

Stephen vs Sabrina 3-Point Contest

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Stephen Curry

Sabrina Ionescu

Press Conference

STEPHEN VS. SABRINA

Q. Steph, Sabrina went out there and put up an incredible score, really put the pressure on you. I know you're the greatest shooter of all time, but were you a little nervous after her performance?

STEPHEN CURRY: Absolutely. I saw the first rack. I think she made the first six, I believe, maybe seven. I was having flashbacks of watching this summer. We were just talking about it. No matter what competition, whether it was this or the regular three-point competition, we would have both advanced to the next round. So it added a lot of pressure, for sure.

I just wanted to get it off to a good start and settle in. Thankfully, I made enough to get over the top. But that was perfect the way -- great entertainment, great shooting both sides, an awesome 70 seconds for both of us.

Q. Sabrina, after you cleared that first rack, what was going through your mind?

SABRINA IONESCU: Honestly, just happy that we were able to get out there and start shooting. Obviously there was a lot of buildup to this and excitement around it. So I was just excited to be able to finally have the opportunity to get out there and just shoot, to be honest.

Q. Sabrina, let's be real here. Like, if you got to shoot second, the target score, you're walking away with the belt, right? I mean, come on.

SABRINA IONESCU: We were talking about just getting a second round. I think we both finally kind of got warm after sitting for a while and wanted to run it back.

Maybe we'll be able to evolve that next time, but obviously Steph won for a reason. I'm going to have to try to beat him next time.

Q. Sabrina, when you look at what you were doing tonight, how much do you think it will help the game of

basketball? I know people say women's basketball, but skill, shooting is for everyone.

SABRINA IONESCU: Yeah, just basketball as a whole, I think. Being able to have this crossover and understanding the respect I've been able to receive from a lot of the NBA guys, just knowing that Steph wanted to do this as well, in terms of just respecting another shooter.

I think it's going to show a lot of young kids out there, a lot of people who might have not believed or even watched women's sports that we're able to go out there and put on a show. So it was really exciting to finally be able to do this. Like Steph said, it happened perfectly.

Q. Steph, what do you know about Sabrina that you knew even coming into the night, that this was going to be extremely competitive?

STEPHEN CURRY: We were talking about it yesterday. When I first met her back in the Bay, right before the Oregon rocket ship went off, you see a different demeanor and a different kind of killer instinct and a focus that -- I mean, the skill is one thing, but the mentality is a totally different thing that you kind of can't teach. She's demonstrated that every step of the way.

So I knew, no matter how the buildup was, there would be no stage that would be too bright for her. The way that the competition went, the way she started was like there's no fear, and there's no kind of hesitation at all. She knows who she is.

She also works -- like that's the thing that you can't -- the preparation to get the skill set like she has and a shot like she has, an all-around game, there's work that goes into it. It was demonstrated at a high level even tonight.

Q. Sabrina was nice enough to share a photo of when she was 10 years old in the tunnel, seeing you in that moment for her. You make sure Riley gets a photo of her?

STEPHEN CURRY: We checked that box a couple of years ago when she was at Oregon. We brought the girls

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to a game at Cal. I was just saying the way she carries herself on and off the court, she understands the platform she has. She took 30, 45 seconds to talk to my girls and make them feel special and took a picture and the whole deal. She gets it. This is a special, special gift.

Q. For both of you, you guys combined to shoot like 75, 76 percent, something crazy like that tonight, on a lime green floor in a football stadium with probably something neither of you is used to. How cool is it that not just you're able to do this, but you both put on a show? Like this wasn't -- if this had been 21-18, this would have felt different probably. The fact that you were both able to put up a big number, how much more does that add to what you guys pulled off?

STEPHEN CURRY: Everything you just said, it goes into the form of the entertainment value of what this -- obviously it was a long buildup for two 70-second rounds, but I've been to ten All-Star Weekends -- a little bit more -- shooting in 3-Point Contests. To have it with the new floor and like 40,000 fans out here and people using the bathroom --

(Laughter.)

All types of chaos around here. Like for us, to deliver a show like that, it was perfect. Like just as much excitement as you can build in that short amount of time with two great shooters going at it is pretty special. This will be something we'll remember for a long time.

Q. Over your career you have won many awards, and you have an unbelievable career. How do you feel having this challenge today contributed to women's basketball and it's going to go into history as your top, you were able to give back to that society?

STEPHEN CURRY: It's something you just live. Like, you don't do things just to check a box. I'm stealing that from Sabrina. We mentioned that this is something, if you're supporting basketball in general, you're supporting women's basketball, it's something that you continually do, and you find new creative ways to have invested in the game.

The fact this is the first of its kind in our sport, the fact that it's on this stage and the way that it went down, like the fact that it's supporting both of our foundations, NBA Foundation as well, so there's a community impact component.

Like all of that is a step in the right direction. We'll always be able to say we were the first. So that's a really cool accomplishment.

Q. Sabrina, this is NBA All-Star Weekend where historically some of the -- all of the best players in the NBA have come and played and be celebrated. You've come in here on a one-off event, the first of its kind. You're not only a guest. You could argue this is maybe the highlight, the biggest event, the one that most people are excited the most about. What does it feel to have a space that didn't even exist and be able to create it, to be able to come in, fill it, and at the same time deliver such a great performance?

SABRINA IONESCU: I think that's kind of been what both of us have done our entire careers is just created our own space and done it our way and stayed true to ourselves. This was so authentic to the both of us to be able to be here, finally not in a closed gym, shooting in front of everyone watching and understanding what it means for ourselves and also the bigger picture, knowing that this is where I wanted to be to be able to do this.

Obviously very thankful for everyone that's kind of helped make this dream we both had a possibility and knowing that it's changed the landscape of how people are going to view what we're doing.

We're very excited to see kind of what the future has to hold with more people having the opportunity to do stuff like this.

Q. I think we all agree this is going to have an incredible impact on basketball around the world. What do you sort of hope the -- maybe the impact will be and what the longer term impact will be?

STEPHEN CURRY: I think the media has changed the conversation for little boys and girls watching us play, it doesn't matter what gym you show up to, don't discount who's to your left and to your right. If they can shoot, they can shoot. We can compete and have fun.

Hopefully we can be models of what that looks like on the biggest stage.

Long term, we'll see -- like I said, it's something we'll -- me personally, I know she's in basketball, for women's basketball, she's just getting started on her career, so I'll let her speak to that. But we'll continue to find awesome ways to further the conversation on how amazing the women's game is, getting the eyeballs on it and continue to create energy around it.

This was a small step in that direction.

Q. This might be obvious to some, maybe not to

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others, but I think the next iteration of this would be maybe bringing Caitlin Clark into this next year. I was just curious what you guys thought, could we see that next year, and what you guys think of her game as far as being an elite shooter?

SABRINA IONESCU: We've been talking about finding different ways to change this up next year. I think he has a partner in mind that's going to join him. So I'm open to any partner that could help me win and take that belt that he has up front and center away from him.

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