

Golden State Warriors

Media Conference

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Klay Thompson

Media Conference



Q. I'll start with a general one. How does it feel to be back at Media Day and to be getting closer to be getting back into game action?

KLAY THOMPSON: Oh, feels so good to put this jersey on and it feels great to be on the court. Even better to be on the court. It's all incredible, absolutely incredible ask.

Q. Is the headband going to be part of the season the whole year?

KLAY THOMPSON: Well, it's been with me my whole rehab. Could be. We'll see how I shoot. I'm pretty superstitious.

Q. We all want to know, but do you have a set date or a milestone you want to hit before you're back on court?

KLAY THOMPSON: Don't have a set date but I don't anticipate anything before 12 months. That's at least till late November, early December. And then it's kind of just a feel thing, you know. It's a lot of conditioning that I have to do but there is an ends point and that's what excites me. The worst is far, far behind me.

Q. Coach Curry said Bob Myers had joked with him and said that you have to come back at a home game. Have you thought about what and what the crowd will be like when you do walk out?

KLAY THOMPSON: Oh, yeah. Thought about that moment for two years. I've really missed basketball. I miss playing for the Warriors in front of our great fans. I would be like to you if I said I did not think about that but I think about it every day. And get a little nervous about it but it's going to be very special. It's going to be a great night.

Q. I saw you during your photo shoots, and you got off the ground a ways there. Looks like you're healthy. I know that's one jump.

KLAY THOMPSON: It's one thing but it's another thing to do it in an NBA game with the best athletes in the world. But I'm excited. Just to be able to walk around and run and jump again, you take it for granted when you go through injuries that I have. I'm just excited to play with the team tomorrow and get up and down. That's going to be a fun day.

Q. With how competitive you are and have been your whole career, the last two years, the word patience has probably taken a new meaning to you.

KLAY THOMPSON: That, it has. You've got to really be patient with your body. Your mind knows you can do things that you're always used to doing but sometimes the human body, you snap a ligament or two, and that rehab process is a long one. And you know, you've got to be like water and just let that frustrating roll off your back, especially when you want to come back and be one of the greats.

Q. Described 2020 as the worst your of your life?

KLAY THOMPSON: That's pretty accurate.

Q. Injury, hardships, losing your grandmother and everything else that was going on. How do you feel like you've grown through that hardship? Do you feel like you've changed in a personal way?

KLAY THOMPSON: Yeah. I have such a healthy appreciation for this game. And you know, I wouldn't really gloat on my past success, but when you have a lot of time on your hands, you can rewatch a lot of film and sometimes rewatch those and think, how did I do that, or I can't believe our team did this, and that's what inspires me when I'm doing this rehab, to do that type of stuff again.

Also, I am able to relate to younger athletes who go through those things. So that's a positive.

Q. You've always loved basketball but did you fall in love with basketball again?



KLAY THOMPSON: No, I've always loved basketball.

Q. Did watching the film make you fall in love with the Warriors?

KLAY THOMPSON: No, I always love the Warriors. It's the team that drafted me. I've seen the fan base grow. I've seen the team go through my rookie year winning 23 games and four years later, breaking the NBA season record for win; 16-1 in the playoffs, another record. I'm very prideful to be a Warrior and so should everybody else who puts on this uniform because it's truly a privilege to play for this organization.

Q. What's your response from your teammates like when they see you? I know a lot of people are excited to see you, but can you see your teammates eyes when you're around?

KLAY THOMPSON: Yeah, feeling like a veteran and it's just been great to lean on these guys, especially the last year. I got to watch a lot of them play so hard, and I got to watch guys carve out a nice niche for themselves in the NBA. Now I want to come back and be able to help them.

We all have a role to do, whether it's lead the team in scoring or play ten minutes a game, these guys take great pride in that and that's what excites me is our front office does a great job in selecting guys who want to win.

Q. As far as captain Klay this summer, is there a wait list for the teammates on the boat and how long might that reservation be?

