

NBC Sports Group Media Conference

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Sam Flood

Carmelo Anthony

Reggie Miller

Noah Eagle

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the NBC Sports NBA All-Star Weekend conference call.

Hi, everyone, I'm Colleen with NBC Sports Communication. Thanks for joining us for the NBA Sports Media Conference Call. In a moment, we will be joined by NBC Sports executive producer Sam Flood, All-Star 2026 analyst Reggie Miller, play-by-play player Noah Eagle, and All-Star studio analyst, Carmelo Anthony.

Once again, with opening remarks from Sam Flood.

SAM FLOOD: Thanks for joining us. Excited to be back in the all-star business. I did part of the very first All-Star game in 1991 in Charlotte where Charles Barkley was the MVP and we finished up our run in 2002 when Kobe became the MVP.

Excited to be back for All-Star Weekend. USA versus the world is a great way to add a new twist to the All-Star festivities. The league has been wonderful to work with in terms of planning how this would all come together in the midst of the Milan Cortina Olympics.

To have USA versus the world as a centerpiece really plays well in this legendary February that NBC Sports is in the midst of, which started with Sunday Night Basketball's launch on February 1st, followed by the opening ceremony of Milan Cortina, followed by the Super Bowl last Sunday in beautiful San Francisco. And now we are on to All-Star Weekend in the midst of all the fun and games at the Olympics.

A quick update for everyone, it's 5-1 United States over Latvia in hockey in case anyone is worried and wondering and missed out on this. Good game going on for Team USA.



As always at NBC Sports, the game is the star. Our job is to tell the story of the game and engage the audience in new ways. And among the fun things we're going to do, is Reggie Miller in the midst of it all. So Reggie, why don't you take it away.

REGGIE MILLER: I appreciate that, Sam. I'm excited for my first all All-Star Game on NBC. You mentioned first time on our network since 2002 and. Look, I know I'm close to the situation. I'm somewhat of a homer. We kind of talked about this when we were previewing All-Star Weekend this past Sunday when we had a hit during our Super Bowl coverage. Saturday night in the three-point competition, coming straight out of the Olympics, the three-point competition will be the first event out of the gate on Saturday, and there's buzz now with Damian Lillard. Hasn't played all season long, out with the Achilles injury. In the league he's a two-time winner. He asked and the league accepted, and now he's going to be part of it.

So I think there's going to be so many eyes on this competition because of Lillard, what does he look like coming back from the injury, as well as Devin Booker, another guy whose won this competition. He'll be in the field as well.

But I do have somewhat of a dark horse in this three-point competition. I think these young guns, Knueppel, to me, if the timing is off for Lillard, for Booker, to me, I'm picking Knueppel to win the three-point competition, so that will be something to watch.

What I really want to see, though, my second favorite thing will be Friday night and the Rising Stars. And Melo, looked at your team and you had the first pick and you went with Cooper Flagg. Everyone was like, yes, I got it. How does your team change now that Cooper is out? I believe Ace Bailey will be taking his place. Does that change how you approach the game a little bit, Melo?

CARMELO ANTHONY: Let me answer the question first, Reggie. No, that doesn't change my approach. We have a system and it's just plug-and-play.

REGGIE MILLER: Okay. Okay.

CARMELO ANTHONY: (Laughter) No, guys, this is my



first All-Star Weekend. I'm excited about the energy and what we have been putting together for the whole world to see. I'm excited about just finally the connection again, like the best players in the world from different generations and different styles of play just all in one space.

I think it's competition without the weight of the standards and just pure joy and creativity and just expressing. It's something we all love.

You also get a chance to see the personalities, the rivalries, and, you know, the behind the scenes conversations and trash talking. You also see that respect when it all collides, too.

To me, that's what basketball reminds you of, when you fell in love with it in the first place. For me, that's what I'm really looking forward to this weekend. I'm really looking forward to just getting it going and being part of the team and the broadcast team and being able to tell these stories of these All-Stars and showcase the world and talent with the rest of the world.

With that said, I will pass it over to Noah.

NOAH EAGLE: That's an honor. That's a childhood dream, getting a pass from Carmelo Anthony. We're already winning on the weekend. (Laughter) That's a huge victory.

No, this is going to be amazing. It's really special for me as somebody who is obsessed with watching this event as a kid and making sure I was parked on my couch from beginning of the Rising Stars all the way through the game. I'm just honored to be part of it.

