

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

San Francisco, California, USA

Steve Kerr

Media Conference



Golden State Warriors 121, Memphis Grizzlies 116

Q. (On how much Jimmy helped the team win tonight.)

STEVE KERR: Even if you're not up, he knows how to draw fouls and what they get, 18 shots from the foul line, that's just who Jimmy is he controls games. That's why he is who he is. He's able to -- in these big moments, these big games, he settles you down constantly.

Q. Could you sense he knew early if that was the scheme they were going to use, that he would need to kind of --

STEVE KERR: Yeah, we talked about it at shootaround this morning. We anticipated that matchup. He just told me, "I don't care who guard me. Just give me space. Give me the ball. I'll make something happen."

And that's beauty of Jimmy. You guys can see it. We have morphed into a different team. We've got the movement and the flow of Steph, but we have also become for half a game, an great iso team, and we've never been an iso team here. There's great advantage to that, to be able to get to the line, to be able to generate offense without having to fly around and set a million screens.

Jimmy has completely changed everything for us since he's been here and tonight was a great example of that.

Q. In the non-Steph minutes, you talk about flying around and getting offense going, and you saw your role players getting so many 50/50 balls and getting so many opportunities. When you think about trying to incorporate them, what was the message to those guys?

STEVE KERR: We talked about it at shoot around this morning, the whole point of the game was to win the battles, just to win every loose ball, every rebound. This is a big, strong team, great rebounding team. And you saw it happened a few times because they got 16 offensive boards. Edey had seven himself. When they get an

offensive board and they are kicking out to Jack on or Desmond Bane, it's a wide-open three.

The focus was really on scrapping and getting to every loose ball. I thought the guys fought hard. Gui only played, what, six minutes but three rebounds. He was flying around out there. Every possession matters and I thought our guys played that way.

Q. Against a team like Houston, how valuable is Jimmy guarding guys that are seven foot?

STEVE KERR: He's the ultimate two-way player. He's so physically strong and laterally quick, and he anticipates things. He reads things. Jimmy is a great defensive player. He and Draymond behind the play allow us to play smaller without giving up too much.

Q. You obviously are compelled to put Gary in because of his defense to shadow Ja, but he obviously contributed a lot offensively. What about this matchup, and some of his baskets seem like smart cuts, and to go along with that, Quinten off the bench, the impact those two made.

STEVE KERR: Gary helped us win a championship, and we don't win that championship in '22 without Gary. He's a big-time player. Playoff performer, two-way player. Understands how to play with Steph, probably as well as anybody on our team, and he's basically a power forward on offense and a point guard on defense. Very unique player.

Hugely effective over and over again for us in these big games. Gary was great.

And then I thought Quinten's three threes in the first half were crucial for us. The way Memphis guards us, they have always hounded Steph and sagged off of our big guys.

So the ability to put Quentin out there, space the floor, have him knock down threes, it opened up the game for us.

Q. Your Harvard shirt, curious to know if that has

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anything to do with what's going on politically right now or if you just happen to reach for that?

STEVE KERR: Oh, something going on? Tommy Amaker is a friend of mine, Harvard coach, and he sent me this shirt. Actually we practiced there in Boston in November. He gave me this shirt, and felt like a great day to wear it.

I believe in academic freedom. I think it's crucial for all of our institutions to be able to handle their own business the way they want to, and they should not be shaken down and told what to teach, what to say, by our government. That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard but it's kind of par for the course right now.

So yes, this is me supporting Harvard. Way to go. Way to stand up to the bully.

Q. The five-second violation, how did you guys pull that off?

STEVE KERR: The guys did a great job of pre-switching everything and we knew they needed a three. So we stayed outside the three-point line. And I thought we were able to take away the play they were trying to run with the switching, and the guys did a great job of that, and that led to the five-second call.

Q. You mentioned the importance of these next few days. How do you balance the rest and recovery against preparing for the next series, and what do these next four days look like for you?

STEVE KERR: This is what we do. I mean, this is so fun. This is the best time of the year. You know, this is Year 11.

My favorite -- maybe my favorite day of the season is tomorrow. We come in as a staff, we look at Houston tape. We start to put together our game plan. The players are resting. We've got a couple of days before we'll see the players again. We get to go to work and try to beat a great team in a seven-game series. There's nothing better. So I can't wait.

Q. You have played with and coached some of the most clutch postseason performers in the history of the game. What do they share, and what does Jimmy share with them from what you're seeing in your one postseason time with them so far?

STEVE KERR: Fearlessness, I think is the main thing. I told Steph after the game what makes him who he is even on a night where he's not really going, he's struggling to make shots, and he makes the two biggest shots of the

game. That doesn't just come from skill. That comes from fortitude and fearlessness and incredible self-belief.

Jimmy possesses the same thing. Draymond, too, in a different way, not so much in an offensive way but just in a winning way. And that's why I believe in our team so much. We have got several guys on this team, Loon included, who has been here for a long time and they have won titles and that guy has taken his team to the finals a couple times. We've got winners in this locker room.

It's time for Jimmy to talk. I'll talk to you later.

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