

# Golden State Warriors

## Media Conference

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## Mike Dunleavy

### Media Conference



MIKE DUNLEAVY: Hello everyone.

I think it's a little unsettling, disappointing, to be sitting here in May with a team that has Steve, Steph, Draymond. We're always looking to win championships. In some ways it's tough. We obviously fell short of that.

The way this team battled the second half of the season and winning the playoffs, winning the seventh game in Houston and going into Minnesota, winning Game 1, and then obviously the injury with Steph really put us behind the eight ball.

It's a weird thing to process sitting here. Obviously we're disappointed, but I kind of feel good about how things went this year. Just hate how it ended.

Here we are turning the page, got to figure out some stuff this summer. How do we make our team better? I think from my standpoint, going into the postseason, whether we lost in the first round or we went to The Finals, not much would change from my end in terms of we have to be better next year.

I think we made a big jump adding Jimmy Butler. This time last year I was probably concerned about our ability to have like a No. 2 guy. We went out this year, we got that, and now I feel better going into next season having a guy like Jimmy on our roster. We'll build around that with him, Steph, Draymond, some of the other players we have.

I just overall feel like we're in much better shape right now than we were a year ago. We'll keep chipping away at this thing. As long as Steph, Draymond, Steve as well as our coach, as long as they've still got their fastball, we're going to keep pursuing titles.

I think if every year we can be in the mix in the conversation like we were this year -- you need a little bit of luck; you need a little bit of good fortune. We didn't necessarily get that the last couple weeks -- but if we're in the mix, these guys have a chance, and I think that's the

most you can ask for.

Yeah, overall, weird way to process the season. I feel pretty good about it, but hate that we didn't kind of find out more about how far this team could go.

That's where I'm at. If you guys have any questions, happy to answer those.

**Q. Steph specifically mentioned size all around the roster and shooting. I know you probably can't make a trade right now and you probably can't speak specifically, but would you highlight those two areas, shooting and size?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Sure. I think you can't go wrong with those areas. You can get bigger, more athletic, more skilled in terms of shooting, passing, defending. I think we can improve in a lot of areas while at the same time knowing we've got -- we're shored up and good in some areas. We'll look to do those things. For sure you can do that. We'll look at trades. We'll look at free agency.

Yeah, that's always -- I know around here the buzz word is size. I'd love to have an ability to play bigger with Draymond and Jimmy in the frontcourt, and we can always go to our ace in the hole with Draymond at center, which we did basically from February 8 on. I think we're 27-8 with that lineup full, including the playoffs.

It works. It's just the question is is that sustainable for 82 games? I'd prefer not to have to play Draymond at center for 82 games.

**Q. Kuminga is the big ticket item of the summer obviously. Where do you think that situation is at as it heads toward restricted?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Last year we had the option to extend him. This year he's a restricted free agent if nothing happens, like there's no new contracts, so we've got to figure something out. That's what it's going to be.

We value JK. I think he had a resilient season is probably the way I'd classify it. He had some ups and downs



playing. Most importantly, he had this injury where he missed 31 games. He came back, it was a new team, there were some adjustments. Overall, commend him for his professionalism. I thought he was resilient.

And as far as bringing him back next season, I think it's something we're very interested in doing because, when I look at the things JK does well, in terms of getting to the rim, finishing, getting fouled, these are things we greatly need. We know he can bring those to the table. It's not hypothetical. It's not a guy in the Draft that we think can do it. He's shown for four years he can do that.

For that reason, we'll try to bring him back, but you've got to have those conversations. You've got to figure it out. It's a two-way street in terms of creating -- getting a new contract and all of that. So we'll see where it goes.

**Q. You mentioned that you guys have a level of leverage because it is restricted free agency but also his desire to come back will be part of the conversation. How much do you feel like there's a convincing that, if he comes back, this is the best place for his career? And how much will you also potentially look at signing trades with him and other options?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: We'll look at everything. It's hard to know two days after the season is over where it's all headed. I know where I see him as a player. I know how I can work with him here. I know how we can work with him better. But like in terms of guessing how it's all going to play out or what the contract might look like or sign-and-trades and things like that, honestly I'd be totally guessing at this point to conjecture on anything.

**Q. (No microphone)?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I don't really get into what was talked about in these exit interviews, whether it was with Steve or with me. I think those are pretty personal. I'd probably prefer to comment on that.

Look, JK has been here for four years. We've worked with him. He's put in a lot of time. It's very reasonable -- and despite him not playing in some playoff games, I think it's very reasonable and actionable for him to come back.

**Q. How do you feel the way he played against Minnesota might affect his market?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: That's not really a question for me in the sense of I don't -- that's probably for the other 29 teams to answer. I know how we value him. I think it was good for him, it was good to see that, after having some

struggles and not being in the rotation during this games, for him to bounce back, step up, and have some great games for us, that was awesome to see.

