

# Golden State Warriors Media Conference

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## Steve Kerr

Media Conference



**Q. All summer long, you've been waiting for specific veteran to decide what he's going to do. What's your latest inkling? Obviously he says he's going to announce it on his Podcast but what's your inkling?**

STEVE KERR: I'm just hopeful. Beyond that, I really don't know, you know, what Andre is going to do. He's been in here working out and kind of getting training staff to work with him and look at him and I think he's getting a feel for what he wants to do, and we told him from the beginning, take as long as you want.

So he's taking his time and that's fine. So we'll see.

**Q. Is there any injury concerns heading into camp or do you basically expect everyone ready for practice day one?**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, we're expecting everybody to be ready to go. But we will take precautionary measures for anybody, especially our veteran guys, if there's anything, you know, especially early in camp, we want to make sure we ramp them up at the right pace. You know, we'll get a good feel for that the first day or two.

**Q. No, I guess, restrictions for like Wiseman, Rollins, Baldwin, any of those guys?**

STEVE KERR: No.

**Q. Why is this one different than the last ones?**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, I think what makes this one different is just the prevalence of youth on our roster. You know, after you get past our first six, plus Dante and JaMychal, you're really looking at a young group, basically first- and second-year guys, which is exciting but also daunting because you just don't show up in this league and win. It took Steph Curry and Klay, it took those guys a few years to really learn how to win. They would be the first to tell you that.

So I think our young guys have a lot to learn but they are

all very talented and so it's an interesting mix of veteran and youth that we're excited about, but we are also conscious that it's not going to be smooth sailing all the time. There's going to be some -- some -- a learning curve for sure.

**Q. Off-mic.**

STEVE KERR: I think all players are very -- (audio break.)

He's played in a ton. We threw him into the deep end. When he was a rookie two years ago, we were decimated with injury and we threw him into the deep end and he had some great nights and he had some tough nights. This year we'll be fitting him into a championship team, so it's a different role for him and we'll have I think (audio break).

What it really means is we just have to change the structure of our camp, and when we return from Tokyo, that's when we'll have a really good week of practice to start implementing some things and kind of get to the nuts and bolts of what we want to do this year.

**Q. Almost two different camps in a way?**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, I mean, three days does not constitute a camp. They practices and then a trip to Tokyo is totally different. We'll use those two games as part of our preparation obviously. But you just adapt and it's fine. It's just different.

**Q. I think you said that you liked the work that Kuminga put in in the off-season. What exactly were you hoping to see him work on specifically in the off-season?**

STEVE KERR: Well, with Jonathan, it's similar to James in that you're talking about a really talented young player without a ton of experience. So there are specific things that we want from him: Running the floor, rebounding, becomes a great defensive player. Being able to utilize his physical size and strength and athleticism.

But some of that just means playing a lot and figuring out the game, figuring out the NBA game, seeing the

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advantages, seeing when to attack, when not to attack.

Most of that comes with experience. So he just needs to continue on the path he's been on and I think he'll be in good shape.

**Q. You mentioned earlier the difference between last time you guys were defending titles and now with the youth movement. During that run of five straight, you were viewed as overwhelming favorites. Obviously we know you have to show up. How do you view this team knowing obviously what you did last year but knowing you have some youth and just the rest of the NBA and who else is in the conference and the League, heading into camp, what do you see for this team and how do you feel like you're viewed going into the year?**

STEVE KERR: I think last year we were hoping to be in the mix and we were hoping we would but we weren't sure. Obviously winning the title and returning our top six guys, we feel really good about being in the mix now. We're back in it.

But there's a lot of teams that are right in it, and the league is super competitive. I think the West has gotten even stronger. There's a lot of competition out there. So we are one of the teams that's in the mix and that's exciting. We have to start over. It doesn't just automatically happen from one year to the next, so we've got a lot of work.

**Q. What have you thought about Moody and Poole in the off-season?**

STEVE KERR: Well, Jordan really established himself last year as a really good NBA player. So for him, it's now about getting better defensively, more consistent defensively, to become -- for Moses, it's about taking the next step and earning a spot in the rotation. Last year he was on the fringe and as a rookie, that's usually how it works.

But Moses has a great shot right now to really take a spot in the rotation and make himself a really big part of this year's team.

**Q. You had very flexible starting lineups in the playoffs throughout. After what seems like a pretty secure starting five, Jordan, sixth man, is that how you're viewing it, like you have your starting five and Jordan is your best bench player, or can you see in certain matchups, Jordan starting, you're going small, that type of thing?**

STEVE KERR: Only way I'm looking at it right now our top

six are really clear but like last year, there will undoubtedly be injuries and things will happen and our lineup about change based on circumstance.

But those guys are going to play a ton. It's too hard to say right now, are we going to start the exact same way every single game. We have to see how it all shakes out. I think that's more the story is what happens after those six.

We know those guys are all going to get playing time but from what happens from there, to me, it's wide open. We have JaMychal and Dante who have been a big part of rotations for great teams in this league. I have a lot of faith they will be able to come in and contribute at a high level, and we have got all these young guys fighting for spots. I'm excited about the competition that's ahead.

