

Golden State Warriors

Media Conference

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Steve Kerr

Media Conference



Q. (Question about changes in the coaching staff).

STEVE KERR: Yeah, I think this really was a decision that was based on the need for some change, some fresh ideas, new energy. Had nothing to do with anybody's performance. Over the last seven years, we've had an amazing group of coaches, all of whom have contributed greatly to our success, and we have had some turnover. I think some turnover is good in this league and for our players.

Excited about the new additions. We have some new structure with the staff and I think it will be very positive for the players and for the staff, as well.

Q. What prompted the change?

STEVE KERR: Nothing in particular. Just a feeling at the end of the season that it was time for just some fresh blood and new ideas. Very, very difficult to make those decisions, as you might expect. A lot of people here who have been here a long time who did wonderful jobs who we love and respect. But this is the nature of pro sports and you just constantly have to be evolving and adapting, and this felt like a necessary step for us.

Q. If you're a coach with a player who is not vaccinated, how much time have you spent trying to figure out contingencies in case that person is not available? Just how you will handle the situation when it comes to that when the season starts?

STEVE KERR: I haven't spent any time thinking about that, nor will I. We'll just see how everything plays out. We're hopeful that it is all resolved in the next couple of weeks but we are going into camp tomorrow with a plan to have everybody out on the floor and ready to roll.

Q. You mentioned last year that you navigating winning now and playing young guys isn't easy. Do you have a plan for Moses and Jonathan, and what are your expectations for them this season?

STEVE KERR: I think, yeah, the plan is to develop them every single day. What that entails is film work, on-court work and practice, scrimmages and possibly games.

So we have to find the right mix of all that as a staff, as an organization. We'll see where our rotation takes us in preseason and into the regular season, and then you make adjustments accordingly.

The good news is, this year I think we have a lot more flexibility because of the COVID restrictions, a lot of them being lifted. We'll have more options, more availability, and I think it will be a very healthy environment for both those young guys.

Q. It's the first day here but how are you approaching that starting 2-guard spot until you get Klay back in the mix?

STEVE KERR: We are not going to figure anything out over the next few days. It will be over the next few weeks. And obviously by opening night, we'll have a decision but we've got a lot of really good candidates. You know who they are. So I won't go down the list.

But we're very comfortable that we'll find the right combination of players.

Q. From the end of the 2019 season, obviously having one of the worst records in the league, COVID hits, and now you're back playing with no fans; you're competing for a playoff spot. Now you have a chance to get back to championship contention. I'm just curious, not only as a coach and on the basketball side but as a human and a man in this world, how has your perspective changed over the last couple years?

STEVE KERR: Well, I think the perspective I have is No. 1, how lucky we are to do what we do, how lucky we are when we have our health and the health of those around us, family and friends, and how lucky we are to play basketball for a living in front of an incredible group of fans that provides the energy and joy that we thrive on.



So those things, a lot of those things have been taken away the last couple years. Absolutely brings a fresh perspective and maybe a necessary one, given everything that's happened in the world and in our country the last couple years. I think there is a sense, at least for me, that we have to understand we all play a part in society. We have this sort of out-sized view of what freedom is and American individualism, and while it's certainly amazing to enjoy that freedom, we also have to function as a society, as a community and that includes our team, our own little community as a team. It includes our communities, our surrounding areas, our entire country. Feels to me like we have lost some perspective on that and I hope we can get some of that back and start to function as one again.

Q. Happy birthday.

STEVE KERR: Thank you.

Q. Last season you set a goal for the team to be a top-10 defensive team. So coming into this new season, do you have any practical or more realistic goals for the team?

STEVE KERR: Well, we were very pleased to finish with the fifth-ranked defense in the league last year. It was a major accomplishment for us. A lot of guys deserve a lot of credit for that, starting with Draymond. I think he's obviously the leader of our defensive unit, Andrew Wiggins, who had a fantastic season, Steph who is way better defensively than anybody is willing to give him credit for, and we can go down the list. We had a lot of guys, Loon, guys who really are good defenders.

The idea is if you're going to be a championship contender, you've got to be balanced, and last year, we were 21st in offensive rating. So we've got to have better balance to our team this year, and that's the goal going in is to have a team that can maintain its defensive identity, but hopefully rebuild our offensive identity with better balance and better spacing.

Q. Bob mentioned Iguodala already acting as a mentor for the young guys. Have you been around him and do you need to see him play in preseason, and does he need to show what he has left or do you know what he has at this point?

STEVE KERR: Well, I watched him at Miami the last couple years, and he was really effective. As you know with Andre, it goes so far beyond points and scoring, and even what you see defensively. It's about the leadership, the mentoring, the being in the right spot at the right time.

And given the goal of what we're trying to do with the

development of young players, and winning games, I can't think of a better player to have on our team who can help us do both. So could not be more excited that Andre's back.

Q. Two-part question a little bit, but considering you have two guys that are going to enter the season injured, some rookies, how needed do you think that 15th spot will be to potentially have a guy who can maybe play in the rotation? And what do you think of the competitors you'll have for that 15th spot, some of the new veterans?

STEVE KERR: I think there's a reason we've invited people to come in. I'm excited about Langston and Avery. Excited about Gary Payton being under contact. We have to use training camp to see what we have and to see how the pieces fit together in this year's puzzle.

Whether we use that spot or not, we'll see. But that's the whole point of camp is to really get a feel for our team, and then put our heads together over next few weeks and figure that out.

