

NBA Western Conference First Round: Rockets vs Warriors

Friday, May 2, 2025

San Francisco, California, USA

Golden State Warriors

Steve Kerr

Game 6 - Pregame Media Conference



STEVE KERR: So before I start, Pop is going to kill me for wearing this shirt. He's going to call me a hapless rube for wearing this shirt (smiling).

I just want to say thank you to Pop and to the Spurs organization for everything that they meant to me and my career. I know this is a pretty emotional day for the Spurs. It is for the entire NBA. The number of people Pop has influenced, the number of coaches in his coaching tree, it's just incredible.

But Pop is one of the most important people in my life for many, many reasons. Most of them go way beyond basketball. It's a sad day. It's also an encouraging day I think because this is a natural transition for him organizationally to move into his next role.

I think it also gives him the space and the time that he needs to recover from the health issues. So I've got a lot of mixed emotions today, mainly just my love for Pop, my empathy for him, for what he's gone through for the Spurs organization, all of the above.

It's a very emotional day for everybody involved, so thank you, Pop. I'll take the shirt off after. Love you. We'll see you soon.

Q. When did you have that shirt made up?

STEVE KERR: Raymond just handed it to me as I walked in, so... Playoff Raymond is on it yet again (smiling).

Q. Have you talked to him? Is there anything you can share?

STEVE KERR: He would not want me to share anything about personal conversations.

I went and saw him three weeks ago when we were in San

Antonio. We had a great visit. We stay in touch all the time.

Q. In a full circle way he's impacted Ime Udoka. How beautiful and symbolic that you are coaching against each other on this day?

STEVE KERR: You can say that of almost any matchup. You seem to be coaching against a Pop disciple. That's his impact on the game, on the league. The success, the records, all that stuff goes without saying. It's the impact he's had on so many of us, our lives, our families. Then, of course, our coaching development, learning.

I think Pop transformed coaching over the last 20 years. I think it went from one era to the next with several coaches kind of leading the way.

I think Phil Jackson and Pop, I know I'm biased for both of them, but I think each of them in their own way transformed the coaching profession into more than just X's and O's, authoritarian figure, to culture and collaboration, the unique chemistry that great teams have.

Those two guys in my mind helped create the current culture that we're in for coaching and team building, where it's so much based on values, human values, human connection, then a fierce competitive desire to go with that. To me, that's what we're all searching for. I think, like I said, Pop sort of helped create that vibe around the league and in other sports, too.

Q. Whether it was Pop's willingness to speak out on issues beyond basketball, how did he stretch the definition of what a coach could and should do?

STEVE KERR: Yeah, I think he probably was one of the first coaches in the modern generation to really speak out on politics, on social injustices.

I know one of my favorite coaches is Dean Smith. Dean Smith in the '60s helped break down the racial barriers in the South, refusing to take his team to certain places to play or stay or eat.



I think Pop is kind of in that Dean Smith mode of seeing the bigger picture beyond sports. Those are the coaches who really stand out to me.

Phil, I immediately think of Phil in that regard, too. The guys who recognize the importance of sports yet the relative unimportance, find that balance and that perspective, then make an impact societally. That's where Pop is.

Q. Where do you think Pop got the confidence to speak unapologetically about social issues? Before you were able to do that as a coach, did you get inspired by him or talk to him about the best way to do it?

STEVE KERR: I was 100% inspired by Pop to have the courage to speak out, to take the hits that you're going to take if you do.

I met Pop when I signed with the Spurs in '99 during the lockout. You could see the conviction. You could see the dedication to his country. An Air Force grad, proud Air Force grad. From the first national anthem I saw him standing at attention towards the American flag, I knew how much he loved his country and I knew how much his Air Force experience meant to him.

I think that conviction combined with let's just say the shenanigans of this century politically. Really all the BS kind of started right around that time, at the turn of the century, between social media and buffoonery and politically. We just got into this current era where everybody is screaming at each other.

He already had the conviction. He saw what was happening. He wanted to make sure he spoke out.

Q. For someone that has never been in the locker room in this position, can you describe what it's like for your team knowing you're trying to get an extra series, extra day with these guys moving on because things change rapidly in the league?

STEVE KERR: So fun. This is what it's about, to compete at the highest level in the NBA Playoffs. Steph talked about it: meaningful basketball. Tonight is meaningful basketball. We have two cracks at this thing to advance. We obviously want to get it done today.

We come into this building tonight knowing we got a wonderful opportunity. Nothing's guaranteed, but we feel very confident that if we play our game, hit our keys, with this crowd, we've got a great chance to win and advance.

I say it all the time: all we want is a chance. Every year you just want a chance. Jimmy came in here and gave us a chance.

Our guys have done an incredible job flipping the season, advancing to this point. Now it's up to us to go get it. That's why we're here. That's why we do this.

Q. Everybody available, healthy? How is Jimmy feeling?

STEVE KERR: Yep, everybody's available.

Q. I don't know how much you watched the video of Game 5. What did you learn from that night that maybe can help you tonight?

STEVE KERR: I learned that we stunk. That's about it (smiling).

Q. Diplomatic.

STEVE KERR: I know...

I don't think it was anything strategic. I think it was they were just way better. We got to be better tonight.

Q. How urgent do you plan to coach from a minutes perspective tonight with your stars? How comfortable are you going over 40 for all three?

STEVE KERR: It will all depend on how the game's going. But we're ready to give our guys heavy minutes. They're ready for it. But we'll always play it by ear. Foul trouble can dictate some things. Injuries. You never know.

Our guys are ready to play big minutes, if they need to.

Q. We talked about getting Jimmy the ball and space around him. Are there specific spots on the court where you'd like to get him the ball, outside the arc, inside the arc?

STEVE KERR: He likes the ball at the elbows. He likes the ball kind of at the wing where he can kind of go either way.

Generally you don't need to run anything for Jimmy. If you get him the ball, you have to get space around him, but wherever he is, he's pretty comfortable.

Thank you.

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