. I think all three of those, if they can show that at the level we saw, seeing them in college at the summer league level that would be the first step to eventually get to a place where they could help us.

Q. Is there any sentiment of one of them potentially going two-way to a G-League team?

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think at the appropriate time, we'll get into that, just out of respect to the contract process.

Q. We haven't seen you since the end of the season.

LAWRENCE FRANK: How happy are you? That's why it's all smiles, man.

Q. Is there any update on how Kawhi is doing?

LAWRENCE FRANK: He had a clean-up procedure done beginning of June, right around June 6, just to clean up. Went terrific. Very, very quick procedure. He'll be -- he feels great. Talked to him and he feels great. It's an eight-week recovery from the time of surgery where you're back on the court playing, like if it was a game.

But yeah, so we're very fortunate that it was just a quick little thing.

Q. Do you expect him to be full go for training camp?

LAWRENCE FRANK: A hundred percent, yeah.

Q. The plan was to build around Kawhi and PG, is that still the plan?

LAWRENCE FRANK: It's still the plan. What we are trying to do is how can we put together the best team around these guys and, you know, we look at the different things, what worked, what hasn't worked, the job that we have to do better, the job that we challenge our players to continue to do better, but yeah, that's where we're trying to maximize these two and figure out ways that we can get better.

Q. When you guys talk about younger -- what strides have to between now and training camp, to go towards that goal?

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think in team building, the draft is just one part of the process. We'll have free agency. That starts in a week. Then there will be different opportunities in terms of looking for different avenues that will make the team better, and we'll be very intentional about our goals, and look, sometimes you're able to achieve many of your goals prior to training camp. Sometimes it's going to be something you have to do along the way.

Trent has said this since the time we started to work together; that the team you have in June isn't necessarily the same team you had in February and the same team you had in April.

So it's a methodical process. The group does a great job with their planning and preparation. You try to identify targets. Sometimes you can obtain those guys. Sometimes you can't.

I think it's still the same. We are looking for a better balance between guys in their pre-prime and on the other side of it, I think that's important. So we'll continue to work

hard and try to find the best fits.

Q. What's the conversations with those guys, Kawhi and Paul, in terms of understanding what y'all are trying to do -- and beyond that, what's been the dialogue with those guys this off-season since y'all cleaned out lockers?

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think you're very transparent in terms of what the plan is in the near term and also long term. Like how will we build this and how will it be sustainable. The new CBA, we talked about it when we got together. It's going to change the way you build teams.

It's important to share things, the way we see it, listen to what those guys see, and try to work through it together and build a team that every year has the chance to compete for a championship.

Q. What's been the feedback that you've got from them?

LAWRENCE FRANK: Those guys have been terrific. I think they are disappointed with the way our season ended. They are disappointed that they couldn't finish the season. You know, with both those guys, they take unbelievable pride in trying to do something that's never been done here as Clippers, and so it's incredibly frustrating for them, especially not to be on the floor, to be able to do -- you know, what they came here for.

Sometimes we forget, you know, we see the brilliance of two great basketball players, but we forget the emotions behind it, and there's a great deal of emotional fatigue and pain of not being able to deliver because your body lets you down at the worst possible moments.

So those guys are very determined. They are great workers. We are fortunate. Our two best players, they like, appreciate and respect each other, and their teammates like and respect them. We will continue to do a better job in all areas, how we can get better, and hopefully we get some better fortunate; that at least we see where we're at, you know, because this is a very competitive league.

I think one of the lessons that we learned and we talked about it when we sat down last time, is the importance of those every day habits. I mean, Denver was the best team in the Western Conference for basically the entire year and they proved to be the best team in the world.

Q. Do you expect to sign both Kawhi and Paul to extensions this summer, and also is length an issue, because you mentioned the CBA.

LAWRENCE FRANK: It's premature because Kawhi is -- I think he's a July extension, and Paul is September. We do talk kind of what the plan is, but we really can't get into those specifics until the appropriate date. And you know, we'll just have the dialogue and just have very, very honest and open conversations and see if there's something that makes sense for all sides.

Q. The last time we talked to you, you said that you guys hope to re-sign Russ. Different point guard options have come and gone since then. Is that still the hope to bring him back?

LAWRENCE FRANK: Very much so. Now, Russ is a agent and he gets to choose, as he's shown. He did a phenomenal job during his time with the Clippers. He's obviously had a Hall of Fame career, one of the top 75 of all time. We want Russ back, but also respect the fact that he's a free agent and has a rate to choose but hopefully we can keep him a Clipper.

Q. What more can you tell us about guys that you considered and guys who might be joining the team in summer camp, training camp, anything like that?

TRENT REDDEN: Jason Piombetti, John Loyer, Matt Morales who runs the G-League team are literally working through that right now. They haven't gotten anybody locked up, but it might be literally when I get back we have one or two done, so I will that answer to you when I can.

Q. You've been in the front office for six years and now that you've had an opportunity to take that next step, the benefit of being in the front office and having all kind of different roles, you being a GM now, what does that mean for how you approach things, I know you can say you've been with Lawrence and Mark for a while, but like, I'm sure things change when you're in this role. How are you approaching it right now?

