

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

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Darvin Ham

Media Conference



Lakers 117, Warriors 112

Q. Before the game, you knew they were going to make runs like that. What was the turning point after they made that big push?

DARVIN HAM: I just think us being solid, remaining solid, staying organized offensively, not getting disappointed or discouraged defensively.

Came in with a game plan. We knew it was going to be ebbs and flows, peaks and valleys within this 48-minute game. That's just who they are, they put a lot of pressure on you to guard continuously, second by second, minute by minute, quarter by quarter, half by half.

The biggest thing again is us having the next play mentality and giving multiple efforts. You saw plenty of times guys getting it to the paint, guys active, spraying around, taking quick outlets to three passes away. Our guys being active, A.D. specifically in the paint, showing his hands, getting deflections, blocks, coming up with tough rebounds. On the other end of the floor, just trying to be organized, making sure we got a good look every time whether it was made or missed, making sure we got good looks.

Q. I believe A.D. didn't sit in the second half. At what point did you decide you could extend him if you needed to?

DARVIN HAM: Again, I repeat, this is what low management is about. If there's going to be low management, we have to manage their lows throughout the regular season in order for us to push them a little further during this time of year.

Post-season, everything is at its peak. You have to pare down your rotation and you got to push the big dogs. Your big dogs got to be there early and often.

We just made a conscious decision, communicated on the sideline, and we were able to push him on through and allow him to play the full half.

Q. You mentioned A.D. Obviously huge night for him. The two plays right at the end, how huge were those plays?

DARVIN HAM: I mean, he's elite defensively. His ability to change shots, block shots, then still gather the rebounds, that's rare. That's rare company for guys that's able to do that.

I told him before the game, Dominate on both sides of the ball. He's been doing that. We expect nothing less from him. We expect it to continue.

Q. Here are the other names of the players in Lakers history who had 30/20 games, Wilt, Kareem, Shaq, Elgin. You contextualize that performance you got from him tonight?

DARVIN HAM: I mean, you're talking about top 75 players, some of the best players our league or basketball in general has ever saw in its history.

Again, that's what we expect of him. We know that's what he's capable of. It's great. We needed every bit of all those points and rebounds and blocked shots, assists as well.

The biggest thing for us is, again, not to get happy, stay humble, respect our opponent, but also know that there's a ton of work left to be done. It's not the first one, not the first with the greatest performance individually. We just got to keep stacking, keep stacking days, keep coming up and putting our best foot forward.

Q. What was the message at halftime?

DARVIN HAM: Just playing with force. Obviously doing what we could in transition. Again, they're a tough, tough ballclub. Any time you got Poole, Thompson and Curry seeing shots go in, it's a nightmare. So just not getting discouraged, not getting disappointed, but all the while remaining forceful on our offensive end, playing downhill, loving and living in the paint, putting a lot of pressure on them to guard in the paint.



I think the free-throw line definitely helped us. Our ability, again, to not just hold the ball, but set good, hard screens, come off swinging the ball, drive downhill, secondary and third side drives. It went well for us in that department.

Just got to figure out a way, try to do what we can to guard them better, not allow them to get loose so early and often from the three-point line, but yet maintain our physicality and our force on offense.

Q. When you have Dennis scoring as well as playing defense, how beneficial is that to you guys?

DARVIN HAM: It's huge, especially him showing up our second unit, him coming off. I tell him all the time, Be aggressive, assertive, make good decisions, don't think twice. All of our guys, they encourage Dennis, Austin, DLo, they all get encouraged by our two captains, LeBron and A.D., to come out and be assertive within the context of playing the right way.

Dennis was huge. He's definitely a two-way player. He's going to come out and give it his all on both sides of the ball, physical, scrappy, give multiple efforts, then push the pace and be able to get stuff done from the free-throw line.

Q. To have someone like Dennis on your team who is making those two free throws in the last seconds, being so ice cold, this is so important. What is your thoughts about that?

DARVIN HAM: He's a big-time finisher. I've known the kid since he first came into the league. That's my guy. That's why we wanted him on our team. We know how he plays, especially in big moments. He plays the biggest. He's not afraid of the moment.

He asks for the ball to be in his hands. Our guys trust him having the ball in his hands late in the game. We know if he's fouled or whatever, the play needs to be made. If it's an open corner three, going downhill, attacking the rim, having to get fouled and having to step up to the line and hit free throws, he's going to do all that, as well as guard. That's exactly why he's on our ballclub.

Q. When you took the job I'm sure you knew A.D. was a pretty good defensive player. Is he even better than you thought?

DARVIN HAM: I mean, I knew watching him during his days in New Orleans, watching him in the bubble, he's an elite defender. He's one of the few guys that can defend laterally and vertically. By that I mean he can get down in the stands and move his feet, keep a guard in front of him,

force a tough, contested shot. He can meet you at the basket, change your shot or get a block. Also do all of that and still corral a defensive rebound.

A is just being A. You come to our film sessions, our walk-throughs, what have you, he's one of the most vocal, communicating, trying to get on the same page, giving suggestions, giving his thoughts on how we can be more cohesive and on a string defensively.

Q. These last two games, is this as well as you've seen A.D. play ever?

DARVIN HAM: I mean, he had some monster performances that year he was with New Orleans. All of that's in the past. He's doing exactly what I anticipated him to do. He's playing like the top five NBA player that he is.

Q. What did you make of LeBron's offensive performance, his contributing in other ways?

DARVIN HAM: He's just playing a total game, man. He's not forcing anything. That's who he's been his entire career.

We knew what we did off the ball defensively particularly would be extremely important. He was all onboard for that and understood why we had to do it. He did his part.

Defensive rebound is a huge thing. Some of the blocks he had, some of the hard, tough rebounds he had, it allows us a lot of flexibility defensively.

Offensively he's just playing the right way. There's times where he's going to dictate the pick and roll, the offense, there's times he's going to be off the ball. We got guys that can carry the load from DLo, Austin, Dennis, Rui, obviously A.D. It gives him a chance to not have to make every play.

Now down the stretch when we really need him to step up and dominate the ball particularly, he's able to do that with a lot of gas left in his tank.

Q. When Jordan Poole took the shot with nine seconds left to try to tie it, it appeared you made a motion. Do you remember what motion you were making? Did you recognize how close you were to Poole at that moment?

DARVIN HAM: No. I'm not one of those coaches that tries to contest shots from the sideline. I would probably tell my players contest, hurry, get out on him, press up. I won't name any names, but I've seen a lot of coaches in those situations that cross the line.

That's not me, man. I allow the 10 players on the floor and the three officials to navigate what's going on between the lines. Not me. If anything, I was waving my players to get up and not give up an open three-point shot.

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