

USA Basketball Press Conference Quotes: Steve Kerr to Lead 2022-24 USA Basketball Men's National Team Dec. 20, 2021

USA Men's National Team head coach **Steve Kerr** (Golden State Warriors)

Opening statement:

Thank you so much. What an incredible honor and opportunity. It is truly humbling. People say that all the time, but this is truly humbling when I think about how few coaches have ever had this opportunity to be the coach of the Olympic team and USA Basketball, and how many amazing candidates there are out there. So, I have been very, very blessed, very lucky in my career, and this opportunity is the result of being in the right place at the right time, working with the right people, having a lot of people lift me up along the way, and then given the opportunity to be part of USA Basketball over the last few summers. So, first I want to thank you, **Grant (Hill), Sean Ford, Jim Tooley, General Martin Dempsey**, all the senior members of the USA Basketball committee, thank you for the opportunity. I also want to thank **Jerry Colangelo** and **Gregg Popovich** for the opportunity to be part of the staff over the last three summers. No question that the reason I'm sitting here now is because of that opportunity. So, thanks to Pop and Jerry. And I will say that the experience I've had over the last few summers has been just an incredible basketball and life experience. To coach with Pop, to experience, both the World Cup and the Olympics, it's a really unique situation. It's a unique environment. It's basically a six-week sprint, where you get the players together and you get the coaching staff together, and you got to figure out how to win pretty quickly. And I think back to this past summer and Tokyo winning the gold medal, doing so with a group of players and coaches – we will share that bond for life. And I think the same thing that attracts players to want to play for the national team is what attracts coaches. I know for me, working with Pop, working with **Jay Wright, Lloyd Pierce, Ime Udoka, Chip Engelland, Will Hardy, Jeff Van Gundy**, every day in that coach's room, first in Vegas and then in Japan, was just incredible. The learning environment, the chemistry, the buzz you feel as you're trying to accomplish something together, and then to meet with the players, after your meeting to try to put it all together, it's the ultimate challenge and the ultimate high as a basketball coach to experience this. I could not be any more excited - thrilled about the staff that we've put together. Any one of these guys could be the head coach, **Erik Spoelstra, Monty Williams, Mark Few**, all so qualified, all have been involved with USA Basketball, and I can't wait to get to work with those three gentlemen and with the other staff members that we'll put together over the next couple of years. Finally, I want to thank the Warriors, because I've had one coaching job in the NBA with the Golden State Warriors, and my life has been enhanced beyond belief by coming to the Bay Area and working in this organization with Joe Lacob and Peter Guber and the rest of the ownership group, Bob Myers, all the assistant coaches that I've enjoyed having by my side over the years and, most importantly, the players – Steph (Curry), Draymond (Green), Andre (Iguodala), Klay (Thompson), down the list. Those are the guys who are responsible for me sitting here, because you don't reach this level unless you have success, and you don't have success unless you have players. So, I want to thank the Warriors and thank all of our players, and that's a good

reminder that you (Grant Hill) have got to get some players for us in the next couple years. (laughing).

On his career:

Sometimes I think back on my career, and I just sort of wonder how. Grant (Hill) and I first really got connected in Phoenix when I was G.M. and he was a player. To think back on all the opportunities I've been given and that I've received, it's sort of remarkable, and as I mentioned, it really is a matter of being very fortunate with the people around me. I think back to the coaches who I played for, I think back to coach (Lute) Olson at Arizona and also with USA Basketball in 1986, all of my NBA coaches, Cotton Fitzsimmons and Lenny Wilkens, Gregg Popovich, Phil Jackson, I've just sort of continued to find this path where I've had amazing people around me who have guided me, and somehow the path continues. I'm not going to stop and think about it too much, because I'll wonder how it happened. But it's happened, I'm here. I love every second of every day preparing to coach basketball. It's a dream job and it doesn't get much better than being the coach of the USA basketball team. So, I'm thrilled.

On his reaction on being asked to coach the USA Basketball Men's National Team:

Well, it was a surprise, to be honest with you, even though we spent the whole summer together in Tokyo and Grant (Hill) was with us in Las Vegas. But, **Sean Ford** (USA Basketball Men's National Team director), getting to know Sean over the last few years, it was just a wonderful experience to be part of USA Basketball, but you just don't stop and think 'oh, maybe I'll be the head coach.' It's not something you even dream about. So, you don't even afford yourself that time and say I wonder. You just put your head down, you work. When this call came, it gave me chills. It's an opportunity of a lifetime, and I can't wait to work with all these guys.

Grant Hill, USA Basketball Men's National Team managing director

Opening statement:

It was a great thing, talking with Steve and gauging his level of interest, getting to a point where I felt he was the right guy, the right person who is uniquely qualified for this role and this responsibility. And, obviously, USA Basketball has a number of stakeholders, and so making sure that it's discussed and everyone was on board, which thankfully happened, so that took some time to get to this point. Steve was my number one choice. And thankfully, there were some great options out there, as Steve alluded to, in both the college and the NBA ranks, but I think because of a unique set of experiences, I think his basketball acumen, I can go down the list of reasons we all know Steve was the guy. We had to go through the process, which I won't bore you with what that is, but ultimately, we got to where we are now, and we're very thrilled.