LAWRENCE FRANK: Honestly right now, this group, luckily, as you pointed out, has been together, and so it's leaning on Judd and Matt and Greg and their group to continue to do the things that they have done. Mike did a great job in setting them up and helping them learn and grow, and they are ready to do a little bit more.

So leaning on them, Jason and John, our two directors on the scouting side are ready to do a little bit more. Hopefully I've done my job going into it of giving them more as we have gone along; that everyone is just ready to step into the next role. I've been fortunate enough to be with some really good people that taught me things, and I think we've gotten to a great place here that we are always going to miss Mike, but he helped put us in place, and with

the group that we have here that we are fortunate to be able to step forward hopefully without him.

Q. I know you don't want to speculate on any contract discussion with Ty, but potentially going into final year with a coach, curious what the commitment level is to him beyond just this year as the coach?

LAWRENCE FRANK: We love Ty and want Ty to be the head coach here for a long time. We don't get into -- obviously there's a lot made of extension conversations but just out of respect to all of those conversations, those are private. But we love Ty. Ty is a terrific coach. As you know, he has gifts that very few have.

So he's an unbelievable connector with people. He sees the game in real time like few others. Obviously many have acknowledged that he's probably the best in terms of in-game adjustments. And so all of those things will kind of take care of themselves at the appropriate time but it doesn't change the way we feel about T-Lue

Q. Any concern about that weighing on him during the season, coaching through that?

LAWRENCE FRANK: No, because again, without getting into contract terms, it's not like he's in the last year, so to speak.

Q. Will you still be active in trades?

LAWRENCE FRANK: Trent has been a lead voice since he's come here. The way we do things is this is a team approach. It's very collaborative. Trent made reference to how our group is. We don't deal in silos.

When I made the transition from coaching in the front office, one thing I learned is I don't know anything so I'd better go hire the best of the best and let them do their jobs, and so I was very, very fortunate with Trent, with Mark, with Michael, with all the guys we have. Obviously Trent and Mark are going to be taking on bigger roles.

As Trent referenced, we have a bunch of guys, Judd, Craig -- I can keep going on and on, but we have a deep group and we are really fortunate because we have an unbelievable chairman who was given us great resources to be able to attract top talent, and the thing that kind of, for me, is one of the more prideful moments that I had this season was when Michael left, like I had -- it was this, okay. We already got in terms of Trent was up, Mark was up, everyone was up.

It was an awesome feeling to have such great talent internally that all we had to do was just move everyone up

a notch, and everyone is able to really, really take advantage of the growth opportunities. So it's been great to be a part of.

Q. The point guard spot and power forward spot, productivity out of that power forward spot, are those two positions you're looking beyond that? What are you looking at those two positions, power forward and point guard?

LAWRENCE FRANK: Trent and I have been talking about this, and I think there will come a point in time where we no longer say point guards, forwards.

Basketball's changed. To me, and it doesn't have to be this way: You have a point, you have wings and you have a big. The great thing about Kawhi and PG, they can play up, they can play down. Both Marcus and Cof had some highs in the season and both had some lows, and then Terance's versatility is what makes him so special.

And one of the great things about coming to work every day from the time you come into the building, early, early in the morning, I'm saying like 5:00 in the morning, you will see our players, and you will see Jason Preston, you'll see Brandon Boston, you'll see Terance Mann, you'll see Nicholas Batum, 6:00 a.m. every day and then guess what at night, coming back, 8:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m., it's awesome to see these guys work.

And my point is they love basketball so much that if you do have positional size to transplant that IQ and quick processing speed, and dribble, pass and shoot, you're going to find your way on the basketball court regardless of what the position is.

Q. With respect to that, Ty said that you guys would prefer playing traditional point guard. That's why I asked, is that someone you already have on the roster? Because Ty did say he prefers to play a traditional point guard.

LAWRENCE FRANK: I think, yes, in the sense that what I would say is the great thing about Ty is he is highly adjustable. The term traditional point guard refers to tradition. We've seen them.

Yeah, what we are looking for is who can initiate an offense that can get the ball to Kawhi and PG in their spots, who can push tempo, play with pace, who can run pick-and-roll and make pick-and-roll reads.

Now, that's a traditional point guard. I think we saw with Russ, Russ can make passes that some of our other guys can't make. But I think the more guys that can initiate, we

talked about this before, you look at the teams beating us, they don't all have a traditional point guard. In fact, I would challenge you to say very few do. They play to their best players. Point guard of the Nuggets is probably Jokic. Jamal Murray is quote, unquote the point guard. Golden State, like Steph is one of the all-time great but you could argue Draymond is the trigger. For Miami, Gabe Vincent starts at the point but Bam is the trigger man.

So I think you have to play off your best players and play to their strengths, but I think with Ty, we are trying to do everything we can to get the players that he likes and I think Ty also does a great job of like, hey, front office is trying their best but I'm also going to be flexible and adaptable. We have good players and I'm going to do my best to take advantage of their abilities.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.