

# NBC Sports Group Media Conference

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**Noah Eagle**

**Dwyane Wade**

**LaChina Robinson**

Press Conference



time together, be around each other in a place that we feel is very charming and have very great people that really helped us accomplish all the things we needed to.

I feel like on the court, these teams are doing an incredible job. Not obviously having a lot of time to prepare or even spend together, have been doing an incredible job game by game of meeting the challenge. I think that's the biggest thing. Each game presents its own challenge and they've done an amazing job of meeting the challenge.

As someone who has played in the Olympics before, now getting to this part, getting to the Paris portion of the program, now is really about locking in even more. It's about locking into the small details even more than before. You get a little bit more serious about it as you get closer to now smelling the weekend coming where a gold medal game is on Saturday. But also not looking over and looking past anyone.

And obviously Brazil is our first for U.S.A. But not looking past anyone. And the coaching staff that was put together is going to make sure of that. And the leaders like LeBron and KD and others will make sure.

So really excited for the guys understanding the feeling that's going on in their minds right now as they prepare with their families started coming in more, with everybody in the U.S. is probably now going to tune in a little bit more as it gets a little closer. Just really exciting time for basketball and really exciting time for sports.

LACHINA ROBINSON: I echo Dwyane and Noah's sentiments on Lille. Had a really good time there. It's crazy how fast the two weeks went. But the energy for the game of basketball was felt through every game that we called.

On the women's side, I know that Noah spoke to this earlier, but the Belgium game was just one of the best environments I've ever been in as an analyst, and I've been doing this for 17 years. And it makes me excited for what we will see now in Paris.

And just thinking about the United States and their journey to this point, there's a lot of pressure for a team that's won seven straight gold medals and is going for eight.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Noah Eagle, Dwyane Wade and LaChina Robinson.

NOAH EAGLE: I want to say how much of a blast we had week one in Lille -- and a huge shout-out to Lille for the hospitality, both accommodations and all the way through the Games. We had a great time and the crowds were off the charts from day one all the way through.

But very excited to be back in Paris. And I think the arena will be bursting with a lot of energy on both the men's and women's side. We have great teams that made it through from the quarterfinals all the way on. The United States the headliner for both, claiming the number one seeds for both sides. The men have looked incredibly strong and the women have dominated the competition.

But the fun part on the women's side, despite going for eight straight gold medals and having a 58-game Olympic winning streak, there were some tests. That includes Belgium who brought a lot of fans and did advance as the third team in the group. Germany, they played yesterday, and that was kind of a back and forth affair, certainly in the first half. They bring a lot of WNBA talent. And then you have the host country in France who will bring the juice and despite a tough loss last night against Australia, should still pose a threat later in the tournament.

On the men's side, a French team that has a lot of NBA talent. And we've seen them at their top level is going to be a challenge. They get Canada right off the bat. And we're excited to see what that looks like. Then you've got Germany who is playing incredibly well. So we expect there to be some really great match-ups, and we're just excited to be here for it.

DWYANE WADE: As Noah said, being in Lille, gave all of us the time as a team to be able to -- this is my first time doing this -- it gave us time as a team to be able to spend



You wouldn't know it with the camaraderie that they have, the support that they have for each other. I've been at practices and got to see the steps that they have taken every game, every moment, to build their chemistry, to build their trust. We've seen that improvement over these three Games.

I agree that they have been challenged. There have been some moments that I'm sure Cheryl Reeve wished were more smooth in terms of the team's chemistry and playing at the level that they're capable of, but there's a lot of star power coming together trying to accomplish one goal. And everyone's got to take on a different role and be willing to sacrifice a part of their game for what's most important, and that's goals.

Obviously Breanna Stewart and A'ja Wilson have been phenomenal in showing why they're two of the best players in the world. But one of the storylines to watch is how the backcourt is developing.

Diana Taurasi comes in with five gold medals going for her six and she's a veteran. She's played at the highest levels in the world. But this is her last as she has said. She's passing the torch to the next generation. We've seen some impressive performances from Jackie Young. Sabrina Ionescu has gotten a chance to make her mark internationally. Kelsey Plum, the list goes on and on. Alyssa Thomas, who has just been outstanding, using her versatility on the world scene.

The last thing I will say is that for me, watching some of the WNBA talent I've called over this last 17 years, playing for their international team, their home team, if you will, has been a lot of fun. Emma Meesseman, Satou Sabally, Sami Whitcomb, those are players I've got to watch in the league over the years and watching them lead their teams now on the Olympic stage has been a lot of fun. Really looking forward to the medal rounds, and just really excited and happy to be here.

