

LA Clippers Media Conference

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Nicolas Batum

Press Conference

Q. Nico, earlier this summer there was a tweet that allegedly came from your wife about this being your last year in the NBA. Was that fake, true?

NICOLAS BATUM: I don't know if it's fake, but who knows. It's my last year on my contract, 16 years, so we'll see what happens at the end of the season. I think I've done a lot in the NBA. I'm trying to focus on this season, and we'll see what happens after this season. Maybe I'm going to stay, maybe not. I don't know yet.

But you know, I'll just -- like thinking about what I've got left. All I'm thinking right now is I'm just ready for this year. Really like I'm pumped for this year. I'm really excited for this year and what's ahead for this franchise, that's for sure.

Because we have big goals, like a lot of teams have big goals, and we're really, really ready to achieve that goal. So we'll see what happens at the end of the season. We'll see what happens.

Q. Nico, we talked about this time last year, variety of leadership that the team had and the team that -- and the leadership that you provided. There was Reggie Jackson, all these guys. Talk to me about Russ' leadership and how that is different from what is already here.

NICOLAS BATUM: You know, it's his energy is insane. We know he's going to bring it every single day. Not talking about game, like day. Like practice, playing, like everything. He's going to bring an energy.

He's one of the best players ever. It's what he's been doing since he got to the NBA, so when he came, he's really committed like for everything he's doing for this franchise. You have to follow him. That's huge for us.

Q. Nico, I wanted to know if you were competing for the starting 4 spot. Are you more comfortable coming off the bench? Where do you see your role this year?



NICOLAS BATUM: You know me; I don't care. Whatever they want me to do. I mean, my philosophy as a player is whatever Coach wants me to do I'm going to do it. If he wants me to come to start, I'm going to start. If he wants me to play the point guard, I'll play the point guard. Big man, off the bench, that's not my job, that's his job to decide that. I just want to go out there and compete and play as hard as I can in practice and games.

If he wants me to start, fine, I'll start. If he thinks it's better for the team for me to come off the bench, I'll come off the bench, as will. I don't really care. I want to compete for sure. I want to push my guy and go hard in practice and make sure I give everything I have for the sake of the team. That's for sure.

But if I want to do something for myself, I don't really care about that. All I want to do is do something on the court for the good sake of the team. That's what matters to me.

Q. I've been asking the guys, and I'll ask you, as well, given the contract situation of this team, how long you guys have been together, do you feel like this is a championship-or-bust year? Is that the right mentality to approach, or is there a different kind of approach you take into the season?

NICOLAS BATUM: I think it's pretty much what you guys thinks that happened in 2019. I don't think something changed since. Going into the fifth year, I don't think something changed. It was the theme last year, so we know what we have to do. We know what we have, like what we'll face. That's for sure.

All we have to focus on is we know we can do it, we just have to find a way to finally do it. That's it.

Q. I remember you mentioned your first year at the Clippers that were fresh because you barely played your last year in Charlotte. Now that you are in your 16th year, you've played probably more than anybody else on this team since you've been here, except maybe T-Mann and Zu. How are you preparing your body and your mind for another grind of a season, given all the things that this team winds up asking you to do year in and year out?



NICOLAS BATUM: I don't know. Just preparation. Just preparation.

I've been lucky to be healthy since I got here pretty much. Played the game as much as I can. Like I said, when T-Lue calls my name I try to go out there and give everything I have.

This year is going to be the same. I don't really care about what happened the last two years, if I played too much or no. I've just got a chance to be on an NBA roster, and a good one, and compete for something. It's the best thing for me, so I just go out there and play, and if I play, I don't care how much minutes I play. I just want to go out there and play with my team and win games.

Q. Last week when we met with Lawrence, he said that he felt like everyone on this roster and in the front office and just everyone felt like coming off last year there was a lot to prove this year. What do you feel like is there to prove? The championship stuff speaks for itself, the pursuit of that, but what do you feel like this team has to prove to people?

NICOLAS BATUM: It's weird because last year when we were in the same spot we were talking about like we're the favorite, and they're not really talking about us that way this year. I think that could be a good thing.

As you say, something to prove because I don't think people probably care about it. That's on us now. We're going to start training camp, like okay, guys, what do you want, what do we want, and that's going to be between us. Like in those words, between us. We're going to be together because it'll be us against the world for sure.

We know we have a chance to do it, but we saw last year, you can have a good roster, have a good training camp and then not make it because some stuff happened during the season. So we'll see what happens this year.

Q. You went from playing a season, playing for FIBA, now this season, probably Paris. Do you have to pace yourself as you go through all these games and the training that you bring to the NBA? Do you have to pace yourself and balance yourself, when you work out, all that stuff?

NICOLAS BATUM: You have to be smart. I try to be smart with it, but when you have a chance to play -- besides one of my last time in Charlotte I got a chance to play like every game, meaningful time, so like I say, I didn't play basketball for four years as a pro; I played between 15 and 20 years.

When I get a chance to play as much as I can I'm going to do it. And I just want to enjoy the high and lows for sure, but I don't really focus on if I'm tired or not or if I play too much or not. I mean, I'm playing. A bunch of guys wants to get like minutes and they don't get it. I'm playing, so I'm not complaining about it.

You can't be tired and complain because you play too much when guys don't only want opportunities to play. I won't complain about that. Other stuff for sure, but not this. (Smiling).

Q. You said earlier last season that it could take some time, there was a lot of stuff in flux for that team to gel, and you mentioned December. Do you feel like coming into this season there's more continuity coming off of last year where you guys can hit the ground running a little bit more?

NICOLAS BATUM: Yes, for sure. Last year I say that because guys like Kawhi and PG missed a lot of time. Kawhi missed the off-season, so you can't really miss one year and be really 100 percent from Game 1, so that's why I said that last year.

But this year is different. I think we're all healthy, we're all good. Now we have the first mini camp with Russ and Mason, as well. It's going to be easier than last year. I know people are going to have expectations from us, also, like one of those teams, but I think we have like 10 teams this year who want to compete for the highest prize, maybe more. At least 10.

That's good because we start something last year, we saw it, now we just need to really find a good groove, a good rotation. That's the coaching job. It won't be easy, but that's their job, and we're going to be okay.

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