

NBA Western Conference First Round: Nuggets vs Warriors

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

San Francisco, California, USA

Golden State Warriors

Steph Curry

Game 5: Postgame



Golden State Warriors 102, Denver Nuggets 98

Q. What was your mindset, starting the fourth quarter down eight? What was your thinking going into that?

STEPH CURRY: It was a weird vibe dealing with, I'll call it some nerves and anxiousness, to try to take care of business, knowing how important this game was to win.

First three quarters, two and a half quarters, you could tell we were pressing a little bit and obviously they were -- Jokic was playing amazing. They had a lot of life in that third quarter and it was a good reminder of, again, how hard it is to win a playoff game and how hard it is to close a team out.

Just dealing with, you know, the nerves of it all, because it matters so much, and I think we wanted it so much. Kind of got in our own way a little bit.

And then you know, fourth quarter is just about can you find a way just to get it done. Get enough stops to speed up the game a little bit, put some pressure on him. We were able to do that. Obviously everybody contributed.

It was a fun way to finish the game, considering all that's happened this year, with the lineup we had out there, with GP doing his thing on both ends of the floors. You know, Draymond and Loon providing a good presence for us inside, Otto coming up big. It was exactly, not exactly how you would draw it up but it's a playoff-type environment where you just get the win and get out of here.

Q. When Gary made the roster, was there a moment where you know, oh, that guy could help us win a playoff game, maybe early in the season?

STEPH CURRY: Seemed so long ago, but like November was wild just how he was making his presence felt,

bringing a lot of energy, athleticism, on both ends of the floor, his defensive awareness and impact.

So you knew like he was capable of doing that, but it's also like the unknown of this group being, you know, in that situation for the first time, and the playoffs brings the best and worst out of you.

Like look at his impact this series, if I'm not mistaken, first two games, he played a little bit, but you know, wasn't -- it had an impact but it wasn't like tonight.

Game 3 he was amazing in the first half where he was pretty much perfect in his minutes.

Game 4, didn't really have that opportunity. Then he comes back and finishes off a series-clinching game, so it's how we do things. Everybody has to be ready but he really made his presence felt and showed what he's capable of and he's going to continue to do that, especially with whoever we play next round.

Q. In a game like this where the Nuggets were coming after you guys really hard early on and physical, a lot of fouling, got choppy, grimy. How value youth a tool is a guy like Gary?

STEPH CURRY: He fills a lot of different roles and he's tough to -- if he's making his catch-and-shoot threes, he's tough to game plan against because you put probably your big on him. He can roll -- obviously he was rolling to the basket, pick-and-rolls, finishing at the rim. He made us two clutch threes.

What he gives us on defense is amazing already, and then when you put teams in different positions on offense, when they are defending us, and he's kind of roaming all over the place and using his quickness to his advantage, it's pretty impactful. He even made a play I think where he turned out a three-pump fake, drove down, dropped down a pass to Draymond for a finish. You could tell it's a guy that's opinion around the game in terms of it's in his DNA. He looked very composed in a big moment.

Q. You seemed to get going from three in the second



half and you clearly decided to get to the rim. What went into that decision and how much better do you feel driving to the rim with the way they are playing you on defense?

STEPH CURRY: That's just how I feel. I think I hit those three threes in the third quarter, I think they were all in the third quarter. It's just a matter of just feeling the rhythm and stepping in and taking them. The rest of the time, you try to play that balance of not forcing something early on the shot clock and making them defend. You know, seeing those driving lanes that if they are going to try and sell out the three and you get a big out there in an uncomfortable position, you can get downhill.

So it's just being confident with whatever it is. Like even if I were to try to shoot some set-back threes, that's the shot I was going to take, it was going to be a confident shot. But you kind of live and die with that. Tonight is was a nice balance down the stretch. I saw a lot of space and was able to get down there.

Q. Draymond was so determined to defend without fouling after Game 4. He shined on that tough matchup each game. What can you say about what he does on the playoff stage to take his game to another level in a matchup like that?

STEPH CURRY: Having been around the block a few times, run out of words to try to describe it. Obviously a guy like Jokic, I don't even know how to explain him either; the pressure he puts on your defense every single possession, it's insane.

So Draymond taking on that challenge, obviously undersized but not in his heart and his competitiveness. Found a way to make his presence felt. And it's also his understanding of the game to know you could look at Jokic's stat line and it's ridiculous, like 30-19-18, but if you asked him, he understand that is Draymond is going to make him work for everything. Over the course of a series, I don't know, I'm glad I'm on this side of that conversation.

