

# LA Clippers Media Conference

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## Norman Powell Mason Plumlee Press Conference



**Q. Everybody talks about offense in the game, but I want to talk to you guys about defense. Do you feel like you guys are going to be one of the top teams as far as defense is concerned?**

NORMAN POWELL: I think so. I think the guys that we have, the guys that we brought in I think you're able to see a little bit in the Playoffs against the Suns when PG and Wai eventually went out, were able to battle with them, and it wasn't because of our offense.

It was guys were able to buckle down and play defense, be on a string out there communicating and getting the stops we need against a fully loaded Suns team.

So to have the guys back in and really -- like Mason and Bones and Russ being able to get the technology down and know the rotation, it's kind of hard to pick up on the fly, especially late in the season. But getting them into the fold and having training camp where they can get fully acclimated is going to take our defense to another level.

**Q. You guys are adding to the team depth from a scoring standpoint, from a big standpoint. How can this team build off of what you guys are starting to try and build at the end of last season?**

MASON PLUMLEE: I think just by coming in, having a good training camp and taking it day by day. It wasn't as far as we wanted to go last year, but like Norm said, I think it showed some depth, considering those two guys went out in the Playoffs and we were right there in the game.

It's something to build on, and we look forward to taking the first step this week.

**Q. I've been asking this of the guys that have come up so far, but given how long this team has been together, does this feel like a championship best year for you guys? Do you approach it with that mentality? And if**

**not, how do you approach it?**

NORMAN POWELL: I think the focus is the focus on the season. We can't look at the contracts and say championship or bust. You can't put that pressure on you because it's a lot of outside noise to it.

Our biggest goal is always to win a championship. With the roster that has been constructed over the years I feel like we've always had a shot and had a chance. You just get hit with unexpected injuries. That doesn't allow you to go into a postseason with your team fully healthy, and it happens a lot with different teams.

But our main focus as players, as coaches, is the focus on the season and the games that we have to play and doing the things and laying the foundation to get us to where we want to be, and the contracts and things like that will take care of itself when the time comes for that to happen.

**Q. For both of you guys, what excites you the most about this upcoming season?**

MASON PLUMLEE: A lot of things. I mean, personally I had a great experience with this group post-trade deadline. Looking forward to the in-season tournament. Looking forward to just the group that was brought back this off-season.

There's so much to look forward to. But again, like I said, we're just looking forward to training camp and making the most of that.

NORMAN POWELL: Yeah, I think the in-season tournament, kind of excited to see how that unfolds and what that looks like. I think that new addition is going to add a lot more eyes and people tuned in, adding another layer to what the NBA is doing like they did with the play-in tournament.

I'm just looking forward to getting out and competing with these guys and continuing to build that brotherhood, that chemistry, that these guys have brought to the team. Mase is bringing that experience; Russ has done a great job of bringing the guys together and showing his leadership and how much he cares for the team. Mase coming in and fitting in, sacrificing and buying into the



roles, that's what we need. When you have veteran guys coming in and sacrificing, giving themselves up and showing them how much they care and how much they want to win, it makes you eager to get out there and compete and play.

**Q. You mentioned the mid season tournament. This is a question for both of you. It's hard for, I think, fans to kind of really wrap their head around the mid-season tournament because there is no history yet. That could certainly happen. From a player's perspective, honestly, when you see a tournament and a prize to be won in December, I know the competitive juices flow. Tell me honestly, how have you viewed the in-season tournament? Do you look at the schedule? Did you try to figure out how that's going to be? Do you even understand it? Are you guys fired up about it?**

NORMAN POWELL: I don't fully understand it. I know something about every game on Thursday or something. I don't know, it goes against the record for it or points. I guess I'm excited to see how it's going to work out. I think that is what is going to draw people's attention. There's no history for it, but since it's so brand new, people are eager to understand it and figure out how it's going to work and what team is going to be the last two standing fighting for that prize.

That's my take on it. Like I'm just interested to see how it's going to unfold and how it's going to work.

MASON PLUMLEE: It's like any board game. You just start playing and then everybody figures it out, right? I think I had Richard Jefferson try to explain it. I love RJ, but once we get into it -- I will say I know what group we're in. We've got a good group, so we're going to have to play well to make it to Vegas.

There's a lot of skepticism or uncertainty, but once you're in it, like at the end of the day we all compete, we're competitors, and prize or not, it puts an emphasis on some games that otherwise wouldn't have it. So it's a good thing.

**Q. Norm, you've heard PG, Russ, talk about the community and how much it means to them to be a part of SoCal. You've had a big off-season, a part of a community. What does it mean to have the support of the Clipper fans and being back home, because a lot of people forget you're from SoCal?**

NORMAN POWELL: It means everything to me. Giving back to the community, being a part of a community. I wouldn't be here without them. The things that I learned growing up, my mom was a big believer in giving back and saying that it takes a village to raise a child. Seeing all the community and charity work that she's done and continues

to do, especially where I'm from down in San Diego, it's rubbed off on me.