Two of them are here but we're littered with hall of fame talent on our roster. Reggie, Jamal Crawford, Vince, Melo, Tracy, Austin Rivers is going to do great in his head coaching debut with the G-league stars during the Rising Stars challenge tomorrow night.

But it's going to be a celebration. Reggie mentioned the Super Bowl and Sam mentioned legendary February. To me it's all fitting in. We all just came from the Super Bowl and you could feel the energy, but I think Melo and Reggie said it directly after. Football is over and it feels like it's basketball's time to take center stage.

This is the perfect moment to do it and get ready for the stretch run of the regular season, which includes a great Sunday night basketball game next weekend right back here in LA, and that will continue all the way into the Playoffs, which we're really excited about.

But it starts here, and I think that this celebration for the league is going to be on full display. Reggie mentioned the three-point contest. Everybody's question is always going to be about the dunk contest. I went back and watched just about every single one in preparation of this, and what stood out to me is when you least expect it, a lot of times that's when something crazy happens.

I think there are very little expectations. In my estimation, that's when something amazing tends to happen. I'm looking forward to that on Saturday night.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Noah. Hey, operator, I think we're ready for some questions.

Q. This one is for you, Reggie. A big part of the focus for All-Star or for the first season of NBC regaining rights to the NBA and obviously you joining on and everything that's gone into it has been about the history of the game, the storytelling of how we got here with the sport of basketball and the role that NBC played in it, and obviously that you played in it and being on a lot of those games. How do you try to balance for a big event like this or even just the games you called this year or that you will call that history and nostalgia with bringing new fans into the game and shining a light on, obviously, today's players and everything that there is to be excited about with the league right now?

REGGIE MILLER: Well, number one, I will always be a fan of the game. Basketball has been a tremendous vehicle for myself in terms of being able to share my stories, my experiences, and when I had the opportunity, when I first met with NBC, I told them I wanted to come home, because some of my best moments happened on this network.

The '90s were a special time and they were great and we had a built-in fan base, which is unbelievable. But like everything in life, things evolve, things change, and people go different places. But for a chance, personally for myself to come back and tell some of those stories from the 90s, but still evolve because of the new generation, that's what life is all about.

We've got some unbelievable, young talent. Even over the last -- I'll go through the LeBron era. Over the last 22 years, having been a part of working his games and seeing how he's evolved from year one to year 22 and tell his stories and Carmelo's stories and Jamal's stories.

It's been great because we've all learned from one another. They asked me about some of the times in the late '80s and '90s. I had one year versus Carmelo, one year versus

LeBron and Chris Paul in that era, so it's just been kind of cool just to kind of cross the Ts and dot the Is.

And to me, to be in this position, and I've truly been blessed. I have been doing this 20 years, longer than I played. I played for 18 and I've been on the sidelines for 20 years now, so almost close to 40 years in basketball. I'm truly honored and blessed to tell these young men's stories. To me this is what it's all about

I was a huge Hubie Brown fan, And when he called my game, I just felt honored to be in the midst of Hubie Brown and Doug Collins. They stood out to me because they were such great storytellers. They understood the Xs and Os and all the little things that go on in a basketball game.

I kind of want to highlight -- I pattern a lot of my style because Doug Collins, my first year at Turner, took me under his wing and showed me how to prepare and what to look for. Even though I played 18 years, It's the game in between the game is what I love about it. I'm truly blessed to continue it with NBC.

Q. Hey, everyone, thanks for doing this. My question is for Reggie and for Carmelo, but first I want to shout out to Noah. The coverage, great to see you arrive and congrats to all the success.

REGGIE MILLER: Do you still have the Hawaiian shirt from 2019?

Q. Absolutely. For Reggie and Melo, Arguably playing the best basketball the last couple of months here, I'm curious what you have made of his play and if you can, just about the trade the Clippers made sending out James Harden.

CARMELO ANTHONY: Honestly, my opinion, and I have been saying this over the broadcast, too, over the air, That since December, Kawhi has been one of the top players in the league. He's shown it. He's shown he's in topnotch shape, some of the best shape I have seen him in in a long time.

For him to get in shape and get it mental right and his body right and to go through all that with what they're going through over with the Clippers and to trade Norman Powell and to trade James Harden, just start making those moves and he's still there producing on a night-to-night basis.

Me, personally, I thought he deserved to be in this game representing the Clippers, representing LA, and representing the NBA as a whole. I'd love to see him being part of this actual weekend because of what he was just doing in LA. His scoring averages, his rebounding, his

assists, the way he's blocking everything out mentally to be able to go out there and focus on the game, I thought he deserved to be part of this weekend.

