

---

## Kawhi Leonard: Still the same old Kawhi

If you are a fan or follower of the NBA, then you are very well aware that Kawhi Leonard is currently a Toronto Raptor and Demar Derozan a San Antonio Spur, after both teams agreed to a swap trade (with Danny Green included). I am not so much writing this article to voice my opinion on the trade itself, but rather, the wrongful criticisms I have noticed from a select few accusing Kawhi's character in attempt to reprimand his humble reputation. Of course, if you are a follower of the NBA you know that Kawhi wants to be a Los Angeles Laker, further sparking the fueled the rift between he and Coach Gregg Popovich. Given that Leonard had one year left on his contract with the Spurs, he did not have the freedom to move to Los Angeles on his own, which is precisely why Kawhi may be a Raptor for at least one season.

The part I really want to delve into however is Kawhi's lack of commentary during this saga. Amidst the rift with Popovich and the rumors of him wanting an LA move, Kawhi has openly spoken about the subject ZERO times. Have all reports have been made by the reliable Adrian Wojnarowski? Yes, but at the end of the day we have yet to hear the player's side of the story. For one, we do know for a fact that Kawhi Leonard is from Los Angeles. Other than that we do not have any factual information as to why Kawhi wanted to leave San Antonio. Rumors of a tarnished relationship with Tony Parker, for instance, are not entirely plausible until/if Kawhi openly confirms them. Other accusations, namely from Stephen A. Smith are also unwarranted, claiming Kawhi purposely prolonged an ankle injury that Zaza Pachulia gave him from the 2017 playoffs.

I will end this piece with this: If you are a Spurs fan, I can understand your frustration, given Kawhi was supposed to be the one to carry the Spurs franchise after Tim Duncan Tony Parker, and Manu Ginobli. However, please understand that Kawhi still gave a piece of his heart and soul to the franchise, contributing to San Antonio's 2014 championship with an added finals MVP award. No matter the rumored underlying motives for Kawhi wanting to leave, I hope and believe that Spurs fans will sincerely respect his decision, and continue to wish him success in all his future endeavors. I urge you to tune out the critics, for Kawhi Leonard is still the same humble, non-attention seeking, defensive showstopper that you remember. There is no shame in wanting to return home. Greg Popovich is still one of, if not the greatest NBA coaches of all time and Kawhi Leonard is still an exceptional player and overall professional.