I don't know, I think from a GM's perspective, if you're evaluating everything on the whole, hard to say how much a few games matter.

**Q. Then just like generally, not specific to any particular player, the playoffs were like officiated pretty differently than the regular season this year. That's probably true always, but it felt different this year. How might that dichotomy affect the way you look at improving a team?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I think we played a very physical team in Houston. They had a heck of a year. It was really tough to get past them. Obviously their physicality came through, way more so than this most recent series in Minnesota where they're really good in their own right, which is different.

I don't want to really overreact to that. I do think there's a discrepancy in how the game's officiated in the regular season versus the postseason. I think we want this free flowing offensive style of basketball for 82 games, and then when the playoffs start, everybody's looking to be more physical, the players, I think the fans are more okay with it. You just want really good, competitive, tough basketball.

So I think the league and the officials are in a bit of a tough spot, where they've got to all of a sudden adjust or figure out which way we're going to do. Both are entertaining. I think everybody just wants consistency.

**Q. When you're looking for a center maybe to give Draymond a break from playing the 5, what are some of the trades that you're going to look at when deciding who to bring in?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I think the biggest things are you've got to look at both sides of the ball. How does a player of that position complement the guys we have? That's specifically in the frontcourts Jimmy and Draymond.

I think with those two guys seeing a nice little sample size of how they played together, one way or another on the offensive end that player has got to be able to finish, whether it's at the rim or shooting a 3. We need, with the way Draymond and Jimmy can create and generally play near the rim, having somebody that they can finish near the rim or make a shot, it's going to be important in that situation.

Defensively, what do they bring to the table? Whether it's



rim protection, whether it's switchability, those types of things. Draymond is great as a center defensively, but he's also great when he's at the 4 and he can roam. You've got guys -- he can be behind the center if the center is brought up the floor in pick-and-rolls and things like that. So those are things we'll look at.

**Q. When it comes to improving this roster, what's your general philosophy on whether, if a star becomes available, knowing you have already Jimmy, Draymond and Steph, adding a fourth star or improving with multiple, complementary pieces? There was a lot of talk before the trade deadline, before you got Jimmy, we don't want to mortgage our future or make a desperate trade or anything like that. Has Jimmy changed the equation of that at all?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, I think the biggest thing, who we're trying to acquire or draft or sign, how much does that player make us better, and from there what all are we giving up? We're good giving up whatever it takes. It just depends how good we think that will make our team.

I think the only issue with mortgaging the future is you just don't want to get caught. I don't want to get caught in a situation where we give up a ton, put all our chips in, and then ten games into the season we have a catastrophic injury, there's nowhere to go, and then we're stuck for four or five years.

We've got to balance that well. There are maybe going to be some risks where it would be worthwhile to do that, but that's what you've got to look at as upside, downside when you make those moves.

**Q. Are the ages of Steph, Draymond, and Jimmy sustainable when it comes to a championship run, or do they need to be surrounded more by players around those bridge ages, like 30 or so?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, we're at the point now where you've got to have an eye to the future down the road. But this league is year to year, and especially with the guys that we have, our focus is mostly 90 percent on next season. How do we make this group better? That can come in a myriad of ways.

Yeah, I would love to get guys in their pre-prime or prime where they're going to have more years when Steph and Draymond and Jimmy are gone, but at the same time, if we have to get a bunch of 33-year-olds or 35-year-olds that we think can really help us win a championship, like that is the goal, and we will do that, cost permitting.

**Q. How do you reconcile the struggles that both**

**Brandin and Moses had in the playoffs versus the strides that they made in the regular season as you plot everything out for next year?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I thought it was great for them to get the experience. Moses has been in the postseason before, had some really great games, helped us win a championship in 2022. Brandin, the first time.

For those guys to get the experience to go through different playoff series. Houston was different from Minnesota, not only how they defended us, but also all of a sudden Steph's out and everybody's role shifts and you've got to do more. I think those types of things really helped those guys.

It's unusual for a young player to come into the playoffs and just run through seamlessly. For a guy like Brandin, I thought he had some really good moments, he did some terrific stuff. Yeah, there were games where he struggled and shots weren't going in and things like that, sure, but I love the experience that both those guys had overall. I think they learned some things, and next time around they'll be better.

**Q. You were in the tax a little bit this season, not deep in the tax. I know these meetings happen over the next few days or weeks, but would you imagine you have the okay to go deeper in the tax, maybe even go into the first apron, maybe even if there's something great, to go beyond that?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, I think we've seen with Joe and this ownership group, there's an unbelievable willingness to win at all cost. We'll weigh that stuff. A little bit now becomes dependent on the competitiveness, playing within the rules. It does, the more you spend, make it harder to make deals and stuff on the basketball operations side.

