

Golden State Warriors Media Conference

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San Francisco, California, USA

Ime Udoka

Game 4 - Pregame Media Conference



Q. Usual starting five tonight?

IME UDOKA: Yes.

Q. Do you have updates on Jock and Jae'Sean?

IME UDOKA: Jock is good to go. Jae'Sean is not.

Q. He was out there shooting this morning. Seems like he was moving okay and not wearing any sort of brace. Is he trending towards possibly being able to play later in the series?

IME UDOKA: Still a week-to-week thing. He had many hurdles to pass to get to that point. Not something that's imminent.

Q. Coach, in terms of overall pace, how important is that going to be tonight in terms of trying to be quick and off the block from the open tip?

IME UDOKA: It's a constant in the series. You know, when we can do it, it's good for us. It's been good for us.

Game 1 when we lost those opportunities, got out ran and didn't convert. It was a tough blow for us, and they did on the other end. But I think both teams are trying to do it, get stops and run, and not have to play against halfcourt defenses. So no more different than the first three games.

Q. What are some of the keys to getting Amen Thompson going offensively given how the Warriors are guarding him?

IME UDOKA: Yeah, get him into some space. Use him, utilize him all the ways that we do. It's on-ball, off-ball, in pick-and-rolls as a handler as well and always getting stops in running.

He obviously ignites our transition by, himself and he's a guy who is dynamic in the open court. The more opportunities we can get there for him specifically there. You know, they are putting big bodies on him but he's seen

that before and worked really well as a screener and playing off-ball some.

And so you know, him and Alpy had quite a few close-range shots that they missed, and then got a little hesitate not taking them, and got to be confident to still take those. We feel like those will go down eventually.

Q. Do you think you might use the triple-big lineup tonight and if they go back Adams, does that remove him from the game or keep them him in the game? What's your thoughts on that?

IME UDOKA: I think we've done to that frequently. You know, depends on the availability of who is at the three at that point, whether it's Jabari or Tari or whatever.

We'll feel it out. Time, score situation. Obviously the for free throws he makes, the better it is for us. But you conversely can get stops on the other end and attack the glass and do those things to keep him in the game. So he's done a decent job when that's happens so far this year. Obviously get him out, get him right back in at the two-minute mark. He's knocked them down when he'd had to. Then get in the zone and get stops, it doesn't really affect you either way.

Q. So down 2-1 in the series and coming up on a very big game. What is the locker room message for your team? What do you keep them focused on?

IME UDOKA: The simple things. Small details that win you or lose you a game. It's really come down to that for both teams in the series. You know, and like I said, we know what each other is doing at this point. It's who can execute the details and taking care of the ball. Getting to our spacing, the things we did really well in Game 2. Had some setbacks, some slippage in that area in Game 3. And so I think both teams are guarding at a high level. It's who can really take advantage offensively of certain things.

So obviously they have their players and schemes they like to get to. We've seen it enough that we should take away some of those actions and not be late on some communication there; and then conversely on their end,

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you know, stopping our offensive rebound, stopping our transition and turning us over. Those are things that hurt us. All those small details and whoever does them better in the game has been the winner so far.

Q. Coming in a Game 3 a less of a likelihood that Jimmy Butler would make his return, and there's more of a likelihood he will tonight. Does it change the strategy coming into tonight?

IME UDOKA: It really doesn't. We know what he brings to the team. And another person to account for, obviously, in the things he does are unique for their team.

But we didn't have any letup or slip -- setbacks because he was out last game. We still knew they were going to be dangerous, and everything gets more focused towards Curry. So still a dangerous team obviously, and Butler just adds that add the dimension of facilitator/playmaker/isolation guy. You have to account for him but nothing changes on our end. Whether he plays or not, just one more thing you have to account for.

Q. Jalen has grown quite a bit over the last couple seasons. Just curious as to how you feel like he's sort of handled everything that's been thrown his way throughout this postseason.

IME UDOKA: You know, he had the rough Game 1 and he admitted that. Bounceback was great, and they wrapped it up and obviously tried to take him out of Game 3. And so at times, you know, you're going to take your lumps, and I don't want to make an excuse for every first; first playoff game, first road game, all those things. Once you're here, you're playing, you have to adjust and adapt to those things.

But done a decent job, and you know, when they take the ball out of his hands, others have to make him pay. So we haven't been the best at some and some of their guys have, and Curry got rid of the ball. So you're doing your job, drawing the crowd, not turning it over is a big thing, and he hasn't done that. The guys behind, they have to obviously be in attack mode and make shots.

Q. What did you see when you looked back at the end of Game 3? Those last five or six minutes that looked like they kind of ran away with it, what did you see and was it what they were doing or was it what you guys were not able to do?

IME UDOKA: A little bit of both. Obviously they hit some big shots and slipped out of pick-and-rolls, and Payton was really effective there.

And then we missed some easy ones, as well, but we also didn't communicate best out of some of their actions that we've taken away. And so you switch up on Curry, you want to take him off his air space. He had too much space, and for two of the threes he hit you want to make him a driver. He was much too comfortable in those situation, one on Dylan, one on Jalen.

And, like I, said our communications when they slip out of the pick-and-rolls, we have to be on point with that and not have two on the ball. Because Green and Payton are really good slipping out making plays for themselves or others.

So it was a little bit of both. But I think our offense thawed a little bit, and obviously we did well enough early to get the lead, and letting them back in it before the half was kind of a blow to us. But it was still a tight game halfway through the fourth quarter. Had a lead going into the fourth quarter, and they executed better down the stretch.

Q. Coach, Alpy said that he rushed a couple of those shots that he missed close range, right at the basket. What are some of the adjustments that he can make coming into Game 4?

IME UDOKA: Yeah, continue to be aggressive and stay confident. They are giving him those shots. Obviously Green really good at playing in between two, kind of faking and fading back to the dunker, and taking away some of the lob threats but also causing a little hesitation for him there.

We know when we get the numbers, we get the ball in the pocket, Alpy has to be dynamic and look to score. Don't have a ton of rim protection back there, or look to make the play when they do rotate. And so if he can clean up that area, same with Amen in the pocket, I think that obviously adds to what we're trying to do.

But what I told him was be aggressive, go look to score, don't be hesitant as far as that and then make the play when they do step up. And so we should invite teams to blitz Jalen and pick up the numbers on the back side, and teams should fear Alpy in the pocket, and so he has to make them pay there.

Q. Assuming Jock gets into this series at some point, how can he have an impact for your group, either tonight or in Game 4 or Game 5, I should say?

IME UDOKA: Jock is a guy that stays ready and has had opportunities throughout the year with Steven unable to play back-to-backs and gives us another dimension as far as a stretch big that is confident shooting.

But his pace, his screening, all the dirty work things that he does, are really good for us, and so Nikola being ready for any situation, as you've seen, they have had some guys out and threw some guys in there and had to make an impact and we might need that at some point as well. The thing he's done really well is staying ready at all times this year.

With Steven being out some nights you knew he was going to play and obviously had some nights off, but he was always ready to play. And I think his shooting ability is the difference-maker as far as what we do with our five-man there. Jabari's small ball five is similar, but similar what they do with post.

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