

NBA Western Conference Semifinals: Warriors vs Lakers

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

San Francisco, California, USA

Golden State Warriors

Gary Payton II

Game 5: Postgame



Warriors 121, Lakers 106

Q. You went from being out of the rotation to being a key part of the rotation within this series. What's that been like for you?

GARY PAYTON II: No, you're never out of the rotation with Steve. I know they have different game plans and different adjustments when needed after a game. Next game is always a different game and a different look. It's just our job to stay ready, and when he throws me in, got to get to it.

Q. Draymond, Steph and Klay might be the most resilient trio in a long time, just their will to never give up kind of thing. What's that like for you to play alongside them and see them show up the way they did on the brink of elimination?

GARY PAYTON II: Like Dray said, they're champions, so everybody is after them all the time. They don't want to go out 4-1 in a series that we know it should be a fight. Just to have them and to know that with them three you're never out of a game, it just gives everybody else just that urge and that fire just to dig in.

Q. When they have Davis on you and you guys' game plan obviously is to make you the screener, what do you feel like your job is?

GARY PAYTON II: Just give Steph some separation, make them switch, and then get space again and watch him work and cut when needed and give him an outlet when he needs it.

Q. They switched in the second half, went switch heavy. How does that impact the chess board?

GARY PAYTON II: Oh, no, we just bring AD up. He's not

guarding me, somebody else, whoever needs to be guarding, put him in action, set the screen so we can get the switch.

Q. How did you feel when you first were told that you were going to be in the starting lineup, and with that, how did you adjust your game because obviously you're on the big stage and your defense is something that they depend on quite a bit. How did you incorporate all of that and how are you feeling about just being here doing what you do?

GARY PAYTON II: Like you said, I'm just doing my job. When he says I've got to start, I've just got to do it earlier than later, so just come out and be myself and get to it. There's really no change or nothing. It's just I'm coming in earlier than usual.

Q. Draymond picked up a foul 20 seconds into the game but he was still chirping with AD, was still super into it and intense. Does that spark you guys when you see him out there doing his thing?

GARY PAYTON II: That's Draymond being Draymond. As long as it don't get crazy, we all got his back, let him talk, try to keep the refs out of it and let him do what he does.

Q. In a game you knew you needed to come out fast, how key was the 17-5 start to get you guys going in the right direction?

GARY PAYTON II: It was good. Like we've been trying to say, we've just got to hit first, hit second, hit third. Keep hitting, keep hitting. They're going to make runs, just limit their runs and maximize ours, and like I said, it's a game of runs so just try to limit their runs as much as possible.

Q. They kind of had a little bit of a moment, so to speak, at the beginning of Game 4. How are you feeling physically now after playing 27 minutes, and do you feel like you're ready to rock for Game 6?

GARY PAYTON II: Yeah, I'm good. Just had to throw up a little bit real quick, come right back. Reminded me of school kind of. You've got to rally, so get it out, rally again.



I was fine after, so it was good. (Chuckling.)

Q. Draymond talked about you guys being aggressive on both ends of the floor, and for guys like you and Draymond and Wiggs who are guarding LeBron, D'Lo, the guys you want to really stop, can you put into words how much energy it takes to be able to do that on defense and then also do what you have to do on offense?

GARY PAYTON II: Yeah, it probably takes quite a bit out of us. But with the adrenaline and we know what type of game this is, you've got to go. Limit their touches, and then once we get it, magically we find energy on the other end, so we get it, we sprint down there and try to make them work and come down and communicate and talk to each other and try to make us a unit on the defensive end so we don't got to, like you say, use so much energy. We can talk to each other and have each other's back.

Q. You said it reminded you of school. I threw up before every AAU tournament. Is it nerves? Is it excitement? How far back does this go? You said school.

GARY PAYTON II: No, Game 4 was just a bad lunch. But back to school, we had like beer Olympics and stuff, so you can't fall out early in there, so you've got to rally, got to get it out and come back and rally. Yeah, just reminded me of Oregon State a little bit. Go Beavs.

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