I wouldn't put a limit on going into the tax, apron, second apron, all that stuff. It's strategically advantageous to avoid the second apron from a team building standpoint, but I would never say never. If there's something we'd do that we feel like puts us head and shoulders above people, I imagine Joe would okay it.

**Q. Obviously Steph, Draymond, and Jimmy are all synced up in their contracts. Steve's got only one year. He said he's fine going year to year. Would it be of interest for management to get Kerr's contract synced up with those?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, for sure. He's as big a part of this as anyone. He's been great being here. I love him as a partner in this profession.



Yeah, I think it's one of those things where we want him here as long as he wants to be here. If it means going year to year or doing an extension, I think we can figure stuff out.

Of the things on my radar and agenda, it's -- no offense to Steve Kerr, but it's not like the highest thing up there just because I know Steve will be around for a while.

**Q. I was going to ask about the second apron tax purposes. You mentioned it in your answer, but now that we're further away from the implementation of those rules, what part of the second apron do you feel like is fearful for teams, and how do you view it as something you want to avoid? Not for money purposes, but for strategic purposes.**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I think the biggest thing, there's a few, but it makes it hard to make trades. There's such limitations on that. So if you do realize during the season you've got to get better in an area or a guy goes down -- like this year, for instance, with De'Anthony Melton with us, and turn around and get Dennis Schröder -- when you're in the second apron, it creates some issues.

So avoiding that is generally good, but it's not something you have to do at all costs. You can obviously work around it, but you'd better feel pretty good about your roster.

**Q. You talked about a center and the things you need to see, finishing or shooting 3s. You obviously have two young centers, one of whom is more at the rim in Trayce, and Quinten, who kind of emerged as a 3-point option. How do you view their development, and how practical is it that they can relieve Draymond of some of those duties next season?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, we like those guys. We think they fit pretty well with how we want to play and the roster we have.

I thought Trayce had, he had an interesting season. He started off, he was our starting center. He did some pretty good stuff. He was out of the rotation after the trade, and bounced back and did some really good things in the playoffs. He's a good, solid player, fits in a lot of ways.

Quinten, incredible rookie year for a guy drafted second round. We intended for him to be in the G-League most of the year, and he came right up and chipped in in a major way. His floor stretching ability, his size, those things are important. I feel like we know those guys can complement who we have, and we'll look for ways to make the position

better. We're happy with having those two young players.

**Q. Both guys second round picks, you guys have No. 41 this year. How much merit is there in having that pick, and how much confidence is there that you could find another contributor like Trayce, like Quinten, at 41?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, that's what we'll look for. Frankly it's nice having some of these young players come in and contribute right away. It's not always guaranteed. 41, I'm sure there will be a good player there. We can always trade the pick, we can keep it.

I think the biggest thing of interest will be the amount of players that stay in the Draft versus go back to school. That will probably dictate the quality and the talent level at the pick, but 41 is a pretty good range to be in.

**Q. At that time with Jimmy Butler, the trade, they have some noise that surround it. Given the past with Jimmy, what do you see in Jimmy that the rest of us didn't see?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I think it's been about what I expected with Jimmy, having played with him prior and kind of followed him throughout his career. When we made the trade, I felt really good about it, both what he was going to bring us on the floor and off.

I'd say it's about what I expected. I can't speak for his experiences with some of these other teams, but he's a competitor, he's a winner. Really, really good basketball player, and we're fortunate to have him.

**Q. Steve always uses this phrase saying that today's NBA is so different than it was a few years ago. Obviously we can see that with the 3-point shooting and stuff. But in terms of your philosophy of building a roster, what do you think are the three or four things you want to do to try and get a roster? What does it take to build a roster that can succeed in the NBA today?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: You kind of hit on it with the 3-point shooting. I think it goes both ways, both offensively and defensively. You want to have guys that can stretch the floor, make shots, and create more space for your other players. Even defensively, how do we defend the 3-point line? I thought that got us into some trouble this year. It just allows so much variance in the game, where if you're up 15, 20 points, a few possessions, teams are right back in if they bang down 3s.

I think us being mindful of how do we defend the 3-point





line better? It's something we'll talk about this summer. We'll look at it in terms of player acquisition and free agency in the Draft. Guys that guard the ball better, protect the rim, those kinds of different things that can potentially help you guard 3s better is stuff that we'll be thinking about.

Yeah, that's probably the biggest thing, to your point, but there's some other areas the way the game's changed and will continue to evolve that we've sort of got to be ahead of, right, as you see it go when you're team building, to know what's coming next.

That comes from evaluating the season, but also watching the playoffs. We're done, hate turning games on, it kind of puts a sour taste in your mouth, but you can learn a lot from it.

