

LA Clippers Media Conference

Monday, October 2, 2023
Los Angeles, California, USA

Coach Tyronn Lue

Press Conference



Q. With training camp starting tomorrow, what's priority number one for you guys?

TYRONN LUE: Just being excited to be together. That's our first priority. Just having a chance to start a new season, coming back, having a full roster. Everyone is healthy. Having a chance to have Russ, Bones, and Mase have a full training camp. Also with KJ being here.

So just excited to get together, start the process.

Q. Every year you have all the expectations for your team. What's going to get you over the hump this year?

TYRONN LUE: I think health. I think we talk about health all the time, which is a part of the -- it's part of the NBA, it's part of all sports. Just being healthy, having a chance to finish the season with our guys being healthy. That's the first thing that pops into my mind when we talk about championship expectations, doing things different, just the health of our two best players.

That's what we're focusing on, having that fine line of just making sure we're taking care of our players first but also prioritizing some different things, as well.

I think just health, and let's roll it out there and see where it lies.

Q. Coach, oftentimes over the last several years you see players come back from a Team USA situation and they see a big bump in their play. Some of that might be where they are in their career, but a lot of them attribute that time being with Team USA. How about a coaching standpoint? Is there anything specific that you took from the coaches or even the players that you can maybe apply to a season like this?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, I learned a lot, actually, just having a chance to be in a room with Mark Few and Steve Kerr, Spoelstra, Jeff Van Gundy, Jim Boylen, Jamal Mosley, as

well. It was just a chance to really learn and get better.

Any chance you have the opportunity to be around great coaches and great people to get better and learn, you want to take that opportunity to do that.

I just want to thank Sean, thank Grant Hill, Jim Toomey and those guys for the opportunity, but I really learned a lot, and just kind of seeing how those guys do things, how I can be better in certain areas, and vice versa.

It was a great experience for me. I've never been out of the country that long. I'm not the type of guy that goes out of the country for five weeks, but it was a great experience, and I would love to do it again. It really taught me a lot, a lot about myself.

Talk about the players coming into training camp being in shape, that helped me get my mind in shape to get ready for training camp. I'm ready to go.

Q. This season the league rolled out the new player participation policy. We've got 15 back to backs this season. Would love to hear how you interpret that new policy and maybe some strategies that you're thinking about to get around that.

TYRONN LUE: Not trying to really get around it. If our players are healthy, they're going to play. I know this is a big thing, like our guys don't like to play or whatever, but that's not true. Our guys want to play, and unfortunately they've had injuries.

Just staying healthy but making sure we're doing the right thing by our players to make sure we're not causing any other significant injuries by playing through certain injuries.

If our guys are healthy, they're going to play, and that's all we're really focused on.

Q. When you look at the depth on this roster, sacrifice is a thing that you guys have preached a lot, but it's easy to talk about and harder to do when it comes to you. How do you make sure everyone is on the same page entering this year so there's nothing surrounding the team, you're just focused on one goal?



TYRONN LUE: Our one goal, like you said, is to win a championship. We have a lot of talent on this team, and everybody can play, so it's my job as a head coach to let guys know, keep the communication.

Guys are still not going to be happy if they're not playing because a lot of guys do deserve to play. Coming into last year RoCo deserved to play a little bit more, and that's my fault that I didn't really give him a strong opportunity.

But when you have talent and so much depth it's hard to play everyone. Our guys have to understand that. They don't have to be great with it because they're competitors, but you also have to make sure that you're doing everything as far as the team goes, going in the right direction.

It's going to be a tough situation, but it's part of the game.

Q. About Russ, what does he bring that's the most important? Is it the leadership? Were you guys missing that, that sort of brand of vocal Russ?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, I wouldn't say we're missing leadership. I just think everyone leads differently. Kawhi and PG are more silent leaders and Russ is more outgoing. You mix those three guys together, you have great leadership.

So just bringing him aboard, just seeing how he approaches every single day, practice, shootarounds, games, his approach every day really helped us out.

Q. You have a lot of guys who have been here, end of the season last year here. What's the advantage of having so many familiar faces, and what are you expecting from the few new guys, like KJ and the rookies going into this year?

TYRONN LUE: Our guys have put a lot of work in this summer. Our player development staff led by Shaun Fein and Dahntay, Cookie, Beau, Wes. Those guys have done a great job of getting those young guys in the gym a lot this summer, just making sure they're up to speed.

For us it's good because now we can really hit the ground running. The biggest thing for us has been health over the last couple years, but when everybody has been healthy, we still have the same defensive schemes. Offensively we have continued to add, but having Russ, Mase, KJ, Bones in a full season, full training camp, I think that's going to help us out tremendously.

