

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

Saturday, April 26, 2025

San Francisco, California, USA

Ime Udoka

Game 3 - Pregame Media Conference



Q. With the schedule for the rest of the series kind of being more compact, does that change how you're going to manage minutes tonight?

IME UDOKA: No. Young and healthy, energetic. We're good.

Q. There are players on this team that have never been in this kind of environment, a Game 3 on the road. For the players that have, Fred and Dylan, what experience or advice do you think they will give to the young players on this team?

IME UDOKA: I'd say more of the same that we gave them leading into the playoffs and what to expect. But kind of have to go through it.

And so at this point, it's basketball, and we understand it's going to be a hostile environment on the road regardless. And so that's what you work for home court for, and like we said going into the playoffs, you just have to experience that for the first time and let the jitters get out and go about your business.

Q. What have you thought of the officiating in these first two games, and do you expect a tighter whistle in Game 3?

IME UDOKA: I mean, I think it's playoff basketball. They let you play a little bit more, and we don't mind that. So hopefully it stays the same.

And both teams are playing hard, aggressive, physical. Two of the better defensive teams, and so I wouldn't expect anything different. But you do have to adjust to specific refs and how they ref the game and we'll do that.

Q. In terms of that veteran and big brother role, how much has Fred meant to the young guys and do you have any examples, I don't know if he's given any speeches before the playoffs or took guys aside but any way that he showed some mentoring?

IME UDOKA: I would say he's been there from day one. Part of the reason we brought him along, brought him in free agency, was to have right veteran with our young guys to help them grow on and off the court.

But no big rah-rah speeches. I think he keeps it simple. And my message was the same as his, which you just have to experience it. And we can tell you all this about these different things but going through it is the best teacher.

Our guys saw it in Game 1. Adjusted pretty quickly in Game 2. So it's more of the same. But I think from day one, him, Dylan, Jeff, the guys that have been there, played for championships and played in high-level games have imparted all that wisdom and experience on guys from day one.

Carry over from what they have done the last two years now and nothing it the guys aren't accustomed to. They have questions to ask, they share their expertise in the film sessions and preparation.

Q. Given how the first two games have gone in terms of transition, how important is that going tonight and rest of the series trying to attack in the fast break?

IME UDOKA: It's been a big thing for us all season. We play at a certain pace that's been good for us, and we let our young athletes get out and run.

And obviously being one of the better defensive teams, we want to get stops and turn those into transition, and not have to play in the halfcourt all the time. So that doesn't change.

I would say in Game 1, we didn't take advantage of some opportunities in transition and did a better job last game.

But it's the same for everybody across the board. If you don't turn the ball over, take care of the ball, make teams score in the halfcourt with a set defense you're obviously going to have a better chance; and when we do get out and run, turn defense into offense, that's been one of our mantras kind of all year. So the more we do that, the

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better. But you have to be able to score when it slows down as well.

Q. I know that basketball is a game of adjustments, is there any difficulties when you have to prepare a game plan for if they are going to play with Jimmy or without Jimmy?

IME UDOKA: No, not at this point. We prepped the whole week off for Butler to be there, and obviously last game, as well. He was out, and you can put more of your focus on Curry and certain guys.

But the anticipation that he's going to play; we prep like he is, and if he isn't we'll do what we did last game, which is key in a little bit more. But obviously the dynamic he gives them is another scorer facilitator, 1A/1B combo with Curry is very important to them, obviously, but we're going into it as if he's playing.

Q. Have you had a chance to escape the team hotel and walk around the Bay Area? Have you been recognized by the Bay Area sports fans?

IME UDOKA: Did you see out there?

Q. No.

IME UDOKA: I walk a lot. I walk every city. So yes, quite a bit today.

Q. How are these exchanges going?

IME UDOKA: Very pleasant. (Laughter) sounds like, honestly, wherever you go, you might have hostility online and all this. But in person, nobody says anything. You're not as brave in person.