REGGIE MILLER: There's no question Kawhi Leonard's resume. You know, two-time champ, two-time finals MVP. I think the question comes how come over the last several seasons has been the injuries and his inability to play at the biggest moments in the Playoffs.

To Carmelo's point, and you just go back to December and look at the numbers, you could make a case those are MVP-type numbers, and for them to be 6-21 at one point and where they have landed right now -- and a lot of that has come on the shoulders of Kawhi -- to me it's a no-brainer that he would be in the All-Star Game in Intuit Dome, in his building, in his city, town.

I was a little shocked he wasn't initially on the team. You can say what you want, the controversy surrounding him and the owner and all that. That's a different story at a different time. If we're just talking Xs and Os and who you would want on your team, he's got to be top two, top three best two-way players this game has seen, certainly in today's game, being able to get it done on both ends.

I'm happy for him. I'm glad he's healthy. That's first and foremost. To me, the joy is back. He just hit that big game winner in Houston. I don't think I have seen him react like that in a while. You have seen it in the last month, month and a half. Some of his takeovers. He's been more animated than ever.

I think he's found that joy again. And, again, and I said this in my opening remarks, Basketball, you take away the political side and the economic side, it's just a game that we grew up loving, right? And you see the joy coming back in Kawhi's face, just how animated he is now and that's so cool to see from a guy.

A lot of people have kind of been dishing on him because of the injuries, but when healthy, he's one of the best.

Q. This question is for Carmelo Anthony. Carmelo, during media day, Cade Cunningham said you and he scheduled times to work out but it didn't happen. I just wanted to get your thoughts on watching Cade Cunningham's rise over these last two years.

CARMELO ANTHONY: I love it. I love it. I have been a fan and watching Cade since he was in high school on the EYBL circuit. I watched his growth, his development, his maturity over the past four or five years to where it's at right now. It's spectacular to watch.

To answer your question, yes, we have been in contact. We are in contact. As far as getting in the gym, he reached out to get in the gym. He wanted to work on certain aspects of his game, and for me, I saw that as being a sign of maturity.

Him wanting to slow the game down, him wanting to pick his spots, get to a spot where he could be aggressive, efficient, and he could take advantage of some of the mismatches. If you watch some of the games last year, it was one or two things I thought he was missing, and getting down to that low block and taking advantage of some of the guards was one of them.

So he reached out, we been talking, watching film, talking film, and me just being that mentor for him, but also just providing him with some insight and anything that I can help him with.

Q. Hi, thank you. I have two questions for Sam Flood. The first is what cameras and other production tools are being added for NBA All-Star and the broadcast?

SAM FLOOD: We have cameras, including a super camera serving as a skycam, but it's a four-time super mode, so we can play at a much higher frame rate. We have a couple of steady cams with four-time frame rate as well. We have robos above the rim. The mouse robo, all of those are, again, at least four times, so you're going to have incredible shots looking up at the players with that mouse cam, the small one under the stanchion.

Overall 19 high frame rate cameras in the show. It's wall to wall high frame rate show indicating the stars. Musa, the coordinating director of the NBA and NBC has done a remarkable job with the cameras to make sure we have the equipment to make the stars shine brighter than normal.

Q. Amazing. How does this new USA versus World format impact your production philosophy, especially with Olympics taking place?

SAM FLOOD: This plan works brilliantly into the Olympic cycle. Quick update: USA did win the game 5-1 over Latvia. That final is official. You can put it in the books. There's something about USA playing against other teams. There's something about country against country that's unique and special, and wearing USA on the front of their shirt, You can ask the people who have done that like Reggie and Melo, that's it's a unique experience to have that written across the front of your jersey.

We hope that leads to some great basketball on the court. We do think it's fits brilliantly into this Olympic pattern.

There's something about even years. In two years, in '28, we'll be in the eve of the Los Angeles Olympics, so you think about the possibilities there with USA versus the World. We're really thankful to the NBA for leaning into this opportunity to take the Olympic audience into a USA versus the World format.

The league did a really smart job of creating four 12-minute games, so the fans at home and in the arena will see 48 minutes of basketball. One of the things that didn't happen last year, there was not enough basketball in the All-Star Weekend because of the format.

This game and this All-Star Sunday will have a full 48 minutes. If we're lucky, we might get some overtime as well, so fun times await.

Q. Hi, thank you for doing this. I have a question for Reggie and Carmelo. In terms of Jayson Tatum and the mental things he's going through trying to come back from a serious injury, do you think he should try to attempt to come back this year? What have been your impression of how the Celtics have managed without him? What kind of situation os that when you add an All-Star player coming off a major injury in the middle of a Playoff race?