Q. Yesterday you talked of the essence of who you are as a team is seeing what's best for the team and accepting it even if it might be a lesser role and we were thinking it was about starting. But Jordan doesn't play most of the fourth quarter. Do you talk to him about that? Do you think he understands that or does he get it because that's who you are?

STEPH CURRY: I think Wiggs said it yesterday, you put your ego aside and understand things change really quickly. But we need everybody. We need everybody to have an impact and when you're out there on the floor, be

locked in.

I was talking to Coach the other day, it's not like you have eight guys that you're just going to play. We do have 12, 13 guys that you could throw out there and understand how we play and could provide some energy, you know, something on defense or offense.

So for JP, like it's the playoff experience of understanding he really helped us get off to a great start in this series and we needed every bit of his energy and his offense those first two games, three games, really. These last two, I'm just proud of the way he's competed on the defensive end, took that big charge on Bones down the stretch in the second quarter. Like found a way to be impactful.

And then the lessons you need to learn in terms of fouling and game plan stuff, that's the evolution of that playoff experience. So like I said, we've been saying this all year, he's built for this. He understands who he is and what he provides for us and Game 1, next series, you start it all over again.

Q. Do you anticipate that you'll ever have to be in a situation where you're coming off the bench again?

STEPH CURRY: I hope not.

Q. And then --

STEPH CURRY: I know it would mean -- it would only be an injury, so I hope not.

Q. This is the first time you've won a playoff series since 2019. What does it mean to do it with these guys, especially after everything you've been through over the last two, three years?

STEPH CURRY: It means a lot. You don't ever take it for granted. You understand that being on this stage, we understand that we hopefully have a lot left to do. But getting to the playoffs and getting through a series, winning four games against a good team, like it's hard. Every team wants to be in this position at the end of the year.

And for me Draymond, Klay, Loon, we've all been there before and know that feeling and love the competition and the environment. It's also a reminder of like this -- tonight was just a weird feeling because we had not been there in a while. Again, we wanted it so bad. Kind of made it a lot more difficult on ourselves.

But we still remember how to do it which is a good feeling.

Q. First of all, that fourth quarter defense, did that

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reflect the urgency you were talking about realizing how much you needed this game? And when you missed the two free throws seemed like you were talking to the basket and were utterly perplexed by that. What was that all about?

STEPH CURRY: The defense, again, it's whatever it takes to win. You could feel the moment and you could feel the intensity of every possession. Trying to just focus on not giving up anything easy, making them work for everything that they got. We got a lot of good deflections. Third quarter, we couldn't rebound the ball and that was the difference in the fourth quarter. We actually got stops and then rebounds and could turn it into offense.

You know, like a grind-out, a playoff series, there's going to be grind-out quarters to finish it out where nothing on offense is pretty. It's just who can hoe their physicality, their IQ and get it done. We definitely did that tonight.

What was the other -- oh, I'm going to make free throws, so be all right.

Q. You can kind of see yourself feeding off the crowd at the end. What was the energy like the last few minutes closing it out for the first time at Chase Center?

STEPH CURRY: I mean, it's nice to have home-court advantage in a game like tonight where because we haven't been here in so long, and close out games are so difficult, like need to feed off the crowd.

So every dead ball like we had some momentum, I was trying to make sure fans knew how much this meant to us, and you know, to keep them engaged and really continue to develop a home-court advantage here in the playoffs.

So it was fun. It was electric. It was loud. Fourth quarter, yeah, you could tell, it was kind of a collective anxiousness in there, and a great celebration afterwards. That's what it's all about, really.

Q. Where were you health-wise two and a half, three weeks ago with your foot? And was there a moment then that you doubted what type of impact you could have on like the first round of the playoffs?

STEPH CURRY: There's no doubt. I mean, I talked about, I was just trying to stay patient with the process knowing that the goal was always to be available for Game 1, whatever that meant. As it got closer, I could be confident that I could provide something. The question mark was how was it going to respond after each game and trying to continue to improve.

So I knew I could have an impact. It's just a matter of sustaining that and thankfully I got through pretty much unscathed. Got my minutes up to what they are usually like in a playoff series.

And hopefully I can take advantage of these at least next three days, and keep building, keep letting the foot heal. Everything is working very timely right now in terms of us being in the playoffs and me trying to do what I want to do.

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