

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

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Fred VanVleet

Game 3 Postgame Media Conference



Golden State Warriors 104, Houston Rockets 93

Q. Fred, you were saying the other night how you had your share of chasing Steph around in big games. What was different tonight?

FRED VANVLEET: We're not going to hold him to three points every time we play them. We have to understand that. This is one of the all-time greats. I thought our coverages were a little slow tonight, some of the switching, some of the physicality was a touch down from how we had it ramped up the previous game but this is the playoffs. It's all about adjustments and chess match and different things.

So they were prepared. I thought they executed at a higher level than we did, and sometimes that's all it comes down to. So he got some clean looks, more so than we would like, so we got to try to limit his opportunities and make his life a little bit harder out there but obviously that's a tough cover.

Q. You often talk about the best way to experience things is go through it. How important is it for this team to experience the moment and learn from it?

FRED VANVLEET: I don't really want to use that right now. We need to get these wins, you know what I mean. It's a true statement for sure. It makes it tough, you know what I'm saying. You can't really have that viewpoint while you're in the middle of it.

But yes, of these are great experiences and great learning moments for our group. Great test. No better challenge than these guys at home after a loss. We had a great chance to get out here with a win. We didn't do that. We have to bounce back, quick turnaround and we'll be right back here on Monday ready to go again.

Q. You've seen these guys eight times this year now, and so it's like you know what they are going to bring at you every time. What make them so tough to deal?

FRED VANVLEET: I think styles make fights and I think that's true for basketball, especially, and schemes and the way that we guard and the way that they run their offense and the way that they guard and the way that we run our offense makes it tough on both ends.

It's nasty out there, you can see, you know what I mean. There's no love lost, attention to detail has to be at an all-time high. Can't lose focus. Can't take plays off. Both teams, you know, trying to find ways to win tonight. Just felt like the first to a hundred was going to win and obviously they got there first.

We lost points in the paint, second-chance points and fast break points. It's not a great formula for us and the way we like to play. It's going to be hard to win like that.

Q. Just to state the obvious, when you have a guy like Jimmy not be available, does it hit harder? And when did you find out that he wouldn't be playing? Did it make it tricky in terms of getting ready?

FRED VANVLEET: No, I think we prepared -- I'll answer the second question first. We prepared as if he was going to play. We were ready to go. You can't play that game of who is playing, who is not playing. You have to be ready to go. I think every chance you don't win a game you feel like you could win is a missed opportunity. Obviously Jimmy adds another layer to that because they are a different team without him. But Gary Payton stepped up tonight. Both the guys off the bench played key minutes and Kuminga stepped in and had some good minutes for them.

This is an experienced group that they have. It's been a good team for the second half of the year. We knew that they were going to respond with a guy out as any good team will. There's no scrubs in the playoffs right now. Yes, it's definitely a missed opportunity but we can't really have that viewpoint. We have to bounce back and get ready for Monday.

Q. You know this group well, and the way you talk about this group, you believe in them deeply. What about this group tells you that you guys will handle this, learn from it quickly and turn the page and go



forward and make the necessary adjustments?

FRED VANVLEET: That's what we always do. You check the track record, we bounce back every time; a little hard-headed, a little young at times.

So sometimes you've got to bump your head but I've loved our resolve and I've loved our togetherness and our commitment to being great. And no matter if we stumble and make mistakes or miss an opportunity as we did today, we've got a short term memory.

That's where the youth comes to play at is to move on and get to the next game. I believe in this team wholeheartedly we'll be ready to go Monday, lace them up and try to get this one.

Q. I believe you scored 13 of the team's first 20 points. How important is your rhythm in the overall pace in the halfcourt, and do you see that carrying over to Game 4?

FRED VANVLEET: Still trying to find it. Every team guards me differently. Obviously they are familiar with me and I know that they are going to guard me a certain type of way. I think it was important for Jalen to get going in Game 2. I know that it was going to be a different atmosphere, so I wanted to get off to a good start for us and settle us down and give us a shot and try to work the rest of the guys in. That was key. Good to see a couple go in and got to build on that for the next game.

Q. Playing against a team that has a lot of playoff experience but also a lot of veterans on the team trying to get in the head of some of your young guys who are experiencing this for the first time, how important is it for you in your role to make sure that you keep the young guys level-headed and don't let them get caught into those type of antics?

FRED VANVLEET: Yeah, it's been a topic of conversations. Obviously we know what that brings to the game but I would just say we got some loose canons on our team, too. We deal with it all year. We go at each other in practice, you know what I mean.

It's a part of the game. Some guys like to trash talk. Some guys don't really do it. But as long as we focus on the basketball and execute at a high level and it doesn't take away from what we are trying to do and compete, I think the ultimate trash talk is to get the win, you know what I mean. That's the most important thing is to get the win and to win this series, and as long as that's everybody's No. 1 goal and No. 1 focus, you know, the rest of it, you're in the flow and the fight of the game you're not going to back

down from everybody. I think that's understood by now, and the rest is just, can we execute at a high enough level to get wins.

Q. You just touched on it there, Jalen and Draymond at the end, what did you see in that exchange?

FRED VANVLEET: Oh, I don't know. I didn't see nothin'. I don't know nothin'. Going to the next.

Q. You pride yourself on being an unselfish player, but how have the Warriors been guarding you that has made it difficult for you to impact the game in that way? At some point, even though you want the young guys to succeed, as the veteran, do you want to step up and shoulder more of a scoring load in the series?

FRED VANVLEET: Yeah, there will be time for it. There will be a time and a place for it. I've tried to dance on that all year. I think best version of this team is when everybody is contributing and everybody is in flow and rhythm and Jalen and I are playing as a high level as a duo and the rest of us are making shots and plays on the back end of that.

Now, there's times and places where I have to play better and I have to make shots at a high clip, and I have to find rhythm and find ways to be more aggressive.

Obviously if I'm getting two on the ball at 28, 30 feet, I feel like I've done my job for that possession. If I can draw a mismatch and I can draw a bet defender and there's opportunities for other guys, I feel like I've done my job on that possession. There's different ways to attack. I have to be better, 1,000 percent, and if I make two more shots, we probably win Game 1. If I make a couple more tonight, we probably get out of here with a win, so that's totally on me for sure.

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