

## Utah Jazz notebook: Laser treatment worked for Earl Watson

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SALT LAKE CITY — **Earl Watson** knows the Utah **Jazz** were a tad skeptical of his decision to seek alternative injury treatment from a non-team source.

Understandably so, too. After all, who has ever heard of laser therapy for a sprained ankle?

But Watson's organization showed trust in the popular player and let him take a detour from Oakland to Los Angeles to be zapped by Dr. Michael Sheps, who's helped him overcome injuries since his playing days at UCLA.

Three nights after leaving the court in agony, Watson returned to action at EnergySolutions Arena to compete against the Los Angeles Lakers.

"I got lucky that I have some good people to work with me," Watson said. "I came back to Utah and had the training staff with me all morning. I was able to run. I was lucky."

Nobody from the Jazz will complain about the results — eight points, 11 assists, a feisty attitude and tough defense in an inspirational 26 1/2 minutes that led to Utah's 96-87 win over the Lakers.

"No one's ever heard of this guy, so it was kind of like, 'Whatever, OK. Yeah, if you think it works,'" Watson said, smiling. "He's amazing. He's incredible. He's helped me throughout my whole career."

Watson said he had four laser sessions on Thursday night and Friday morning, and his swelling reduced dramatically because of the patented process.

Watson joked that he wasn't a science major at UCLA, so couldn't fully explain how the treatment worked. But he said Sheps' innovative laser penetrates damaged tissue to help cells regenerate quicker and get rid of toxins.

According to Sheps' All Back and Joint Care website, the Diolase 10 laser "combines a unique wavelength, 940 nm and high power to provide optimal tissue penetration and enhanced biostimulatory effects, resulting in more effective treatment of acute and chronic pain in his patients."

Jazz coach Tyrone Corbin smiled when asked about the unusual procedure, which seemed to work like magic.

"It looked like it worked," Corbin said. "His swelling is way down from what it was. He's back on the floor, so that's what I'm excited for."

Watson, who missed the fourth quarter against the **Clippers** and Thursday's game against the Warriors, wanted to do whatever he could to return as soon as possible.

"I love to earn my check. I love to play basketball," he said. "I love to compete, so I'm not one to ever linger around any injury and sit out long times."

Devin Harris (hamstring) and **Raja Bell** (adductor) also returned Saturday from injuries, although neither went Watson's laser way.

After Saturday's shootaround, Watson credited Sheps for helping him feel "no pain." He insisted that

was the truth even though the Jazz teased that he wouldn't divulge the full injury truth anyway.

"I'm going to play until they say I can't play," Watson added. "My goal is to get my mindset ready to come out and play and play the way I play and help my teammates try to get a win."

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