**Q. With Jimmy and Draymond as part of your core, you guys really aren't built to be a 5-out team or even a 4-out team. What are the challenges of trying to threaten defenses with those two guys not being a threat from 3?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: It's playing to your strengths, right? There's multiple ways to skin a cat. I think people complain about the homogeneousness of the NBA, so to speak, where everybody's spacing is out and playing high pick-and-roll and shooting a bunch of threes and all that. I like that we can do things differently.

Obviously with Steph, he's such a unique player and creates so much gravity, but Jimmy and Draymond are unique in their own rights. Jimmy's ability to get to the line, it's a highly efficient way to score and get to the basket and those things.

We've got ways to be a really good offense, but it's just maybe not as traditional in 2025 as some of these other clubs.

**Q. Mike, you had mentioned, as long as our three stars have their fastball, we're still about pursuing championships. Do you see it as a two-year window? Seeing what you see with the landscape of the NBA and other contenders, do you feel like at their age they can keep that fastball going for the next two years and what they have to do around them?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, I don't want to cut it short, but I want to see it a little more short term and see it as a one-year opportunity. We'll see what happens after next season and how we pivot and do things differently.

But for now, we're going to focus on next year. Steph is an

All-NBA player. Draymond is one of the most elite defensive players, not only ever, but still today. Then we have a very special player in Jimmy. It's like how could we not focus on winning it all? That's got to be our focus.

I think, as far as how it relates to the rest of the league, the West is tough. It's a really tough conference. We can't just say, hey, let's get through the regular season and let's hope for some favorable matchups and health in the playoffs and give it a go. We've got to build a team that can get through the regular season. We won 48 games this year, and we're in the play-in.

So it's very tricky to navigate a whole season with some older players and still win games and be in a position you want to win the playoffs. That's will be the hardest part. It's not just show up in April, May, and June and hope for the best. It's a long haul. We've got to be mindful of that, and we've got to build a team around that.

I do believe in the way these guys take care of their body -- Draymond, Steph, Jimmy -- they all had incredible health this year, and that's a tribute to our medical staff. The story is Steph missed the last four games because of a hamstring injury. The reality is we managed them quite well and just got a little bit of a stroke of bad luck at the end.

I think on the whole these guys' ages are what they are, but 37, 38, 35, that's different than it was 10 years ago. I think these guys still got it in them, and we'll manage it well and hopefully put ourselves in position to compete for a title next year.

**Q. How do you view your own future, and how are you settling into the job? Do you feel like a veteran GM at this point?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: I think I'm learning every day, every season. It's nice to have two years under my belt with this team. I've learned a lot. We've been through a lot.

Thinking back to last year, the things we went through, didn't make the playoffs, lost in the play-in, Draymond Green was suspended for a lot of the season, went through that.

This year felt like three different seasons. We started off 12-3, lost our way, went to the trade deadline, made a move, and rekindled some stuff, and it was a really exciting spring.

I feel like we've been through a lot, but that's life in the NBA. I've been around this a long time. The seasons are long, but they go by fast. I feel more and more comfortable



as we go along, but that's not to say, like I've got a lot to learn, we'll figure more things out.

I'm happy with the way as an organization and a group, front office, we problem solve and figure things out because we've been through some tough times on the court, off the court, and I like our ability to figure things out and problem solve as we've gone along.

**Q. Without subtracting anyone necessarily from the current roster, would you say that it would be safe to say you guys would require a big, a wing and maybe a playmaking guard to be from where you are now to championship contender? How much do you prioritize needing size versus needing shooting versus needing playmaking?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Yeah, it's tricky to kind of filter through all that and prioritize it while acknowledging all those things are good and will help.

I think the beauty of our team is -- well, at least the guys that we have here, there's tremendous versatility with them. So we can add some stuff. We can sign a guy, and all of a sudden then Jimmy could play 2, 3, or 4, or Draymond could play 4 or 5, Brandin Podziemski can play multiple positions. You kind of go through the guys.

Yeah, all those things you mention would be nice, and we'll look at those things, but we do have some versatility where we're not locked in and we have to have this certain position or we have to have that.

The one thing I would say we have to have is health. We learned that this year. Big takeaway, you get in the playoffs, and you kind of need your best player to advance. That didn't happen, and you see the results. It's unfortunate. There's not much you can do about it except for hope. That's kind of where I'm at with things.

I think there's a lot of ways to improve this roster, and I wouldn't necessarily pigeonhole us into having to have a specific position or a specific skill set. We probably need a range of them all.

**Q. In that same realm, Looney and Gary are free agents again. Just how do you view their future here?**

MIKE DUNLEAVY: Those guys have been key parts of our organization for a long time, been a part of championship teams. They're free agents. I told them yesterday we'd love to have them back, and we've got to figure that out.

Just like with JK, when guys' contracts are up, you've got to work through it, figure out how it works. In terms of how

we value them, they bring us great things on and off the court, and we'd love to have those guys back.

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