I'm really excited just to get started, get going. But having the same guys for an extended period of time really helps

you out in the long haul.

Q. Other than health are there any other points of emphasis this off-season that you guys want to improve on the court?

TYRONN LUE: No, just our sense of urgency I think to start camp day one, using every practice, every shootaround to get better and better.

Just hit the ground running. That's our biggest thing. And just having the urgency to know that Game 1 starts, we want to be ready and have everybody to play right away.

Q. I'm wondering specifically about KJ Martin, how you plan on using him this season. Do you see him more as a 3 or as a 4? What have you seen and how can he help this team?

TYRONN LUE: I see him as a basketball player, 3, 4, 5, wherever we can use him. I know in Houston he played a little small ball 5. Just his athleticism, being able to switch, being able to guard different positions, being able to roll to the basket, run the floor. He's a really good passer, can push the ball in transition and make plays.

We just want to get him on the floor just being a basketball player.

Q. Your team is always going to be surrounded by a lot of trade speculation with the kind of championship aspirations you guys have. How do you as a coach, as an administrator, a manager of these players, make sure that you guys are sort of focused on the stuff you're trying to get done in training camp instead of what could happen or what may happen?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, I love our team, the way it's constructed now with a lot of pieces, a lot of versatility, and so our main focus going into camp is this is who we have. We want to focus on that and give it our best shot. That's what we're focused on. Not really focused on trades and the outside noise. We're really focused on the guys that are here in this locker room.

Q. With Kawhi having the ability to slide up and play the 4 and also PG having the ability to slide up and play the 3, do you see a pathway this season to starting Terance along side Russ, PG, Kawhi and Zu?

TYRONN LUE: You're pretty smart. There's a possibility. There's a possibility. Like I said, with our versatility, anything is possible. We're just going to see what makes the most sense and how guys kind of come together and plan and what makes the most sense for our team.

That could be a possibility for sure.

Q. With Zu, we've see marked improvements with him over the years under you. What are you looking for out of him a little bit more this season?

TYRONN LUE: I think to post him a little bit more. I think when he has guys on his back, we should be able to throw the ball into the post and let him go to work. His post-up numbers are really good. He's improved a lot over the last few years.

Just trusting him to make the right play when he gets the ball on the block, which he's done. He's a good free-throw shooter, and then the next step for us is just defensively with him, just being up more on the pick-and-rolls and stuff like that, challenging him to be up more on the pick-and-rolls.

But Zu is great. Whatever you ask him to do, he does. Just continuing to keep developing him and let him get better.

Q. Has KJ's dad been in your ear at all yet?

TYRONN LUE: No, that's my guy. K1 has been my guy. He's been my guy for a long time. Even when he came out of the draft. He stayed with me for a couple months when he first came out in the draft, him and DerMarr Johnson. He's always been a really good friend of mine, so I don't really take all that stuff from Kenyon, but his passion about the game, he was passionate when he played, so he hasn't really said anything.

Q. Last year was challenging on a number of levels, and so when you had this camp and just renewed energy, if you will, coming into this season, where are you at with that? How do you feel like you are refreshed more than you were perhaps when the season ended?

TYRONN LUE: Yeah, I feel good. I think -- I was just talking about the USA Basketball. I think that really got me going, got me motivated to start the season.

When you end the season on -- I know we had injuries and everything, but when you end the season and you don't accomplish your goal of winning a championship, making it to the NBA Finals, you have a lot of time to sit back and reflect on things you could have done different, things we could have done better.

So I think USA Basketball gave me a jolt to get up and get going and get my mind activated and get ready for camp.

Now in the position I'm in right now, I'm ready to go. A lot of times as coaches when we come into camp it takes a little bit of time for you to get going, as well, with everything you want to do and how you want to do it and how you want to impact our team, impact our players.

So having that five, six weeks with USA Basketball has really got my mind going and has got my mind in shape to be ready to start camp.

Q. Given some of the contract situations on the team, the coach, players, whatever, can you approach this season as a championship or bust season?

TYRONN LUE: No, I don't approach it like that. I just approach it as doing everything the right way and putting ourselves in position to be successful, and if you do things the right way every single day, you can live with the results.

You can do everything right and not win. But just doing everything righty think from the coaches, from the players' standpoint, from the organization standpoint of just doing everything the right way and then live with the results. That's our main focus. If we do everything right and if we still don't win a championship, then we can live with those results.

Our main focus is to win. That's what we're here for or we wouldn't be sitting in this situation, but we want to win a championship, so our main focus is that, but I wouldn't say it's a bust if we do everything the right way.

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