**Q. LaChina and Dwyane, as you mentioned, I want to ask about A'ja Wilson. She came in into the tournament described as one of the best players if not the best player in the world. Could you describe her development, not just as a player but as a leader and figure within her sport?**

LACHINA ROBINSON: I appreciate the question. In my opinion, A'ja Wilson is the face of basketball, of women's basketball. Watching her develop and grow from high school in South Carolina to winning a national championship at South Carolina, to now being a two-time champ with the Las Vegas Aces, two-time MVP, two-time Defensive Player of the Year, she's just dominant.

As talented as the players we've seen on the Olympic stage that we have in the WNBA talent there are times when it looks like A'ja Wilson is a woman among girls. I would say few things about A'ja in terms of her basketball skill set, she looks like a completely different player even from the Tokyo Olympics.

Then you go back to, again, starting out in Las Vegas or at South Carolina, she has worked incredibly hard on her skill, whether that's expanding her face-up game, being as comfortable going to her right side as she is to her left. Her second jump on rebounds is just faster than everyone else's. And also with her endurance and her strength.

I know she worked with Donnie Raimon, a world-renowned, I think he called himself a biochemist. He works with LeBron James as well. But she's quick. She's got more energy on both ends of the floor than anyone else. You almost forget she's 6'5" because of how mobile she is and how great her footwork is around the rim.

That doesn't even speak to how she cleans up everything defensively. So I have a great level of respect for what she does between the lines because I know how much she has grown and how hard she's worked on her game over time.

And as a person, boy, her voice is just really important to the leadership and the advocacy of the WNBA. That's long been the face of the league. This has been a league of women who are unafraid and unapologetic about who they are and what they believe.

And A'ja Wilson is exemplary of that. And she is leading the charge right now. She's an author. She has a statue in South Carolina, a place that she talks about, has had a significance in her life personally with her mother not even being allowed to walk on the campus of South Carolina, what that means socially in terms of advocacy.

But she's the voice. And now she's getting her own shoe. You see her face all over the place as a brand in marketing. I don't think the game could be in any better hands on or off the court than what they have right now with A'ja Wilson.

DWYANE WADE: LaChina said everything perfectly. And there's nothing for me to add to that.

**Q. Dwyane, as you look at this U.S.A. men's 5x5 team, obviously the draw seems favorable to them in that they won't see Canada, Germany or France until a medal game. But I wanted to know when you're watching this game, the circumstances that would, what are the circumstances that would trip them up,**

**maybe before the medal round -- I'm sorry, before a medal game or even in the gold medal games? What would go wrong for them to not win a game?**

DWYANE WADE: I think Steph said it best. When you look at this team, you have had multiple guys, even multiple in the game, but you've got multiple guys who have led the charge. One night it's KD. Obviously LeBron has been consistent. One night it's Edwards.

And the list goes on and on. There's been multiple different guys, and what I love about it is watching the team enjoy each other's success. Even with all the noise that probably coming from the outside, it looks like from the inside these guys have been just enjoying each other's success. And we know for a team to be able to be successful they'll have to do that.

And of course we know that the one part about this is all it takes is one bad quarter, takes one bad game. I've been there before in '06 when we lost. We just had one bad game and we ended up with a bronze. And it doesn't mean that we weren't better than the field.

I think the team understands that. You can see the way they approached the game as true professionals. They're still coming out and working their game, finding moments throughout the game to get better and playing, like we keep saying on the air, they've been running through the tape. That's what you want to see with a team that's probably the most talented teams, the most talented teams, one of the most talented that we've seen in [inaudible]. We've seen them continue to respect the field, run through the tape and continue to work their game.

It's basketball. A team doesn't need to be better than you four times out of the seven like the NBA; they have to just be better than you one night. That's the tough part about the Olympics. Obviously Team USA is preparing for all those things. And I can guarantee you that they're getting a little bit more disciplined than they probably were. And as they tighten up and tune up for the Games, as we get to now, from the Paris side of things, and understanding exactly that, that a team just needs to be better than you on one night. I'm sure that's a part of the focal point.

**Q. Dwyane, following up on what Richard was asking, Dwyane, you said this was your first time doing this. Out of curiosity, before you started doing games with Noah, even practice ones, what was your prep like? Tom Brady talked about practicing at home. Did you have a scout team Noah on your couch watching the game? What was your homework like for this before you started doing it? And how have you maybe changed your routine at all because you started to do**

**the actual games and gotten a taste for it now?**

DWYANE WADE: Well, the first thing for me was to sit down and try to learn how to pronounce the names from the Greece team. I've never really had to do that, just in my normal life and definitely with the world listening.