**Q. Does your mentality or approach to the regular season change at all this year, as opposed to maybe a year ago?**

STEVE KERR: Maybe a little bit based on the circumstances. I mentioned that last year we really felt it was important to establish ourselves right away, and we got off to that quick start, 18-2, I think. We needed our vets to play together and develop that chemistry.

I think in the end, we won 53 games. Started out strong and kind of, you know, had that lull late in the regular season. You never know how this stuff is going to shake out, but I think we have more confidence in our ability to compete at the highest level going into this season. And the season may take on a slightly different shape in terms of the momentum and the energy and everything else. We have got to navigate that as it comes.

**Q. You have a good number of guys in, quote, unquote, contract years. Do you like that? Do you think that can be a benefit for you guys in some ways or how do you view that?**

STEVE KERR: It just varies. You know, some guys play better when their contract is up. Some guys stress out about it. You know, sometimes somebody will sign a long-term deal and be thrilled and settle down and relax, and other guys will sign a long-term deal and feel pressure to, you know, match the contract they have been given. Everybody is different.

So I don't really worry too much about that before the season starts. I try to get a good feel for what every player is going through and help them through their own set of circumstances.

**Q. Every NBA off-season comes with drama. And this**



**week we have seen a lot of drama with two top teams that are contenders. I'm just wondering if you can draw a correlation throughout your career but specifically with the Warriors, between the stability of leadership and success on the court?**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, I think organizational stability is a huge factor in pro sports, but I think especially in the NBA, especially today because of the player movement.

I think one of the great strengths of our team is our continuity. For sure within the roster, you know, with our core guys who have won titles together.

But also, with ownership and management, and this will be my ninth year. We have a really stable, solid organization, a very successful one. We have worked together well. And when you throw all that together with this talented core, there's kind of a lot of institutional knowledge that allows you to kind of push forward quicker than if everybody is brand new.

A know coach has to install a new system, get to know each other, GM has to put in a new structure. All that stuff matters. So to have that continuity that we have that's really a decade long, when you think about the players, Steph, Klay, Draymond, Andre, Bob, Joe, those guys have been together for a decade, and I'm just behind about by a couple years.

We really look at that as one of our -- one of our advantages.

**Q. How rare is that?**

STEVE KERR: It is rare. We're in a sweet spot. We know that. Those sweet spots if you look historically in the NBA, they always come with special talent. As a coach, you don't stay anywhere unless you've got special talent: Jerry Sloan, Stockton, Malone. You know, Pop, Tim Duncan, Ginobili, Parker, David Robinson. You know, Phil Jackson, the Chicago days, the Laker days. There's always special talent at the core of any extended run and I think you also need really strong management and ownership, and we've had that.

So it's nothing that we can take for granted. We have to keep working but we do view it as an advantage.

**Q. With your three vets of Steph, Klay and Draymond, usually you keep those guys in the mid-30s, minutes-wise. Is there any consideration to shaving off a few minutes per game in the regular season or do you want to keep it the same as you have the last few years?**

STEVE KERR: We'll see how it goes. I think early in this run, they were all like around 32, which we were able to do because we were very talented and we were able to win a lot of games where we could rest guys in the fourth quarter. We didn't have that luxury last year, and I think if I'm not mistaken, Steph's minutes went up by a couple minutes.

I think all that stuff matters. It would be great if we could limit some minutes and be able to have guys really ready and physically in a great place going into the playoffs. But you've got to get there, and every season is different, and you have to read it as it goes. So we'll see.

**Q. How important was it getting a free agent like JaMychal, someone who came in and said that he's here to do all the little things, set the screens, fight for loose balls, etc.?**

STEVE KERR: Thrilled to have JaMychal. I thought Otto Porter and Bjelica last year were such important pieces to our team, veteran players, who just knew how to play the game. Good shooters. Smart screeners, rebounders, and that's how I view JaMychal. He's really an accomplished player.

And especially given all the youth on our team coming off the bench, I viewed JaMychal as a critical addition to our team, so really excited to have him.

**Q. There's some staff changes. You're going through some coaching staff changes. Do you expect that to be a pretty smooth process or is it going to take some time to work out responsibilities?**

STEVE KERR: No, responsibilities are pretty clear. It should be pretty smooth given that we promoted from within. We just changed some roles a little bit. But we still have the chemistry that we've -- that we had a year ago.

We'll miss Mike for sure. Mike was a huge part of our success and our defensive work a year ago but also just our personality as a team. He took on a lot of leadership for us, and great relationship with our players. But there's a reason we promote it from within. We feel really good about the guys who are moving up the ladder and we feel good about the individual responsibilities, as well.

So I'm excited about the staff.

**Q. You guys played Boston in the Finals and they played a couple bigs a lot of the times. Minnesota traded for Rudy this summer and they will play him and Karl together. Cleveland is playing two bigs. You**



**guys are obviously at the forefront of going the other way playing small. What is your thought about some other teams around the league going that direction and what do you think are the pluses and minuses of it all?**

STEVE KERR: I like it. I like when teams zig when everybody else is zagging. I think it's smart. I think our advantage has always been Draymond Green. He gives us the flexibility to play big or small. And sometimes we accomplish the small part even playing big because he's so smart.

