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Chauncey Billups says he's 'all in' with Clippers

He says he was at first upset he had little say in the matter of his being waived by the Knicks and picked up by the Clippers. But now the guard is ready to play alongside Chris Paul and others.

By Broderick Turner

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Chauncey Billups, in a clear, baritone voice, assured the Clippers and their fans that he was no longer uncertain of where he wanted to play.

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"I'm all in," Billups said Friday at a news conference at the team's practice facility.

Billups admitted he underwent some soul-searching before he came to grips with the fact that the Clippers would be his new home.

He had been troubled by how New York treated him, how the Knicks used the new "amnesty" provision to waive the 35-year-old guard.

He had been equally dismayed at the Clippers for placing a bid of a little more than \$2 million in the waiver auction Monday to acquire him.

Billups had threatened to retire if a team he didn't want to play for picked him up, something he reiterated Friday.

Billups wanted to control "my own destiny," and that had been taken out of his hands by the Clippers, a team he hadn't considered.

But after "three or four" days to gather his thoughts and realize that he wasn't done playing after 13 years in the NBA, Billups decided to join the Clippers.

"I'm a Clipper and I'm happy to be here," Billups said. "It could have been much worse. But this is really a good situation. These guys, I don't really feel like it's a rebuilding situation. I think these guys are ready to take the next leap and hopefully I can help with that."

He'll earn all of the \$14.2 million the Knicks are on the books for; they'll pay Billups \$12.2 million and the Clippers will pay the rest.

When Chris Paul was traded to the Clippers from the New Orleans Hornets, he tried to convince Billups that being a Clipper was the new thing to do. So did Mo Williams.

That wasn't what won Billups over, but he appreciated the gestures.

In some ways, Clippers Coach Vinny Del Negro has a quandary on his hands.

He has three point guards who have started most of their NBA careers and all have been All-Stars.

Paul, Billups and Williams all met with Del Negro and General Manager Neil Olshey before Billups' news conference Friday.

Then Billups, a five-time All-Star, came downstairs along with Paul, a four-time All-Star, and Williams, a one-time All-Star, and the three of them looked pleased.

Paul will be the starting point guard, Billups the starting shooting guard and Williams the backup point guard.

"In my eyes, we are probably going to be starting two point guards," Billups said. "Not a point guard and a shooting guard. I'm a lead guard and a playmaker, so is Chris. I think that we are going to cause a lot of teams a lot of problems."

Billups, at 6-3 and 210 pounds will defend the bigger shooting guards.

"To be honest with you, I'm lucky that it was the Clippers that took me," Billups said. "I know that the Clippers aren't the Clippers of old. They do want to win and they do want to do it right."

He even talked about playing "two or three more years."

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