One thing I've done since I retired is I work with a vocal coach. I work with a speech coach as well. Just like when I played basketball, I had trainers. I have people help me get 1 percent better, understanding that God gave me natural talents but how do you take it to another level?

Not knowing this space, I just did what I normally did, and I just prepared myself as much as possible. Go and read as much information about each team as I can so I have my own information and knowledge. Go watch film. I watched the games that the U.S.A. played versus a lot of teams in this field and any other film I could find from other teams just so I could be familiar with their game.

And then from there, like I said, spend a lot of time around the team. Noah is an Encyclopedia of knowledge when it comes to all sports but definitely this sport. Just sitting around, listening, asking a lot of questions, not being afraid to say what I don't know. But most importantly just being myself. That's the one thing that everyone told me and that's what I told myself when I signed up to do this was I'm going to bring my brand of basketball to the airwaves, understanding, just like in life, some people are going to love it. Some people will not love it. But that's just the nature of life and that's the nature of the game.

Also, too to have fun with it but also bring a player's perspective. I've been on the court before. I've been in the huddles before. I understand kind of what the Olympic athletes are dealing with and growing through. So just bringing that perspective to the table that not a lot of people could bring to the table. So understanding that and being confident in that.

That was kind of my prep. And then from there my prep has continued to be the same. We just spent a lot of time together in Lille as we said when we came on this call. And I think that was good for all of us just to be together and just get to know each other. And as you heard at the end of our games, some of the games we were able to talk about Xs and Os and give information about what we were watching. And some of them we're putting culture, movie references up. We're talking about comedians, doing all kinds of things to fill the airwaves as well.

That shows the connection between either Noah and LaChina or Noah and myself and how we see this brand of basketball feeling and looking. So we're trying to bring the

audience into Pierre Mauroy Stadium even though they may hear it, they may be able to see it from the TV, but they can feel it even more coming from us. I think we did a good job of bringing them in the stadium and watching the game with us.

**Q. Is there anything you thought would be harder as a transition with all this in terms of being easier? And vice versa, is it something that's easier (indiscernible) more difficult doing all this?**

DWYANE WADE: Well, whenever you're doing something that you've never done before, you're going to think about everything that could go wrong. You're going to have anxiety, some anxiousness in there as well. It's going to be a challenge to you. So all those things have been true.

I definitely know that I haven't even scratched the surface of the understanding of all the things. I haven't even used a telestrator yet. And that's coming up, I heard. There's so many things to learn even having a producer in your ear, knowing when to talk, knowing when to let it breathe and knowing when to let the crowd bring the energy. There's things I'm learning along the way.

Like I said, and I told the team when I first signed up to this, one thing I've always been in my life, I've always tried to be coachable, even though I'm someone who listens to my coaches, then I respond. I do talk back. But I'm very coachable as well. To be able to have individuals around me to my left and right, in my ear, giving me information that I need to be my best self so we can obviously be our best selves.

So, yeah, I hope that answers your question.

**Q. Ms. Robinson and Mr. Wade, you both talked about the importance of chemistry and of leadership on these teams, both the men's and women's. There's so much talent on each team. Is there a moment where either of you guys have seen that chemistry resonate or improve? And if you have, how so?**

LACHINA ROBINSON: Definitely 35 assists on 42 made field goals was a sign that chemistry was starting to come together for the U.S. women's team, without much runway.

But, yeah, there's been some different times within the game. I think what I've noticed in the three games that the United States women have played is that there's always been a stretch where another team goes on a run and there has to be a response.

And that's the moment where -- I'm sure Dwyane can speak to this and his experience; my playing experience is

nothing compared to his -- but when you look around at your teammates and everyone's wondering who is going to step up or who's going to make that next play or who is going to do something to change the momentum of the game -- we saw that when Japan got hot hitting 3s. We saw that in the Belgium game when the crowd was roaring and it didn't seem like anyone in the building was cheering for the United States and Belgium had gone on a run.

We felt that against Germany when they came out and just punched first against the United States women. So in those moments to me is where trust is really developed and you start to see the chemistry come together because ultimately someone has to step up. And it's great for the United States if they can look at a roster where, for only the second time in history, all 12 players have either won an Olympic gold or a World Cup gold. So they've been on the stage.

There's a level of trust that starts to come through, but I will say what stands out to me the most in terms of chemistry development is how -- I guess how everyone has buy-in on the fact that this team is built on A'ja Wilson and Breanna Stewart. Cheryl Reeve has said that time and time again. She has no problem saying, we're going to run through Breanna Stewart and A'ja Wilson, two of the best players in the world, all day, every day.

