

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

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Gary Payton II

Media Conference



GARY PAYTON II: Yes, I plan on being available this year. So let's go ahead and get that out of the way now.

Feeling good, healthy. Body is feeling great. No hiccups this summer, no nothing, ready to go. So just get those out the way now.

Q. Based on some of the things the team did in the off-season, and based on some of the ways Mike and Steve were talking, seems like defense is going to be a big priority this year and committing to the defensive end. How do you see -- you're obviously going to be a big part of that -- but how do you see this team and what they are capable of doing defensively?

GARY PAYTON II: We have a lot of, you know, young, young fresh legs -- Reece coming in, Melton coming in, Kyle with his IQ -- just we have a lot of pieces that I think are going to blend together on the defensive end and use their -- use our brains on defensive end together more better.

So I feel like we have a bunch of numbers, we're pretty deep, I think, defensively. But like I said, some of the young guys are going to have to get thrown in the fire and figure it out. But I feel like we'll be good on that side this year.

Transition defense and transition offense, I think, you know, we'll do a lot better than we have been.

Q. Gary, what do you think it's going to be like without Klay for the first time? And what are you going to miss most about him?

GARY PAYTON II: There's probably a Dray or Steph question. They have been here the longest. But since I've been here, Klay has just been Klay.

I love when -- come see his face come in on the boat, see him on Instagram live, driving to practice. Just his energy on and off the court. Especially we are going to miss him on the court.

We know what he brings. He's a tough-shot maker, tough-shot taker. You can't really duplicate that, what he does. We're going to miss him but excited to kick his ass pretty soon.

Q. People are talking about threes. Looney came in and said he's been practicing like crazy on his threes, and Podziemski is emphasizing that. Are you thinking that, more, too?

GARY PAYTON II: Me, I'm always available and ready to shoot. Kind of working my way up from the corners. You know, that's where I like to be. If they are there, I've got to take them.

Seen Loon working on it. I know Brandin is going to take a few more this year. Just be ready and just try to make as many as I can -- but not an emphasis. Just shoot when I need to.

Q. You mentioned Brandin. Can you speak to the young guys, and in particular, the guards, Brandin and Moses, and sort of what you've seen from them in the pre-camp games and how much of a step you think they are ready to take?

GARY PAYTON II: Oh, absolutely. Brandin already showed that last year out of the gates. And he's been grinding and growing ever since. Moses has been doing that for the last four years.

So I'm not worried about Moses at all. Just when he comes in, he gives it his all every time. And Brandin, he's just getting more confident being out there, USA this summer. I think he picked up a lot at the USA camp with all the great ones.

So I think they are excited and ready to come out and show what they have been working on. So no worries, not worried about them.

Q. Did you watch the Olympics, not the Steph part, but just in general?



GARY PAYTON II: A lot of sports -- water polo. Table tennis was crazy, actually. That's like, that was probably the funnest that I watched. Archery. Yeah, pretty much a lot of sports.

Q. Do you ever watch and think you could have been an Olympic high jumper?

GARY PAYTON II: Seriously, probably like two years ago, I probably could but not anymore. Water polo, though. I used to play water polo. That's fun and dangerous, though, same time.

Q. You kind of obviously came in with the emphasis that you plan on being available this year. How was your summer? How much playing were you able to do? How cleared were you most of the summer?

GARY PAYTON II: I was good. Ever since I came back from, what was that, the Sac game, I messed up my calf a little bit. But after that, rehabbed for the next probably two weeks here before summer and then I was good. Just trying to bulletproof everything and just get my body ready for this long season.

Q. Best you've felt since --

GARY PAYTON II: I was good. Probably my first summer in a few years without rehabbing and all that stuff. Felt good moving around doing stuff. It was good.

Q. This is probably the longest offseason this team has had in like a long, long, long time. Did you get an itch early? Did it feel like it was that long for you? What was it like to have so much time between the end of last season and training camp?

GARY PAYTON II: It was good. But in a way, like you said it, was like, it was the longest that I've probably had since I've been in the league. And a summer without, you know, rehabbing and surgeries and all that stuff.

It was good to get everything back together, put everything back together body wise. And just sit and just prepare, basically. Work on stuff that I need to. Had extra time to go do different things, get my body right.

It was good. But like you said, I think we are ready and itching to get back.

Q. In the past, you've kind of said that your job is to steal the ball, get it to 30 and maybe make an occasional three. Going into this season, is that still basically the plan, or are there a few more things you want to try and do?

GARY PAYTON II: Yeah, with Klay gone, I think everybody is going to have to step up and try to fill his presence and whatnot.

So that's just going to go down to second unit, and, you know, whoever is going to be in that starting lineup, just to try to get us off to a good start.

But, yeah, I've been working on a lot of different things -- more ball handling. Things that I usually do wasn't needed at the time for the team. So I think we are probably going to need a little bit more extra stuff now that 11 is gone.

Q. Not to keep piling on the availability thing, but you said you were trying to bulletproof everything this summer. What does that mean? What does that look like?

GARY PAYTON II: Just get bigger, faster, stronger. Get my conditioning back to another elite level. I know if I can do that, it will cut out most of the little nicks and knacks and all the little things that happen during the season.

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