REGGIE MILLER: Great question, because Melo, Jamal, and myself, we have been having some in-depth discussions about this. If you would have told me at the start of the season that the Celtics would be five and a half games out of first place. Currently they're second. I know they're a half a game and them and New York are trading places back and forth on a nightly basis.

I knew they would still have talent without Jayson, but first of all, the way Jaylen Brown is playing, he's playing at an MVP level and should be highly discussed in that MVP frame with Jokic and SGA and Cade.

For them to be playing this well and coach Mazulla should get serious consideration for coach of the year, the way he's entrusted his bench, Queta, Jordan Walsh, these guys, Gonzales, the rookie. He's opened up his bench and he's developing a strong bench in hopes in return of Jayson Tatum.

The question being, because they're playing so well, with Tatum possibly coming back, does that mess up the rhythm of a team that has gelled. They're playing through Tatum with Derrick White and Prichard being the second and third options. Does that mess up the chemistry? If you can add an all-NBA first teamer -- and, look, I don't think he's going to play major minutes if he came back, but I think hearing like Damian Lillard participating in the three

-- point competition, a guy who tore his Achilles in the Playoffs last year as well.

We have had a number of Boston Celtics games this year, some on the road, some in the Garden, and Tatum has been front and center, especially the ones on the road that I have seen him. And I have gone into the workout facility and seen him work out. He looks great, and I know he put on some type of informal workout for the media two or three weeks ago and looked pretty good.

I heard that he's getting ready to go down and play with the G-league Celtics. So it looks like he's ramping up his activity.

I personally would bring him back. To me, it's all mental. I don't think it would mess up chemistry. I know Melo, you and Jamal were kind of going back and forth on if that would mess up the chemistry.

Look, adding an all-NBA guy 15, 20 minutes, I think it could only help, Melo, what do you think?

CARMELO ANTHONY: I'm with you, Reg. We spoke about this. If he's healthy enough to come back and play, then you play him. I say that because this is about saving the championship window, right? If we can do that, let's do that. We got to bring him back in limited minutes and let him get in game shape. Game shape and individual working out is totally different. He's been individually working out and skill working out and lifting weights since he's been hurt, since he's been injured.

Now he's coming back, starting to get reps. We're not behind the scenes so we don't know what's going on. From what we have seen, he's in the gym, he looks stronger, a lot more physical, healthy. Mentally he looks like he's getting ready.

If you have one of the best players in this league that's ready to come back and putting in the work and making sure that he dots all of those Is and crosses those Ts, why not bring him back? The team has what they have going on, Jaylen Brown is leading those guys, having an MVP caliber season this year.

If Jayson can come back and get implemented and get his wind back and get his timing back, I don't see how this disturbs the Boston Celtics. I only see this enhancing the Celtics.

REGGIE MILLER: Also this, the Celtics don't make that Vucevic move without thinking about the big picture. Adding Vucevic really opens up their team. He's a pick-and-pop center which is different from having Queta in

there, who is good hands around the basket.

But the way way the Celtics won a championship and have been successful over the last three or four years has been taking 50 threes and playing five guys out. When you have Nikola on the floor, that allows you to do that with Tatum.

I think that move there kind of signals to me that they're anticipating Tatum coming back by them making that move.

SAM FLOOD: As a Boston media guy, you might want to pay attention to the backend of the All-Star Game. We might have an interesting element on Mr. Tatum. That's called a tease. (Laughter)

CARMELO ANTHONY: To add to that, You don't simulate playoff intensity. You just can't do that. You have to come back and get yourself prepared to get to that playoff intensity and be ready for that playoff intensity. It's going to be very interesting coming down these next couple weeks after the All-Star break.

THE MODERATOR: We have time for two more questions for today.

Q. Thank you. Appreciate that. I'm going to ask about a Phoenix Suns from a couple of perspectives. Carmelo, Reggie, if you guys want to address however you want to go with it. Looking at the Suns and what they have done this year, wasn't a lot expected out of them. Devin Booker was part of that, but so was Brooks. One, what do you think of what the Suns have been able to do overall? And then, two, do you feel like Dillon Brooks was deserving of being an All-Star this year defending what he has been able to do as far bringing culture, scoring, and helping the Suns -- playing a major role in the Suns having the kind of start they've had to the season.