Q. I'm sure it's special for Amen to be back in the Bay Area and play a playoff game here, but do you expect him to have some sort of hostilities from the fan base here?

IME UDOKA: Yeah, regardless of him being home or whatever, I think that's what you get as an opponent. Obviously in the playoffs, regardless. Unfortunate what happened, like I said, wasn't intentional and everything. But with the bias and fans they are going to take that and run with it.

I'm sure they will have some of the same thing they did with Miami with the Herro incident. But he reacted well. Like I said, we all know it's unintentional. And he'll just go about his business as usual.

But understanding what it's going to be, I think he knows that, and nothing to be shocked by when it comes.

Q. How are you looking to start off this game? Is a fast start better for you, or do you want to sustain a long game and try to finish it at the end? What does it look like in a hostile like this in a playoff?

IME UDOKA: It's always good to get off to good starts. We've done that in these two games. Didn't sustain it Game 1, and kind of kept it in Game 2.

And for us, don't want to obviously play behind with the crowd getting into it. So if we defend at the level we have this whole series, let alone at the starts, it's a good thing for us.

But whatever it takes, and honestly understanding every game is not going to be the same and how we have to approach it and navigate different situations.

Of course we've got really good starts, jumped out both games and they grinded their way back, took a big lead and we fought our way back.

Kind of prepared for everything. We've gone through a lot this year as far as all those situations and handled them well, and don't get blown out or let teams keep leads. Whatever it takes.

Q. I don't know how much time you've had to watch the other series, but it's been obviously really physical and I wonder going into the whole playoffs, did you have any sense from the league standpoint what it might look like? Are you surprised at all by -- I think everybody agrees, it's been quite a bit more physical in the last couple years, and assuming do you agree, it's good for your team, but in general, are you liking this brand right now?

IME UDOKA: I think, you know, I'm 20-plus years in as a player and coach, I'm accustomed to what it always is in the playoffs for the most part.

I'm not sure if it's any more, but the thing I said that works well for us is that we don't have to flip the switch and become who we haven't been all year.

So we play the way we play, and although it does increase in the playoffs we are not changing what we do. And so for us, nothing different, honestly. The opponent is the opponent. They are a really good defensive team, and they show how they have guarded us at times this year. More than it being the playoffs, it's just a matter of the opponent and how we play, and so our series is what it is.

Other teams, I've watched some, and it's pretty much regular postseason basketball in my opinion.

Q. After Game 2, Jalen said that Game 1, there was all nervousness and he was able to shake that out in Game 2. What was the mental to him heading into Game 3?

IME UDOKA: Keep it simple. Keep it basketball. You know, we told him that coming into the playoffs, like I said, you have to go through this, and you know, for us, it's no different in this game, as opposed to being at home.

So the crowd is going to be what it is. Just like we've had some tough In-Season Tournament games in Vegas or whatever it is on the opponent's home court and kind of played through that.

I think that's the beauty of our group is they just go about our business regardless and kind of don't get overwhelmed by anything. Jalen mentioned the jitters. He obviously adjusted to that fought back and had a really good Game 2, but I think at this point, you know what it is.

Q. Do you see ways to emphasize the pace within the halfcourt and is there almost a preference of playing fast or slow within the halfcourt after a team gets settled in defensively?

IME UDOKA: Much better pace in the halfcourt. We did that in Game 2. Especially when they are going to go after Jalen quite a bit in these blitzes and pick-and-rolls. We do like to get up there with some pace and separation.

You know, our bigs understood that. Set much better screens the last game that freed him up, and when the teams are going to try to bottle him up, you can't just walk up there and have a big scrum up top. You want to get that separation get him downhill and give him tree dominant to attack. That's important for us, and it's almost as important as we play with the pace in the halfcourt and attack and get the paint touches and kick it out against a team that really loads up heavy.

I think that's just as important. We're not just talking about getting out in transition, it's playing with that speed and ball movement in the halfcourt.

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