And I always told myself when I made it to where I'm at right now I'd always give back and never forget where I came from and show the kids that you can be successful, that the stereotypes and things that are placed on young African-American males in America can be broken down with the right mentality, the right approach, and the right people guiding you and showing you the way.

And that's my goal here is to continue to pave the path for the next generation to come to show them that they can be successful in anything that they put their mind to. Don't hold back or play smart because other people are placing their doubts or criticisms on you saying that you can't make it or that you can't achieve anything that you want.

**Q. Norm, coming into last season, you talked about having the goal of being the starter, being the Sixth Man of the Year, and you had a great season, especially against Phoenix. Do you have any individual goals on the court this year?**

NORMAN POWELL: I'm simple, man. My expectations are all the same going into the season. My individual goals, being an All-Star. I see myself as that caliber player. That's my mindset. But like I said throughout the course of the year, individual goals are great to achieve, but I never place that above the team's main goal, and that's to win a championship.

So whatever my role is this year, I'm going to go out there and be the best I can in that role to help this team win. I sacrifice everything for that championship. That's what I really want.

But individually, I want to be an All-Star. I see myself as that. I'm not going to change that mentality or approach.

But at the end of the day, I really want another championship, so to be a part of a team to bring another championship to an organization that hasn't won one yet, that's my main goal.

**Q. It feels like so many rosters changed this off-season, whereas you guys brought back pretty much the entire court and stayed pat. Does that continuity allow you guys to do anything in the off-season? I know there was some time in San Diego, kind of a mini camp. Any other events in the off-season where you bring the group back together to bond more or get things going earlier?**

MASON PLUMLEE: Like you said, San Diego was good,



... when all is said, we're done.®

and then we all got together in Vegas I'm sure you guys know about. Russ organized us getting together as players, and that was a really fun trip. Played a little basketball, sent out to dinner, just had fun.

Yeah, and then like guys have been around here for the last month, some of the younger guys longer. Yeah, I think in the NBA anymore, it's hard to have some continuity and bring guys back to have the same staff coming back. Like that's all helpful, and I think something that we'll benefit from.

**Q. What's Russell like as a host?**

MASON PLUMLEE: He's a good host, amazing host.

**Q. Norm, you work hard; that's been established, especially since you've been here. But you also have said that you start seasons slow. We saw that you had to improve from the first few weeks of last season. What are ways that you are going to try and get off to perhaps a better start than you have in previous years?**

NORMAN POWELL: I think honestly just being within myself. I think that's the biggest thing. You have so many goals, so many things you're trying to do, you want to prove and show everything that you've worked on every single game.

So you put a lot of internal pressure on yourself, and a person that does that a lot, especially getting in my own head, and I think that's what kind of holds me back a little bit. Having to find the time to decompress and just let it come to you, I think that's the biggest thing coming into the season, is letting things come to me as they are and sifting through it day by day.

But I'm not going to put any more pressure on myself. I know the guys I'm playing with and the coaching staff, the organization believes in my ability and my skill set and what I bring to the table, so it's going out there and having the confidence and adjusting myself and playing the game that I love and not adding anything extra to it.

**Q. You mentioned Russ; how important is it to have a leader that's that forthright and vocal in pursuit of a championship?**

MASON PLUMLEE: Well, you've won one. I would imagine it's very important. Like I said, he's been great, taking us out in Vegas. I haven't had a teammate do something like that before, so that was really unique.

But I think every group looking to do something significant

needs a voice, needs a leader, and not just from the staff or the front office. I think having an internal one is really important.

NORMAN POWELL: I think having somebody like Russ, I've been with -- I won a championship in Toronto, and Wai is not the most vocal. He shows by his approach and his play.

But having a guy like Kyle Lowry on the team, having a guy like Fred Van Vleet on the team that's vocal and unapologetically him is very important. His approach, his personality, and his competitive drive really rubbed off on the team.

You saw that from day one when we stepped into the facility, his approach with everybody in the organization. Didn't matter if you were a player or if you were working behind the scenes, day-to-day things that nobody sees. He's interacting with everybody, making everybody feel important and special, and you need that.

He's a guy that's going to say what's on his mind, and he's going to hold everybody accountable and hold everybody up.

I think T-Lue and the organization allow him to be him, which is the best thing for us. I think you saw that. So I think everybody is excited to have him around and have him bring that Hall of Fame -- one of the greatest players to have an basketball mindset to the organization and everything is going to elevate us throughout the course of the year.

Because 82 games is a long season. You're going to have ups and downs. But then seeing Russ throughout the course of his career, good games, bad games, 0 for 11, 18 for 25, doesn't matter what it is, he's still him and he still has that same mentality, and that's what we need on this team.

