

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Paul George

Press Conference



Q. Let's talk a little bit about the little one here. First of all, and how the little one has helped to change your life absolutely for the better now?

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, you know, he's my youngest of three, and for me, it's now legacy. Obviously my girls are girls. They're not as sporty, which I've got to live with, but the good thing and the beauty about having a boy, he's all about sports.

For me, it's continuing on the legacy of hopefully the older he gets, the more he understands how my impact in basketball has been and sports in general in my life and just being able to share that with him now.

When I step on the court I know who I'm playing for now and what impact I'm making.

Q. Take me back to 2018 and 2019 playing alongside Russ. I remember reading comments in real time that you had to change your conditioning playing with Russ. What else changed about your game? That was one of your best years, if not your best year. What do you remember that Russ was able to bring out of you and that he might be able to bring out the rest of this extremely talented team that you guys have?

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, you know, what I enjoyed and what I loved most about Russ off the court, and it carries on to on the court, was just his approach. Talk about somebody that you know on a nightly basis you're going to get his full-on 100 percent effort, if not 120, 130 effort. He's always going to give everything he has.

It was nice knowing that, especially in the dog days where you're just not feeling it. Might be under the weather, might be tired, might be achey. Whatever it is, those excuses wouldn't allow it to creep in just because the energy he brought on a nightly basis, and it was just contagious to see him -- there would be times where I'd be like, I know you're tired, especially playing with him, and those were triple-double days where he was getting those on a nightly

basis.

He was just doing so much, but yet he just always had energy. So who am I to be like, hey, I'm feeling it today, or I'm tired. It just changed the mindset every time I stepped on the court, and I think that's just what he brings to this team. I think that's his value and why I really wanted him here so much.

That goes a long ways. It's not necessarily everything he does on the court. That stuff leaks on to off the court where he's so contagious, he's infectious, his energy, his communication. Just the way that he values that team camaraderie, the leadership. It just means a lot. He has a ton of value in this organization.

Q. At what point this summer coming off the injury against OKC did you feel like you were back to being 100 percent?

PAUL GEORGE: Probably a couple months after we were removed from the Playoffs and our season was over with.

It took a couple months of starting to feel better, starting to trust my legs, starting to trust working out again. That whole time I was thinking that I was going to have a chance to come back and tried to give myself every chance to come back, but hindsight being realistic there was no way I was going to be able to return, regardless of how hard or how much work we did that postseason.

I know it was well-documented, me working out, me being on court, but there was just no chance that I would have been able to return, even if we made it to the Finals. It took a long time for me to get over the hump.

I made big steps, big strides, but all the way up until the end of like June, July is where I was on the court and had no fear of hurting myself.

Yeah, it took a while. The injury took a long time.

Q. Earlier we were talking about the league's new stance on wanting the top 50 players out there every night. I'm wondering if you feel an obligation to play every game?

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, absolutely. It just comes down to the guys that you're out there with and obviously the fans. So yeah, I 100 percent agree with the obligation that you should play.

A lot of stuff that goes into it with injuries and being smart and not trying to play through something that can possibly keep you out longer than what you want to be, but if healthy, absolutely, I'm suiting up and I want to play every night.

Q. If USA asks you, would you play in the Paris Olympics?

PAUL GEORGE: Yes and no. It all depends on how well we do and how far we go this season. That would play a lot into my decision on going and playing over in France.

I would love to. I know Bron is in the forefront of creating a hell of a roster. But that's first and foremost on how my body is, how my health is, to finish the season.

Q. With the special group that you guys have, you, Russ, Kawhi, you being a Southern California guy, how special would it be for your career to be able to bring a title to this Clipper team?

PAUL GEORGE: Oh, completely special, completely special. I think that's what made this so enticing to come here, is the possibility of being the first to bring a title to this LA group. It would be special, especially having Southern Cal guys, myself, Russ, Kawhi, Norm. We know what that feels like. We know how much it would mean to Clipper Nation.

Again, it's just so much of a storyline, going into a new arena, the buzz, and us being a team, I think, a lot of people can relate to, of a grind-it-out unit. It would mean everything to be a part and be connected with these guys forever.

Q. In the finale of your podcast with Steve Ballmer, he talked about wanting the Clippers to be a hot team. How do you help contribute to that, and what does that mean to you?

PAUL GEORGE: Being a hot team? Win games. You know, we've got to help ourselves in that sense of just being available, and win games.

He put together and been backing this team up for a long time now, and we just haven't quite been able to get over the hurdle. Our issue was just being healthy, which says a lot about the roster. When you look at teams that don't have a chance or are not quite all the way there because of

a missing piece or bolstering up the roster, for us it's just remaining healthy.

That's how we can help ourselves, just stay healthy throughout the whole course of the year, and putting it all together when it comes to playoff time.

Q. A little bit of a different question, but as a local guy, how do you feel with this being your final season sharing an arena with the Lakers?

PAUL GEORGE: You know, I'm ready for us to have our own space. I think I can speak for the whole unit and say we're tired of all these early games, and so it would be nice for the schedule to be a little bit in our favor. It's been awesome, growing up a lifelong Kobe fan and what Staples, now Crypto meant to me, and being able to play in that has been awesome.

But that was short-lived now that I've been here for a couple years, and not looking forward to the early games. Again, it'll be nice to have our own space next year.

Q. After the season ended, Coach T-Lue talked about the injuries for you and Kawhi. As you approach this season, what is your message to the non-believers or the people that don't have faith that you two can stay healthy from now until June?

PAUL GEORGE: It doesn't matter what I say today; doesn't matter what I say tomorrow; it's about what we do going forward.

They're going to say what they're going to say. Regardless, if we play 20, 30 games straight, at some point they're going to think, they're not going to finish the year.

It's just, again, about being available, remaining healthy, doing everything we can to take care of our bodies, and we'll address those comments and the naysayers at the end of the year.

Q. Both Lawrence and Ty this off-season have talked about taking the regular season more seriously, as something they're really trying to preach. Lawrence said he felt like there was an intensity or pride that just felt missing last year at times. How do you fix that? Did you see that? How do you diagnose what was missing and how you guys can fix that?

PAUL GEORGE: Yeah, you know, I didn't necessarily like the question of us not taking the season serious. We take the season serious. We go out there and compete and try to win on a nightly basis.

But their approach is that we take practice serious, that we take leading into games serious. But to say that we didn't take the year serious or the season serious per se, we put everything into it.

But now it's doing all the little stuff. We can't cut corners. We've got to take pride in the work that needs to be put in to win a championship.

I think that's more so what he was getting at. I'm all in for that. I've been on the forefront of saying we need to practice more, we need to -- at the end of the day it needs to feel like we've done everything that we could have to get to where we're at and not have any regrets of we could have did this more, could have did that more.

I'm all in. I'm all in with the process of going for a championship this season.

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