And I think Loon has now entered that conversation, too. You think back to the Finals, we played Loon and Draymond together a lot. What we lost in terms of spacing we more than made up for in terms of intelligence, hand backs, screening. We were able to generate plenty of offense, and then at the other end, put our best defensive lineup on the floor.

We have been lucky just because of our versatility on our roster with -- with multiple guys, but particularly with Draymond.

As other teams play bigger, or really stretch you out and go smaller, we always feel like we can adapt either way because of Draymond mainly. But like I said, I think Loon is part of that, too. Not to mention Wiggins who can guard multiple spots; Klay Thompson.

We have been blessed to have a great, flexible roster.

**Q. What do you think James missed specifically by missing two training camps, and what do you think he'll gain just in this next two-week period where you guys are installing and everything that comes with training camp?**

STEVE KERR: I think what James missed between two training camps and two Summer Leagues, too, is just all the foundational stuff that young players need. This is not 30 years ago where Patrick Ewing plays four years at Georgetown or Tim Duncan plays four years at Wake Forest and you're getting these guys that are ready to roll right away.

In a case like James, you have three college games and zero training camp, zero Summer Leagues. So now, comes the foundational stuff. His work ethic is fantastic. His approach, his attitude; he's beloved by his teammates. They are seeing how hard he works.

So now it's a matter of experience. He just has to keep playing, and we have got to continue to be patient and allow that development to happen an organic, natural rate.

**Q. The question has always been for years, for Steph what year will be the last, but practically, watching what he did in the playoffs and watching when he was at his best at the end of the playoffs at the end of a long run, does that alter your view, or do you think this could go on for maybe three, four more years, when most of us are thinking one, two, at the most?**

STEVE KERR: I think with Steph, you have to factor in a lot more besides just the age. You know, you can't just look at his age and go, well, he's only got a year left or two years left because that's traditionally when players start to fade or whatever.

I think of Steve Nash a lot when I think of Steph. I watched Steve in Phoenix play at a really high level until. John Stockton did the same thing in Utah. You're talking about athletes who are ferociously committed to their craft, to their body, to their conditioning. Every single aspect of Steph's day, he's devoted to being at the top of his game for as long as he can.

And you're talking about one of the best athletes in the world. Maybe not by, you know, how high you jump or how fast you are, you know, traditional athletic standpoint. But when you talk about hand-eye and balance and core strength, Steph is one of the greatest athletes on earth. And so all that stuff matters.

His ability to keep himself at such a high level, it's not an accident. He's both really, you know, kind of gifted naturally, but also totally committed, and I fully expect him to have a lot more great years.

**Q. I know you've addressed the salary situation. I was just wondering, there's ownership in sports, all sorts of sports, where stuff like this happens and nothing changes. What is it about the NBA that it isn't tolerated to the point where someone will actually sell a team? This is not the first time this has happened. But it seems unique to the NBA that the players can bring pressure and change the narrative.**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, that's a good point. I had not really thought of that dynamic. Maybe there haven't been similar situations in football and baseball. I haven't really given it much thought.

I think some of it is the age that we are in, the era that we are in. Everything is really laid out. Everything is exposed. Everything is laid out there, and then everybody is sort of free to play judge and jury and just here comes the hammer and it's really difficult to withstand that sort of barrage of whatever -- in whatever direction. We have

seen it happen in a lot of different areas of life, not just sports.

I don't really know that the NBA is different but I'll have to give that one some more thought.

**Q. Similar but different to James. For the first time in three or four years, Klay has had a summer where it's not rehab but it's just having fun on vacation, but also just working back. How big is that going to be for him both physically and mentally heading into this year?**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, he's had a great summer. Just the peace of mind being back and playing at such a high level, winning a championship and then getting a summer without having to rehab all the time, he's in a great place mentally, spiritually. He's really happy.

I think he'll be -- I know he'll be in a good place, just emotionally as he comes into camp. But I think our training staff repeatedly has told us and told him last year that he will be better this year than he was the second half of last year just because of the nature of the rehab. I expect him to be a big year and be more consistent. I thought he showed that he was still himself last year but it was more sporadic. I think it will be more consistent this year. I think we are all sort of anticipating that.

**Q. As you've reflected on what Klay did come back from over the last couple months of being away, are you still pretty amazed at what he did and to come back after two and a half years?**

STEVE KERR: Yeah, yeah, I mean, he had to overcome so much, not only physically but the devastation of being taken away from the game for two straight years. Really, two and a half.

I was so impressed with his defense in the Finals.

That was kind of an underrated part of that series was as the series went on, he got better and better. He got more and more physical. Was able to stay in front of their big guns and just contribute so much to our defense that he looked like the old Klay to me in that regard. Because that's always been maybe what people don't notice as much because he's such a great shooter but when he's at his best, he's a brilliant two-way player.

And so it was so much fun to see him return to that stage and have a lot of fun out there.

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