**Q. What does something as simple as having Mason do for you guys in that second unit and overall for the team?**

NORMAN POWELL: I think it's big time, somebody that can actually challenge Zu and give Zu a bunch of different looks. Mase has a very versatile skill set. He's not just a traditional big. You see him pushing the pace, getting rebounds, and not having to play for the outlet. He is pushing the ball up the floor and he able to hit guys in strides, and then you can put him in a bunch of different areas and positions offensively for him to make plays for others, make plays for himself.



He's a threat in multiple ways. He can step out and shoot 15-, 17-footers, threes, as well, and hit guys in the post, guys at the elbow, guys out of the post.

I think his skill set is really good, and then defensively you've seen him switching, guarding guards, guarding bigs. You can put him in a bunch of different coverages because he's mobile, he's athletic. I'm really excited for that. It's going to give Zub a good person to go up against in training camp.

**Q. You joined the last 20 games. I've always viewed you from afar and it was confirmed in my mind that you're a plug-and-play player. You can come in, make an impact, and show all your skill set. Did you feel like you left anything on the table because you weren't comfortable yet, you weren't familiar with anybody yet, that you'd be having a training camp, and obviously with 82 games you'll be able to display it? Did you feel like you left anything on the table?**

MASON PLUMLEE: No. I truly didn't know anything bad coming in last year. But to your point, having a training camp, having a full -- I think maybe from a staff perspective, you can only put in so much with four new rotational guys, so maybe they held back a little bit.

I don't want to speak for them, but yeah, just having -- in-season moves are tough for anybody. It's tough for the players that are there, the ones coming in, the staff to integrate them.

Yeah, I just think -- to me it's an underrated move to move the continuity back coming into the season, and I applaud the front office and the decision makers in that effort.

**Q. Mason, the fans took a liking to you pretty quickly when you put on that Clipper jersey. I'm wondering if you've heard some nicknames you've been getting.**

MASON PLUMLEE: They've been great. The fans here are great and I've really enjoyed my short time here, and I look forward to having a great year here. It's been fun to be welcomed like that and appreciated.

**Q. For myself personally, how do you guys prepare physically as well as mentally for the season, for day-to-day routine? What's your schedule like? I know it can be hectic.**

NORMAN POWELL: Well, I have a pretty intense off-season schedule. I work out three times a day five days a week, sometimes six. That's the physical component of it.

But I also have a health coach a mental health coach. I also see a therapist for my mentality and my mental health. Because, one, you have a lot of pressure on us to go out and perform for a full season, but we also deal with a lot of things off the court, being the ones that have to look out for your family and friends and you take on some of their problems, as well, and trying to sift through and figure that out.

I have a lot of different things in place that help me prepare every single night, different routines that I do, different self-reflecting reflections that I do, day in and day out, not only on my game but just how I'm feeling, and that goes on throughout the summer, throughout the course of the season.

MASON PLUMLEE: It's a good question, and I appreciate everything Norm said because I think especially at this stage in our careers, like the physical part, you know how to lift, how to get in shape, but the mental part is -- I know a lot of people are talking about it now, but you do have to take proactive measures to make sure that we're staying fresh throughout the season, so that in February and March you're still putting your best effort into the game.

A lot goes into that. Like he said, people don't know what you have to manage outside of just playing, and if you aren't taking care of yourself mentally, you're never going to be the best you can be on the floor.

They have good support here, and we take advantage.

**Q. People can be extremely harsh, especially on social media. Do you read those comments, or during the season do you just try not to log on? What is your approach to that?**

NORMAN POWELL: Well, I got on Twitter years ago. My marketing team runs that.

But I kind of laugh at it now. I think one thing that -- fans are part of it and they want us to win. They want us to play well, as well, but nobody wants us to play or have our best performance and help this team more than us. We put our team in. We commit ourselves and dedicate ourselves to the game. So we're not going out there trying to miss lay-ups, trying to miss shots, trying to blow assignments. Just things happen.

But I think it was really important for the game to expand and grow, but it's definitely tough, but definitely having a strong mind and taking from it what you want. Me, now I laugh at a lot of the comments, and I found the shift, because I used to use them as motivation, but those can also be detrimental to you when you're reading it a lot. You

can find it hard to differentiate like what is motivation and what's actually bothering you.

I've worked through that aspect of it, but now I just laugh at it and kind of respond with a little crying face emoji or whatever. But yeah, I find like my little outlets in that, as well.

MASON PLUMLEE: Yeah, I don't check it. Like earlier in my career I would look at that stuff. Similar to him, I don't manage my own stuff anymore. I just remind myself, it's a different fan that's criticizing online than the one that's coming to the arena. To me, fans are smart. Like they have a feel for the game.

I've been on teams, if they're booing you in an arena you've got to play better. That's real to me. But if you go online you can find a critic if you want to. You can find somebody applauding you if you want to. It's not the same fan.

To me, I am in tune with who's in the arena. Not that that's motivation or whatnot, but we appreciate the people that come out and support in addition to all the stuff online.

NORMAN POWELL: Not just the box score watchers.

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