So there's been very good buy-in for that across the board from all players. That's just a signal of, hey, this is where our chemistry is going to start. This is where it's going to end. And we're going to run through those two players and their leadership. But definitely stepping up in moments where they needed to respond.

DWYANE WADE: I would add to that, outside of just watching the Xs and Os and watching the ball go through the basket, I like to look at the team throughout the game. I like to look at the team just like the world on social at times, watching these guys take the train together. Watching these guys at the practice. Watching all the guys get into the work.

I reached out to Coach Bo and just get tidbits there and understanding. After practice he normally works with Bam, then Booker comes and then KD comes, and the list goes on and on.

Guys wanting to be around each other, understanding how important it is. Like, even though you love your teammates, you love the city you play for, you would never get a chance to play with this kind of talent unless you're on an Olympic team. So respecting everyone's greatness but also, too, like, learning from it.



That's what we did in '08. We learned from Kobe's greatness. We got a chance to see it up and close and personal. A lot of times you hear about it, you just play against a guy. But now you get to see it, how they prepare, their preparation.

That's one thing that Noah and LaChina and I, we get a chance to be there before the game, we get a chance to watch the team come out and see how they prepare for the game, see how they prepare together, how they walk out in unison together. That unity is being built away from the game of basketball. Then once they become (call dropped) --

LACHINA ROBINSON: I think both on the men's and women's side, despite all the talent, you can see them cheering for each other. Like Dwyane started talking about how he's been watching them. I know that's something we've all seen is that even though they're all talented, want to be playing, the fact that they're cheering for each other, no matter who is on the floor, no matter who is making the play or the bucket, I think that adds to the chemistry as well.

DWYANE WADE: Just as I said, the unity, that we look for, especially LaChina and I. Unfortunately Noah didn't play basketball probably after grade school, (laughter) but as former athletes we look at the unity that the team has in those moments where they're not being as successful, you look at them how they're cheering for each other, you look at the conversations, the side conversations they have and the celebrations they're all doing together, the LeBron flex, when LeBron does something -- these guys are all connected and unified.

The chef Curry cooking you up. You see these guys not only having fun but you see these guys have fun with each other. And also, too, being able to coach each other on the floor. I think those are the things that we look at and we see these teams growing with that.

**Q. Dwyane, obviously you haven't done this for a long time, but you're getting reps at the highest levels of broadcasting, obviously working for NBC and calling the Olympics. Have you thought about at all if this is something you want to do full time heading forward? And if so, I'd love to just sort of get a sense of maybe this experience has sort of prompted something in you that, hey, I might be good at this or this might be something really interesting to me?**

DWYANE WADE: I think for me is, even when I got the opportunity, when I got asked to do this, I looked at this as probably one of the biggest challenges in my 2024 calendar year. The one thing, as a former athlete, you

don't find these certain challenges that present themselves every day besides the challenge of life.

So this was a big challenge. I decided to dive into it, understanding that it was going to be a lot of things that was going to be need to be learned actually on the fly. But that's kind of how I live my life. If anybody knows anything about me, I just dive into things.

And so I'm in the moment. I'm definitely asking questions that I don't have the answer to. Being able to sit right next to Noah and being able to go to dinner and being able to hang out the way we have, I've definitely asked him a lot of questions about this world, stuff that I didn't know. Something as simple as, hey, bro, what does number one mean? What is number one team? I don't know those things. Even though I kind of know I wanted to get a breakdown of it all. I just want to enjoy this.

LaChina, Noah and I, we have the best seat in the house. I keep saying this, we literally get to sit center stage and watch the greatest athletes in the sport that we love in basketball compete. And we don't get to see them competing at this level, not with this kind of talent.

We've been able to be in one of the greatest environments we've ever been around in Pierre-Mauroy Stadium, the energy in the building, the atmosphere has been crazy. This is our last week doing this together. I don't want to look too far ahead.

I want to enjoy the moment we're in and continue to try to get better, because as Kobe Bryant said, very famous quote, "The job's not done." The job is not finished over here. We have a lot of work to do. We want to keep bringing the same energy and the same education and knowledge to the listeners.

**Q. Noah, so far your, young broadcasting career has been doing mostly stuff in the U.S. This summer you've had a case of international broadcasting, first at Roland-Garros with the French Open and now with the Olympics and here and now. I want to ask, how has your Olympic experience been and what's it been like doing broadcasting over in Paris a lot this summer as opposed to doing it in the United States like you used to?**

NOAH EAGLE: It's a good question, and honestly I looked at the calendar before both events, I mapped out 40 days in Paris and France. I was like, okay, I'll be fluid in French at the end of that month and a half; I'm going to be really good. And I'm not even close. I feel like half a failure in that sense.

