

Fool's Gold: Are the Golden State Warriors the Most Overrated Team of All Time?

The 2016-2017 Golden State Warriors are champions of the basketball world once again. This is their second title in three years, having defeated LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers both times. They went 16-1 in the playoffs which is the highest post season winning percentage in the history of the NBA. By every conceivable measure they appear to be a great team.

Unless you ask other NBA players.

Charles Barkely, Scottie Pippen, Rasheed Wallace, Robert Horry, Julius Irving, and Magic Johnson have all had less-than-kind things to say about this Warriors' team. All of them have publicly questioned their greatness, insinuating that they are the product of a watered down, less talented and more easily exploited league.

We here at Rambling Ever On decided to take a closer look into this controversy. What is it about this Warriors' team that causes all of these former (and current) players to withhold praise, or worse, to openly doubt? We have done our best to get a good sampling of reaction from various NBA players who have played in different eras.

We started our investigation with the players from the 80's and 90's, since they seemed to be the most vocal in their criticism. Craig Ehlo, a former Cleveland Cavalier from the 80's and 90's, noted "I have no doubt we'd take them. 5 games at most. We didn't win the championship but the league was tougher back then. And with the new rules Mark Price would hit 22 threes a game, minimum. Between me, Wilkins and Price, we'd have the Splash Triplets. Curry would ride the bench in the

90's NBA."

Patrick Ewing, Hall of Fame center for the New York Knicks bristled when asked if the current Warriors are better than the 1996 Chicago Bulls. "Man, we played those Bulls' teams! They were great. Best ever. And we played them close. These pretty boys from Oakland would be crying on the court if they had to play me, Mason and Oakley. We sweep them or they would give up. Whichever comes first."

It appears there is a level of skepticism about the Warriors. We dug deeper.

Michael Olowokandi, the number one pick in the 1998 draft has also recently spoken out. "I'm confident the 99 Clippers would take these Warriors. I know I only averaged 8 points per game for my career, but the league was tougher back then. Draymond Green wouldn't be able to touch me. I'd go for 30 every night."

The skepticism and verbal attacks are not reserved for players from the 80's and 90's. NBA players from every decade are stepping up and taking their shots at Durant, Curry and the Warriors. Fred Carter, the leading scorer on the 1973 Sixers had some choice words.[1.The 1973 Sixers went 9-73 – the worst record in NBA history.] "Back when I played, there were only 17 teams in the league. There are 30 teams today. Obviously that has watered down the league. And we didn't have any of those European players. Those guys should just stick to soccer." Carter continued, "We didn't have the three point shot in my day either. It didn't exist. If it had been around, I am confident that at least half of my team could have shot it at least as well as Stephen Curry. Probably better."

Fred "Curly" Neal of the Harlem Globetrotters added his own perspective. "Those guys are fancy. They dribble, they drive, they shoot from anywhere on the court. But we did all those things and we did them better. We looked better as well, you

know what I'm saying? Don't give me that 16-1! The Globetrotters won 8,829 games in a row!"

Surely, we thought to ourselves, that at the very least, the current players would have a healthy respect for a team that has won 207 regular season games and two NBA championships in the past three seasons. So, we approached LeBron James, arguably the great player of his generation, to get his thoughts. James was thoughtful and political with his response, yet with enough negativity it was clear the questions about the Warriors extends beyond the older generations. "Well, they were a great team. No doubt. But they played in an era that honestly didn't have a lot of great teams. And their style of play worked for them in that era but would not be as effective against the great teams of other eras." We asked James if his Cavaliers team would beat the Kevin Durant led Warriors in a seven game series. LeBron smiled, "Absolutely. Our team could defend the perimeter which would have contained Curry and Thompson. We would have neutralized Durant completely. Our teamwork and passing would have made it impossible for their defense to key on any one player. And defensively, we played a physical and aggressive style that would have knocked them off their game. We would have won that series in 5, maybe 6 games."

There you have it. The Golden State Warriors, who set the NBA record for the most regular season wins in a single season AND over a three year span, winners of two NBA championships, are just not very good. In fact, ask any player, past or present, besides Dell Curry and Mychal Thompson, and they would tell you that pretty much any team that has ever played in the NBA could beat these guys. Even some great college teams could probably give them a good run for their money. In fact, there have been rumors that members of the 1995 College of Charleston Cougars are saying they believe their team could also defeat the Warriors in a 7 game series, but none of them could be reached for comment.