REGGIE MILLER: Deserving, yes. But let's be real here. The All-Star game is about stars. He wasn't going to make it as a guard in the west over a a lot of the guys that are super stars. Let me say this about Dillon Brooks because he's one of my favorite players just because of how he approaches the game.

You think about all the teams he's been on, they've won and they have been so good defensively. Obviously in Memphis. He goes to Houston, they're better defensively, they're tougher. Gets traded for whatever reason to Phoenix, and with Kevin Durant departing, everyone thinking this is going to be somewhat of a gap year and a slow progression to get back in it, and the Phoenix Suns are lights out and playing great basketball in a very loaded

western conference, and a lot of that has to do with Dillon Brooks.

I think he has shown that he can score the basketball. I think I raised an eyebrow at some of his stats in some of his games, but it also lets me know he's been in the lab, too.

I think he played a role in Memphis and in Houston, and I think looking at the Phoenix Suns and the opportunity he saw on this roster that he could expand his game, which he has, and I'm happy for him. But he's still a bad boy, which I love, right?

At the end of the day, he's still a bad boy and that will never leave him. I think that's the Phoenix Suns' identity. You can say what you want about Draymond Green, those dudes get results. They get in your head, they disrupt you. They make it a spectacle, but they understood how to win ball games.

I think that's the only thing left for Dillon Brooks. He has to have this type of success come playoff time. He's done it during the regular season. Draymond has done it during the regular season, the Playoffs, and is a four-time champ. I think Dillon Brooks now has to do it in the Playoffs and be consistent about it.

CARMELO ANTHONY: If you're talking impact, then Dillon Brooks absolutely had an All-Star case. He's been the defensive tone-setter for the Suns. He guards the toughest match-up every single night. He's scoring at his career-best level I would say.

But now, let's get to All-Star. All-Star isn't just about defense. We complain about that, but All-Star is not just about defense. It's production, the narrative, it's standards with your team.

Did he deserve a strong consideration? Yes. I think so. Was he a lock? I think that's where the debate starts.

Q. Just a quick follow-up for Carmelo with Devin. You said when Devin was named All-Star that he was deserving of it. What have you seen with him particularly this year with the move that they made and what he's been able to do this season to have the kind of season he's had so far.

CARMELO ANTHONY: I just think what we have seen with Devin, he's showing he can lead a team, again, while in transition. He's not complaining about it. He's going out there doing what he's got. And he's had teams with KD and those guys. He's been to the Finals, so he's had opportunities with everybody else.

Now it's his opportunity to show that he can lead this team and this organization. I have always been a fan of Book and I vouch for him this year. Where we see him now, we see a really refined Devin Booker right now, and that's why the game is coming to him the way that it is.

Q. Thank you, guys, appreciate it.

MODERATOR: We will take our final question.

Q. Thank you. This is for Reggie and it's following up on an earlier question. Kawhi has elevated his three-point game. At his age, how difficult do you think that's been for him since you were a three-point specialist?

REGGIE MILLER: To me, it's probably enhanced his game because when he came into the league, he certainly could not shoot the basketball the way we've seen him evolve over the years. They really worked on it when he was in San Antonio in terms of the fundamentals, the followthrough, the footwork.

To me, it's one of his strongest suits because when he has the three-point shot going, because he can score at all levels from the three, the midrange. He's great with either hand in the paint. He can finish over you. He has great touch around the rim.

I think the older you get, at times you can revert and relay on that three-point shot, but what I love about him is that that is not his only gift in terms of scoring the basketball.

To me, that sets up the rest of his offensive repertoire the way he's able to get to the midrange by knocking down a few threes each and every game.

Q. He has said that he added... he and Jeremy Castleberry have worked on his three-point shooting this year and said he can take 12 a game.

REGGIE MILLER: That's the way the game is played. Guys are increasing their three-point attempts and teams are playing faster. Teams want to shoot anywhere from 35 -- and I mentioned the Celtics. Last year, Issa had almost 50 threes a game. That's the way Coach Lou has evolved his coaching style, allowing guys to get up like Kawhi, 12 threes a game and play faster.

And plus, too, that takes off a little wear and tear off his body. Again, remember, this is a guy who has been injured, has had leg and knee injuries. If you can settle behind that three-point line, you don't take the risk of driving and getting bumped and getting injured, getting

hurt. If you can have a reliable three-point shot, it just makes your game a little bit more easier.

Q. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, everyone. Thanks to the media for joining today. Tune in to rising stars on Friday night, All-Star Saturday on Saturday and the All-Star game all across NBC, Peacock, NBCSN and Telemundo. Thanks for joining us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports...