But from the broadcasting sense, it's been an incredible experience. I got to do the Notre Dame game last year against Navy in Dublin. That was my first appetizer to international sports and the fandom that it brings. It's a different level of passion and I think we really experienced it.

I know Dwyane and LaChina have both been talking about the crowds from last week, whether it was the Belgium and U.S. game or any France men's game we got to do, and certainly the U.S. on both sides. It just brought out the best in every fan.

And that's what you get, I feel like, when you leave and especially when it's a United States-based sport; basketball and the NBA and the WNBA are considered the best leagues. You get great leagues elsewhere, but these are the best athletes now coming together on international soil. When you get that, you get this different level of fandom and passion.

I think we felt that. It's been really, really cool to feel that myself. I got to do Roland-Garros in 2020 when it was COVID. And so they were only allowing, I think, about a thousand or 2,000 fans total into the grounds.

It was amazing to be here and to eat a lot of baguettes and croissants and put on a couple of pounds. I was really missing that flare that you get with the actual tournament, but come back and have it full force is amazing. This has been kind of the cherry on top. Excited for this final week.

**Q. LaChina, when the U.S. women's team was announced, one of the reports about why Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese didn't make the team was because the tryouts made during the NCAA women's basketball championship, during March Madness. They had no chance to even try out. Fast forward to 2028, do you think the U.S. Olympic Committee, U.S.A. Basketball, will change the tryout dates so that the next generation Caitlin Clark or Angel Reese, if they want to try out for the team in Los Angeles, they'll have a shot?**

LACHINA ROBINSON: Obviously I cannot speak on behalf of the committee or U.S.A. Basketball, but I also don't know for sure that that is the reason why they didn't attend those camps.

I know there's been a lot of speculation, but I haven't heard anything specifically from U.S.A. or from Caitlin or Angel as to the scheduling of that. It would be great to have all talent available that is eligible for those tryouts and for those camps. Obviously when it comes to the college basketball season there are games scheduled and mandatory things that are already set in place.

I know that it is already very tough to pull together those camps for U.S.A. because so many of their players are playing internationally and have other obligations throughout the year, and I think that's what makes this pool very special is they all try their best and put various commitments aside to be there if they can.

But, yeah, of course, you want everyone to have a fair shot. So we're talking about something as simple as scheduling, absolutely. Hopefully it will be something that they take into consideration moving forward.

**Q. Noah, following up on the question you just got. This has been an incredible year because you did not only what you talked about with the French Open and the Olympics but also Big Ten football and basketball. The (indiscernible) Super Bowl with Nate Burleson. (Indiscernible) basketball with Sara Kustok on YES. What has it been like for you to work with so many different commentators, including the fact with the situation of the Olympics you're working with two commentators and working with learning the whole international basketball platform, what's it been like -- what do you think about yourself in terms of how you get the best out of not only yourself but also the people alongside you with commentators?**

NOAH EAGLE: I think that I was really fortunate in a lot of ways to grow up around this with my father and to see how he did it. But if I just look at all the skill sets he possessed as a broadcaster, the one that's probably the most underrated and might be the number one of making a great broadcaster is how you work with who you work with. And that's not just the partners that you have on the air, exactly what you mentioned, it's producer, director, graphics coordinator, A-2, cameramen, whatever it might be, statisticians. You need to have that team atmosphere.

I watched him do it. I would go with him -- everyone always thinks my dad sat me down one day and said this is how you become a broadcaster, right, you do this, this, and this and that's it. That couldn't be further from the truth. I would go with him at a very young age and just watch and observe.

I would see as he would connect with somebody that I would have never even recognized, whether it was a security guy at MetLife Stadium or, quite literally, the producer of his show. It was as if it was the same.

I looked at that and I said, okay, maybe that's the secret sauce I should be using myself. So I've taken that with me. And I think it's all about connecting at an actual personal level.

Dwyane talked about it a little bit but getting to know the people you're working with and legitimately taking a genuine interest in those people is paramount.

I will say both Dwyane and LaChina are two of the most considerate analysts I've ever had because Dwyane literally brushes his teeth before every game we do and LaChina always goes with Tic Tacs. So I've got two analysts that have impeccable breath. That is massive. That's a huge deal right off the bat. (Laughter) Creates awesome synergy and just chemistry.

But I think when you get to know the people you're working with, you take a genuine interest in them and you actually remember the minute details they tell you. It's not going in one ear and out the other.

I'm trying to pay attention and actually care about what they have to say to me. I just think that little things like that and being a decent human being go a long, long way when you're then building it on the actual camera time.

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