

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

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Steph Curry

Media Conference



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Q. The goal for weeks has been to make a playoff series, obviously get past the winless record and to play in to do so, how significant to do that within the arc of the season to make a playoff series at this point?

STEPH CURRY: I don't know exactly what point in the year it was when we were below .500, and after a 12-3 start, emotional roller coaster of the season, for us to be able to climb our way back into relevancy, and then trick off a couple opportunities to get it done within the 82, just came down to having one game where we just get a win however we could, and thankfully it happened.

And now with some clarity on who we are playing in a playoff series, great Houston team that has had an amazing year. Just a sense of relief that we have something to look forward to now, and excited about the challenge.

Q. As someone has won championships and many playoff series, where did this play-in victory rank in your career?

STEPH CURRY: I'll put it this way: Mike Dunleavy in the locker room had the game ball.

And after Coach did his thing, Mike interrupted and was like, "I got the game ball here, four championships." And he threw it to Steve and he said, "This is your first play-in game win." Obviously got to have some fun with it.

It's done well for the league, obviously. Keeping some interest and some drama down the stretch of the season.

And for us to finally get on the other side of it and live to play hopefully a solid seven-game series, it's exciting.

Q. Jimmy has called you Batman about four times tonight?

STEPH CURRY: What?

Q. In interviews, in TV on the podium, he's calling you Batman and him Robin. Has he done that to you?

STEPH CURRY: No. That's why I said, "What?" I hadn't heard that one yet.

Q. 38 from him tonight. There was some talk maybe in the weeks leading up to this past week about him, does he need to amp up his scoring aggression. Did you ever push him to, or did you know it was coming? Did you ever want it to come sooner?

STEPH CURRY: That's been a few games here and there, sporadically, where he has been a little bit more aggressive looking for his shot. He's obviously been getting to the free throw line.

And I think it's, obviously the sense of urgency and winning games that matter down the stretch, I never doubted it was coming. He always has a sense of pride in playing the right way, and you know, whatever the game calls for, I think he kind of understood that he's been here before. He understands the nerves and the adrenaline and the expectations, and none of that rattles him. It's just he plays basketball at a high level.

So that's what's coming out. I don't think -- I mean, it's predetermined that he's being aggressive but it's because of the moment. We definitely needed every one of them. And you could tell he's a dog and a winner and loves these type of environments, and it brings the best out of him.

Q. You've played a lot, obviously, with GP over the years. Why do you guys mesh so well together. How instrumental can he be in the playoffs as he was at times in '22, and as he obviously was tonight, beyond just his defense?

STEPH CURRY: Well, you have to start with his defense because that's the way he can change a game with his ball pressure. You know, just his knack for the ball.



And then offensively, it's no secret, like they are going to play off him. Force him to knock-down shots. He's not afraid of taking them. He can knock them down. He's great in the pocket and getting to the basket.

He just knows how to play basketball. If he doesn't have a shot, he's swinging it and setting great screens for me and always in the right spot, and he uses his athleticism to his advantage.

So if they put bigger guys on him, he takes advantages of it. He's a savvy veteran that way, and he's always made an impact, and me and him have a great chemistry because you got to give up something.

Q. Draymond said he's really looking forward to that first film session ahead of the first. What is that first film session like ahead of a playoff series with Steve?

STEPH CURRY: It is just attention to detail. You really just flip the book on Houston and their patterns. You want to truly understand, hopefully them better than they know themselves, kind of vibe. Just be as prepared as possible. It's fun because you have everybody locked in.

What we enjoy about playoff series is it's just one opponent, and it's a chess match from before the first game and in between every game, just trying to find the subtle changes or game plan or discipline that can help just win four games.

And so, we missed the playoffs last year, and the year before that, Sacramento and L.A. It reminds you of just how much fun the playoffs are, and that chess match that goes back and forth, and so sitting down that first film session gets the juices flowing.

Q. How much has your appreciation grown from making the playoffs at this point in your career compared to earlier on when you guys began the Championship run? How do you look at it differently now through your lens?

STEPH CURRY: Well, it's easy to not take it for granted because we weren't there last year. You know, from 2013 to '19, we made, obviously the Finals runs and all that but we were in the playoffs every year; that two-year stretch where we missed it, and '22 came around.

I think it's just a reminder that it's not guaranteed. I don't care how talented you are. You look around the league, you could argue more talented teams than we have that are on the outside looking in.

So you appreciate the moments. That's why we've been

talking this game for the last two months, how important it is to play meaningful games. And now we have a series that's going to be full of meaningful ones.

Q. Ime Udoka was clear last time they played you that they wanted to physically beat the entire team up, but clearly you're at the head of that game plan. How much do you expect of that in this series, and how much of that noise did you absorb in the aftermath of that Rockets loss?

STEPH CURRY: I honestly didn't hear nothing afterwards. I just know we were talking on the court and all that.

But they are the No. 2 seed for a reason. They have played well all year long. They play a certain physical style of defense, and they are super athletic.

So that's the beauty of the playoffs. Like you get to take a second and kind of understand what they do well, and how we're going to try to counter that and how we can try to make them uncomfortable. It's all eyes on them.

We're excited for the challenge. I was just telling Draymond, it's wild. We've been in playoff series in Houston for a decade. It's crazy to think about. I know this is a brand new version of the Rockets team but yeah, we're excited for the challenge.