KLAY THOMPSON: It's a great question. There's definitely a wait list. You have to show me you can tie a boat knot. You have to be able to not get seasick for at least an hour. I don't know, you just have to have an enthusiasm for the ocean like I do, and then I'll let you on the Axopar.

Q. What have you learned about how strong you are mentally to be able to endure that downtime?

KLAY THOMPSON: I'll learn a lot more when I come back and feel that game action, because still in the middle of my rehab, I'm probably like 75 or 80 percentile of what I need to do. So when I get closer to 100 percent, I'll start to feel myself again.

What did I learn, as far as mentally, there's things that you cannot control but you can control how you react to every situation, and I've learned to take a more emotional conscious approach to the craft that comes my way.

Q. What exactly can you do right now on the court?

KLAY THOMPSON: I can make a lot of jumpshots. Pretty good at defensive sliding. My timing is a little off. My reaction time is not there. But that's also being rusty, two years. So I anticipate, you know, with hopefully the next four weeks play five-on-five again, one-on-one, and then from there it should be smooth -- not smooth sailing but should be up from there. I've done everything but five-on-five, one-on-one, so I'm feeling very confident in my body again.

Q. What did you think of the way they rebuilt the roster this summer, and the idea of trying to compete for a title this year and obviously you have two rookies, James still coming along, and that mesh?

KLAY THOMPSON: I think it's great. I think the future's bright, and the present is even brighter. So you know, actually I've got young guys that listen to me. It's pretty crazy how time has evaporated but I am excited to coach these guys and just play alongside them. Hopefully teach them a few of the little tricks I've learned over the years and I mean, I just get excited seeing these young guys run up and down with their spry legs and their ability to get above the rim. Gets me excited to try to develop their skills a little bit more and their basketball minds.

Q. The pandemic has had a big effect, and there's been a lot of social adjustments in that time, too. What have you been able to persevere and what have you been able to see and take away from the things have changed in our lives the last couple years?

KLAY THOMPSON: I mean, I've learned as professional athletes and NBA players, we have a platform. It's all right to do what we want with that platform but let's pay more attention to social justice issues or promote your own business or a small business or the community. And I've learned that it's a very special opportunity to have these type of platforms.

You know, world leaders sometimes don't have as big a platform we can, and I think it's great we voice not only our frustrations, but we empower communities that may be marginalized.

I thought a really special moment for us last year was walking through Oakland with Juan Toscano-Anderson and watching him lead. He grew up in east Oakland. It's tough, we all know how tough it is out there and just follow him and his friends in the neighborhoods and chant the names of those who have been unfairly murdered and unarmed. That was probably my favorite moment of the year. It was very empowering and it was so surreal and it

was special.

To see Juan do that and be so vocal about it -- I was very lucky. I had a privileged lifestyle growing up. My dad played in the league and I went to private school. I think sometimes for so many people out there, we need to be more empathetic what people go through on a daily basis, and I think the Warriors organization is that the forefront of that. They are so involved with the community, not only in Oakland but in San Francisco, San Jose, and they have empowered a lot of people and I think Juan Toscano-Anderson will have a movie about his story one day.

So we have got some great minds on our team and I have learned as NBA players that we can be at the forefront of change if we really want to.

Q. What have you learned as you got older that perhaps you didn't see from a social justice standpoint growing up?

KLAY THOMPSON: I learned that the cards are stacked against a lot of people. I was the son of an NBA player. So for a lot of my life, I was able to operate in spaces with a lot of white people, a lot of people who come from great families to who go to college, who are lawyers, doctors.

But then you come to the NBA and you learn from your teammates and you learn from players who come from inner city or the favelas of Brazil, and they have worked so hard to elevate their lifestyle. But it's hard because you have so much family and friends who you want to have that same American experience. Sometimes the cards are just stacked against you, whether it's the neighborhood you grow up in, the school system you're in. It's hard just to obtain assurance of your next meal.

