

Golden State Warriors

Media Conference

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Steve Kerr

Postgame Media Conference



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Q. I don't think anyone was surprised by Jordan Poole's performance tonight but what do you think of the young guy's composure on such a big stage?

STEVE KERR: Yeah, it was great. Technically his first playoff game. But our two play-in games last year sure felt like playoff games. So he played great in those two games. So kind of what we expected. He's not afraid of moment. Looking forward to it. He works every day to prepare. Yeah, he had a great game.

Q. You set it up to have that closing group when you put Jordan in with Steph, Klay and wig begins. Was that the plan and is that your closing lineup and what does it do when you have those guys in together?

STEVE KERR: I think you get a lot of floor spacing. You get two play-makers with Steph and Jordan and you get Draymond at the five where he's most effective where he can do his thing in terms of DHOs and being a great screener. You know, diving into the pocket, catching the ball, play-making himself.

It's a good lineup. It's kind of what we've always done here depending on personnel but going to Draymond at the five and trying to spread the floor. So it's fun to see it. I think it's the first time we've been able to get to that lineup all year. I may be wrong but we haven't done it often that's for sure because of injuries.

Q. The defense on Jokic with Draymond and Kevon and Steph helping out and others, how important was that and much did you like that effort?

STEVE KERR: He's such a phenomenal player. You just have to be as solid as possible. I thought we for the most part took away the back cuts. He's such a brilliant passer. When you play these guys, you have to take something away. If he's dicing you up with back cuts and he's getting to the foul line and he's making 3s, he's impossible to

guard.

So I think you look at his numbers, 25, 10 and 6, he's the MVP for a reason. Brilliant player. We did our best on him and we know he's coming back for Game 2 and it's going to be a lot harder.

Q. He only had two free throw attempts. What's the key to your guys defending him physically? They didn't foul him tonight.

STEVE KERR: Yeah, Loon and Draymond are great post defenders. They understand how to guard without fouling. Belly did a good job on him, a few possessions. He knows him well. We had a couple guys on him as well, Andre, Otto, everybody who was out there I think understood the value of doing your best without fouling, and then the guards not getting beat on back cuts. We did a good job that have and that's got to continue.

Q. Not starting Steph, you didn't want the long break in between?

STEVE KERR: Yes.

Q. And how hard is it going to be to get Jordan Poole out of that starting lineup?

STEVE KERR: Yeah, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Q. How did Steph come out? He made 22 minutes, I believe it was. Any issues at all?

STEVE KERR: No. Feeling good. I liked the way he approached the game. I think his first stint, he didn't even shoot. Took care of the ball. Got a couple of assists. Got his feet wet and then kind of found his rhythm as the game went on.

So it was a really good first game back for him and this will help set the table for what's coming.

Q. And how would you describe the process that allowed the vets to become comfortable with Jordan



having the ball at big moments like this?

STEVE KERR: What was the process that, what?

Q. The process that allowed let the veterans be comfortable with the ball and not Steph.

STEVE KERR: Because of the way Jordan has played all season long. He's earned the respect and trust of his teammates. They believe in him and they see what he's done all year. So there's no hesitation to put the ball in his hands.

Q. Did you consider the play-in games as turning points that gave you comfort he would be ready for the big stage?

STEVE KERR: He had a great season a year ago, particularly the second half of the season. Then, yeah, I mean, those are basically playoff games, and he performed at a really high level.

So just having that in my memory and his experience, it was pretty obvious he was not going to be shy tonight. And he was fantastic.

Q. Was 22 minutes about what you expected for Steph tonight?

STEVE KERR: Yeah. I mean, you know, given that he's not starting, you know, somewhere in there. He could have played more. But it was I think a good starting point.

Q. We've talked a lot about that three-guard lineup and tonight we saw a pretty hefty dose of it. What do you think of the way Steph, Klay and Jordan played together and that small ball lineup to close?

STEVE KERR: I thought they were great. Klay had a big night shooting the ball. Obviously Jordan, Andrew Wiggins was fantastic tonight. His defense, his rebounding, he had nine boards, he attacked the rim, 6-for-11 but had a couple at the rim that didn't quite fall. Got to the foul line.

I thought Wiggs was tremendous. So he's a really nice complement to those other guys because there's a lot of open floor for Wiggs to attack when Jordan, Steph and Klay are out there with him.

Q. 41-35 in rebounding to you guys, and you had one more offensive rebound than them; how big of a factor is that considering how you want to play against them, fast and small?

STEVE KERR: It's a good stat for us. You just want to

make sure the possession game is either in your favor or even. It's hard to win playoff games if you're giving the other team an extra eight or ten possessions. So take care of the ball and rebound, which we did both thing well.

In my experience, NBA, Game 2 after a comfortable win in Game 1 is always, always a toughen did he ever. So we know what's coming. Denver has had a lot of success in the playoffs the last few years. Got a lot of experience. Well-coached. Good start for us but we have to be on our toes and on edge for Monday.

Q. You touched on Draymond's defense but you went 9-of-14 off his passes. Yesterday Mike Malone said felt Draymond's absence was a big reason why they went 3-1 on you this season. Was tonight an example of how overall Draymond impacts the game?

STEVE KERR: Draymond is a Hall of Famer. He's a two-time Olympic champion. I don't know how many times he's made the All-Star team an awful lot. He's been Defensive Player of the Year. He's one of the best players in the league. Tonight he showed why.

Q. We see the fire that Draymond plays with. How do you assess his ability to strategically or tactically approach something whether it's Anthony Davis from years ago, or Thompson, now with Jokic, how does he lock in mentally for these match-ups?

STEVE KERR: What makes him great is his competitiveness. He's obviously incredibly smart. He's a skilled passer and he's never going to be one of most skilled offensive players in the league but what he is is competitive as anybody I've ever been around and as smart as anybody I've ever been around. It's a pretty good combination when you're playing in the playoffs. You need smart and tough, and that's Draymond. He locks in and you don't want to be around him too much.

He gets antsy and he wants to play. These last five days were -- he was an edge. I could feel it. We just needed to get to the game today for his sake. He bounced to the gym today for our walk-through, all energy and all sometimes and it was finally game day and that's what Draymond lives for.

Q. Jordan Poole is shooting something like 43 percent from three; rookie year he's 28 percent from three and last year he's low 30s. Did you see something like this coming? He's always had a good free throw but basically shooting Steph Curry levels the last month and a half.

STEVE KERR: You watch him work and you see the



skillset and you see the ability to shoot on and off the ball.

His first two years in practice, he would line it up and the game the first especially, the game would start and he would be in a rush. It's just typical inexperience and that's why it takes a couple years for a young guy to get the game to slow down. I'm not really that surprised at this streak. He's a great shooter. Free throw shooting is always a great indicator that if you're a great free thrower, you're generally a great shooter.

For him it's just been a matter of game coming more easily to him from a speed standpoint. So it's not surprising.

Q. You already mentioned Game 2 is a big step up in terms of intensity. Do you expect Steph Curry to still -- do you want to be cautious with him or are you now emboldened to take the governor off of him as soon as possible or were you happy enough with tonight's results where you would be comfortable bringing him off the bench again in Game 2 just to be cautious?

STEVE KERR: I didn't know that Steph had a Governor (laughter).

Q. That's you and the medical staff.

STEVE KERR: Steph is Steph. He's done this a million times. So whatever the training staff says, you know, we'll adapt accordingly. But I don't have to tell him anything. Like you know, "Hey, take it easy." I don't even talk to him about that. He's Steph Curry. He's going to do his thing.

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