Q. Bob told us there's no specific date for Klay's return, might be December, January, but Klay has to be the one that says, "I'm ready now." How much will his voice matter with his readiness? Klay seems like the type of guy who wants to play yesterday.

STEVE KERR: Klay has to tell us he's ready, and Rick has to tell us he's ready. It's a combination of things.

There is a history with Achilles' injuries that our group has studied carefully. We have very recent experience with it with DeMarcus. I know Klay has been in touch with Kevin Durant and they have talked about Kevin's return and healing process. We need to give Klay some time. He's in great shape. He's going to take part in a lot of training camp coming up, no contact yet but a lot of the activities. He's really excited about where he is and we'll see where it all goes.

I know I can't wait for that night. And Bob already told me it has to be a home game, so I've got that figured out. We will not be starting Klay out on the road somewhere.

Q. Staying on the injury front. With what you've seen from James over the summer, how close -- and I know Bob already said there's no timeline necessarily but how close do you feel like he is from getting back on the floor and being closer to game action?

STEVE KERR: Yeah, we don't have a timeline. He's doing great with his rehab. We are going to be very careful.

Obviously he's a young player, incredibly talented. We have a great training staff that is going to be cautious and really walk him through every step of the rehab process.

So we'll just see how it goes. But very comfortable with the development process that we have in place. Our development staff is really doing a great job already employing a lot of the structure of our development that's going to happen in between games. All of our young players will be getting a healthy amount of playing time even if they are not, you know, playing in games for us, they are going to be playing a lot of basketball.

Q. How was the experience in China this summer and your whole Olympic experience?

STEVE KERR: An amazing experience. I felt really bad for the Japanese people because they spent years preparing for the Olympics, and it's such an amazing culture of service. So everywhere we went, people were so kind and generous and caring and yet nobody could come to watch.

So it was very sad. But it was really, really fun to be a part of the Gold Medal winning team, coaching all the players, coaching Kevin and Draymond again, getting to know all the other guys on the team, and then coaching with Pop who has become, you know, a real mentor for me and one of my best friends, along with the rest of an amazing staff. It was a phenomenal experience.

Q. Players always talk about in the off-season working on something or thinking about something or trying to get better. From a coach what do you do in the off-season that you try to work on or get better or something you learned about?

STEVE KERR: I think we're all constantly evolving. I tend to pick up little things from books and podcasts and it's amazing how much you can learn from stuff that has nothing to do with basketball but everything to do with human beings. I find myself in the summer highlighting a lot of passages, writing them down, keeping them in a file because I know that they will come in handy during the year, coaching individual guys, coaching the team. Just trying to figure out different ways of communicating and motivating.

So it's fun, and I think part of being on the Olympic staff was seeing how other people do it. Not only Pop, but Lloyd Pierce and Erik Spoelstra and Ime Udoka and Bill Hardy and Jay Wright, the whole group that was there in Japan. It was a pretty incredible experience, and I will definitely draw on that this coming season.

Q. Does this season's roster fit what you want to offensively more than last season's?

STEVE KERR: I think we have a better group for spacing. We have more shooting, which I think bodes well for us. You know, I thought we came on strong at the end of last year, and a lot of that was our spacing and ball movement. I'm hopeful that this year's team can feel that right away, can understand the need for spacing and swinging the ball side to side and understanding how to play off of Steph. Spacing is such a big part of that but understanding when to screen for him and where he is, and Klay, too when he comes back.

But this is a group that I think is probably more capable of doing those things than last year's group, just based on the depth of our shooting and the shooting from the front court. Otto and Nemanja in particular can really stretch the floor as fours. Belli can play five as well. So those are fun combinations to think about.

Q. Do you expect to play small a ton? Draymond at the five, maybe 20 minutes a night, type of thing?

STEVE KERR: Yeah, again, I've referenced last year, 15-5 to end the year, No. 1-ranked defense over those 20 games, No. 8-ranked offense. That's kind of the blueprint to start the year.

Now, we are going to miss some guys. We are going to miss Kelly and we're going to miss Baze. They gave us good size and length on the wings, so we have to make up for that.

But the whole idea is to play a similar style, and that means Loon is going to play a big role. Draymond is going to play a big role. You'll see Draymond at the five. You'll see Juan out there but we have some new guys to plug in, so we'll have to see how they all fit.

Absolutely, they want to play with pace and space, and really get Steph going in the open floor and getting the ball in his hands as often as possible, and the more spacing he has around him, obviously the more dangerous he becomes.

Q. How do you think James Wiseman will be impacted, missing another training camp?

STEVE KERR: Well, it's not ideal, obviously. But he's in good spirits, and our coaching staff is doing a great job of working with him every day on the things that he's able to work on. DeJan in particular has been with him every single day and in some ways it's been healthy. It would be nice if James were out there playing, but because he's not

playing, he's focusing on little details.

As a young player with so little experience, he needs work on those details. So he's getting some good work in now that I think will pay off as he gets healthy and gets back on the floor.

Q. You were mentioning Ted Lasso, have you seen it? I was told by a friend, they wanted me to ask you, was it a career highlight as well?

STEVE KERR: Yes it, was a highlight. There was a little bit of nepotism involved there, though. My son may have had something to do with that. He's on the writing team for the second season of Ted Lasso. His name was actually mentioned, as well, in the same episode. It was actually kind of fun to get a whole bunch of texts that day and for people to watch it. It's been a fun watch and we're very proud of our son for being proud of that, that whole group.

Q. Did he get to the Emmy's?

STEVE KERR: He did not get to go to the Emmy's. I've written my letter of complaint, so we'll see, hopefully next year.

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