Q. As you get older, people look for signs of deterioration or whatever you want to call it.

STEPH CURRY: That's a strong word.

Q. I was trying to think of a softer one. But where are you right now? How do you feel right now? Are you as good as the old Steph going into the playoffs? Are you beat up?

STEPH CURRY: Everybody is dealing with something at this stage. I don't feel like I'm slowing down at all. Just the maintenance and the build-up game-to-game is a little different than it used to be. But I can still get to that level that you've seen, night-in, night-out.

You have to accept the fact that we talked about getting as much rest as possible and how important Game 82 was, and we didn't get it done and how important tonight was to have five days to get ready for a playoff series.

So I'm going to take full advantage of that for sure, just to get refreshed and rejuvenated, and try to get as healthy as possible before we start hopefully a two-month journey.

Q. It's been more than a decade that Draymond has

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been centering lineups. How would you contextualize the responsibility he wields in that spot and the advantage it continues to create for you guys?

STEPH CURRY: I mean, from the original small ball, depth lineup thing and just him being able to play bigger than his stature. Make his presence felt. Be our quarterback on defense, it allows us to play faster on offense. He's a great playmaker on offense, too. And so it just gives teams fits because he just knows how to make plays and be in the right spot and know he loves that challenge.

And so this team, specifically, probably more than any other team, like we have to play that way. That's going to be a huge part of our identity if we are going to win in the playoffs. You know, we expect him to keep doing what he's doing because I know he loves making his presence felt and changing the game on the defensive end.

Q. Draymond said that a lot of nicknames in the NBA are bogus but that Playoff Jimmy is a real thing. Will you agree with him, and what do you think it's going to be like going into the playoffs with Playoff Jimmy, something you haven't done before?

STEPH CURRY: I mean, we've all watched it. Like he was in the Eastern Conference and we are on the West and we never got to play against Playoff Jimmy.

But the idea of just that he raises his level based on at the right time, when it's needed the most. That's why the trade made so much sense for us because he has that experience and he has that resumé.

He's proven it since he's been here, and in these last two games, you can see a different level of intentionality, and especially just scoring the basketball because teams are trying to take away some of our pet actions.

At the end of the day you need somebody that can put the ball in the basket, and he knows how to do that. We have to keep doing all of our parts, and you know, Playoff Jimmy will hopefully be a big unlock for us.

Q. You talk about wanting to take full advantage of these next four days off. What does that look like for, and you how do you balance the rest and recovery against preparing for Houston?

STEPH CURRY: Well, preparation is resting for now because we've been on a crazy run the last two months where every game has felt like a playoff game, and our schedule has been kind of crazy with road trips and all that. So take a day where you do absolutely nothing. Just get

away from the game, as far away as I can, be with my family.

Then the preparation starts on Thursday where it's more the mental part of it, like understanding what the roadmap looks like between Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and what I need to do to get my body right, stay sharp on the court, not overdo it, and the experience will kind of come into play on making sure you're as prepared as possible, mentally and physically to be ready to go.

But tomorrow, I didn't plan on doing nothing that has to do with basketball.

Q. Jimmy was saying that he knew if he came here, this team would be in the playoffs. Did you know that at that moment? When did you know that this move was going to get you guys in the playoffs?

STEPH CURRY: You never really know. My standpoint, you have belief, like, and you approach every day with the goal of, you know, especially where we started when the trade happened, to get here, like knowing how long that road was going to be; how tough it was going to be.

That first game in Chicago, everything felt pretty natural and there was a smooth transition of what our team looked like post-trade, and that was a great feeling. And we just kept that rolling. I forget what our record was at a certain point when both me and Jimmy played, and when we had our quote, unquote, full team.

You know, winning produces more confidence and more energy, and we've been riding that wave for the last two months, even when we've had some slipups. Like the San Antonio game, the Houston game, like nobody panicked. We knew we didn't play our best. But nobody was panicking or feeling like we didn't have what it takes to -- it sounds crazy to be a 7-seed, but that seemed like a long way away two months ago.

Q. Curtis said he didn't want to say it before, but that this team was desperate to win this, just to get the time off, maybe that explains the shootaround, not scheduled and then it was scheduled. Was there a focus that was a little different on this one?

STEPH CURRY: I mean, yeah. We've had a pattern last two or three weeks, kind that have question about what it looks like before Sunday when we play, like the mental preparation of game plan discipline. You know, me, Draymond, Jimmy, Loon, we've all been here, so we understand it. But a lot of guys haven't.

I told GP in there, like a lot of guys haven't been here and

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the physical demand is one thing but the mental capacity to be able to lock into a game plan, trust that you're prepared on the same page no matter who you're out there on the floor with, there's a sense of urgency around that.

We gave ourselves a good chance to do it in 82, like I said. Didn't happen. To get this one sealed up and have five days is big for us, and we've got to take full advantage of it.

Q. You said it, the last few have been intense. How does that impact the series coming up against an aggressive Houston team knowing it's going to be intense from here on out?

STEPH CURRY: You just tap into the same energy. Again, we know what to expect, and you know, you're excited to embrace that challenge for sure.

Every game, like I said, has felt like a playoff game for a long while now. It would be nice to catch our breath, and again, hit reset a little bit, but lean into just that competitiveness that we've tapped into since February and we should be in good shape.

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