And 2020 really taught me that we still have such a long way to go, especially in this country, you know, people to have the same opportunity I had as a kid. I had everything handed to me. I had gym access. I had great schooling. And I want every child, no matter what color you are, to have that opportunity, and it might seem like it's impossible but it's not, and I think you start within your community first. You empower those around you, whether it be your family or friends and then you try and go bigger. We've got the platform playing for the Warriors. You try to preach great things whether it's valuing time, your family, your relationships rather than material things or the big house or the mansion.

But really, just the ability to inspire people is what I learned 2020 is all about.

Q. And do you ever have racial incidents going up or did being the son of your father protect you from that?

KLAY THOMPSON: You know, being at a private school a lot, you know, sometimes there's only a few kids of color. So you would hear ignorant things, but it didn't affect me as much as it does now in adulthood because I was a child. I just let it roll off my back whether it was hearing the n-word or racial epithets about marginalized groups. You just learn that's ignorance and all you can do is check people for it, and I learned in adulthood how deep words really cut.

You know, you remember those traumas as a kid, and I didn't get much at all but so many of my friends in the NBA have so many stories about being stereo typed, whether it's being pulled over for being black or checked at the shopping mall or buying stuff and not thinking you could afford it, stuff like that just opened my mind does tried to be more compassionate to people who have had to deal with that for generations. I think 2020 really showed us that the world needs more love, and just to try to hear people's story because you don't want to be judgemental of people who have gone through so much.

Q. Coming back from two years, you look at the roster and just four guys that you played with, Steph, Draymond, Kevon, and now Andre coming back, do you look at all the new faces and almost feel like it's a changed team from last time you played?

KLAY THOMPSON: Not really. I mean, I've got so much playoff experience with those guys you named. But definitely the bench has obviously changed. It's like a revolving door in the NBA. It's a business.

But you know, Jordan Poole is in his third year. I remember when he was my rookie. Like where has time gone, really. It gives me a lot of life to see these young guys. It reminds me when me, Steph and Draymond came on board and how everything was so fresh and how every night was a big opportunity, whether preseason or playoffs. Although it does feel like a new team, there's still a ton of familiarity between the core guys who have been here and luckily for us these guys are willing to do whatever it takes to win.

Q. When you went down initially, you were reaching a new level with your ability. Do you feel like for what you've done and how far you've come, do you still feel like that level is attainable?

KLAY THOMPSON: Oh, yeah. That's my last taste of hoops was 2019 Finals and I was really shooting the heck out of the ball. I might not get there right away but I expect to be there at some point during the season, and I think

very highly of myself when it comes to scoring and being a two-way player, and although I've been through tough injuries, I'm not going to use it as a crutch. I'm going to go out and play as hard as I can, and luckily for me, we have a great training staff that won't let me loose until I'm ready.

But I was on my way. I was playing the best I ever played in the Finals, so I expect to take off on that knows. That's just my attitude.

Q. A lot of guys are extending their career close to their 40s. Do you have an idea of when you would like to play, as long as it might be, and do you think you can get -- do you want to go like Steph and Tom Brady and those type of guys?

KLAY THOMPSON: I would like to, but sometimes stuff happens you can't control. And health is obviously the most important factor when it comes to longevity. So I just want to kill it this year. Not even this year. I just want to kill it at training camp. But I would love to play until I'm 40. The greatest shooters have always had longevity, whether it be Ray Allen, Reggie Miller or Steph or Steve Kerr played forever. I plan on shooting in this league for a long time.

Q. What do you think Andre returning can do for you guys?

KLAY THOMPSON: Just his leadership. The man has had one of the most incredible careers in a Warriors jersey. He's one of our three Final MVPs. He is a clutch defender, he's a clutch shooter, and even more importantly, when they say more than an athlete, Andre represents that. He has been a great investor in the Bay Area. He is a great family man, to see little Andre Jr. about 14 about to go into high school, it's crazy.

And he can just be a shoulder for these young guys, and he has really figured it out and I'm still happy to have him back. I still go to him or advice on the daily. I love Andre. He will have his jersey in the rafters one day as he should because he's a Hall of Famer in my books.

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