

NBA

Nothing cooler than a hot shot

It was payoff time for a proud pop.

Del Curry is the TV color analyst for the Charlotte Bobcats. On Feb. 27, the Bobcats flew from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City, Curry checked into his hotel room and flipped on the TV to the ESPN NBA game, Warriors against Knicks at Madison Square Garden — which was about to become Studio 54.

The second quarter was starting. Del's son Stephen had scored four points in the first quarter, on 2-for-6 shooting. Dad sat down to watch.

Del Curry was a great NBA shooter. Late in his career, when he gave shooting clinics he brought along his two sons, Stephen and Seth, who loved hoops and didn't mind sitting through dad's lectures.

On the family driveway, Del worked with the boys, but

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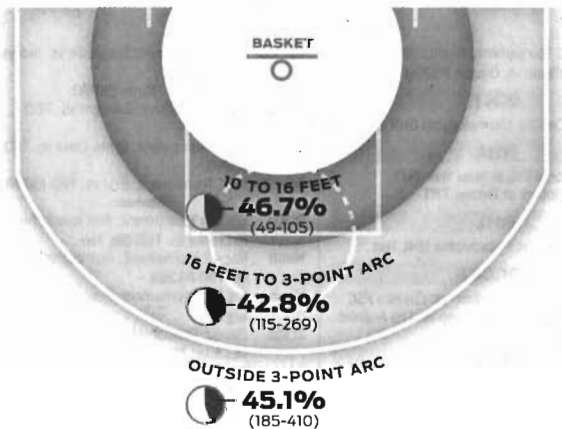


casually.

"When they shot here at the house," Curry says, "I made sure they did things the right way. But I didn't go out and say, 'All right, it's time for your 30-minute shooting instruction,' nothing like that. I always watched 'em, made sure they were doing it the right way. Taught 'em, really, without them knowing it, through my clinics."

Curry, in a phone interview Wednesday, recalled the summer that Stephen almost quit the sport. Now he's a fourth-year NBA guard whose game has advanced a significant

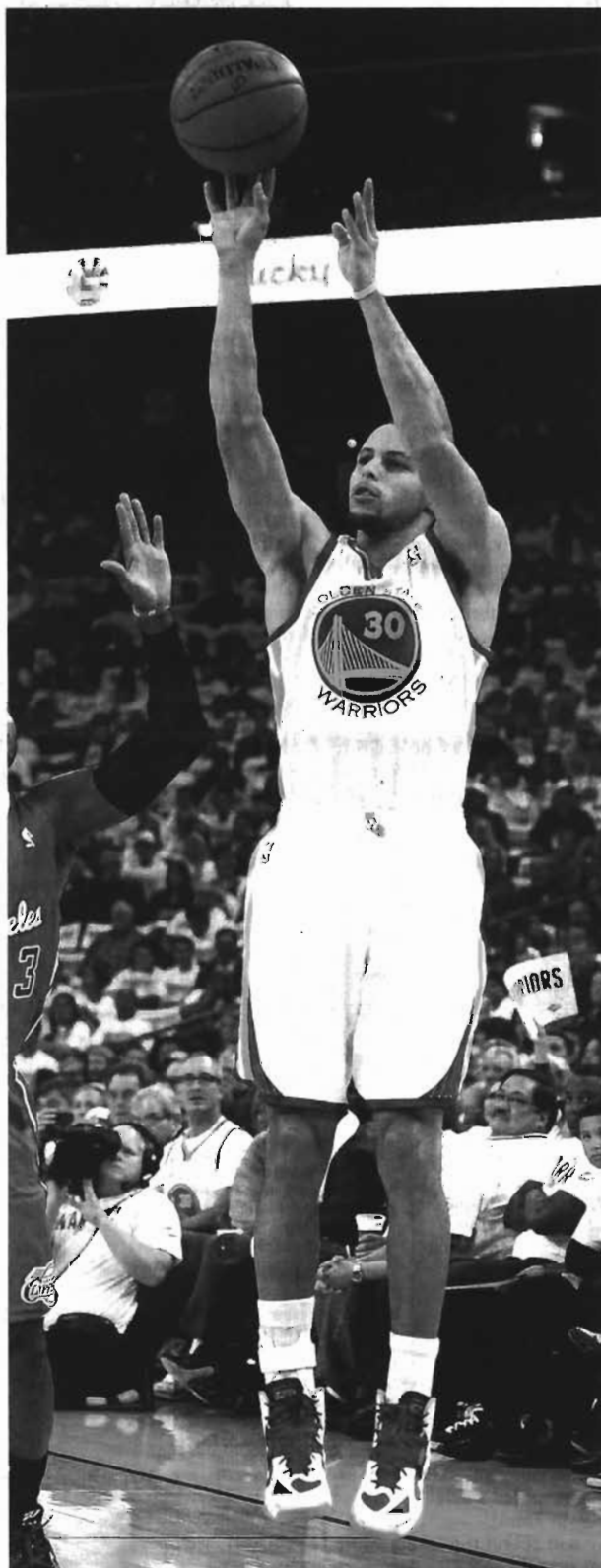
Ostler continues on B4



Distance is no object

A look at Stephen Curry's shooting percentages broken down by distance for this year shows his jump shot is consistently effective regardless of length of shot.

Todd Trumbull / The Chronicle



Carlos Avila Gonzalez / The Chronicle

Stephen Curry and his father moved his jump shot over his head when he was in high school. Now, it's picture perfect.

NBA

Karl says he hopes the Kings can stay

SACRAMENTO BEE

SACRAMENTO — Nuggets coach George Karl took a walk Tuesday to see some of his favorite places in Sacramento before his team played the Kings at Sleep Train Arena.

Karl hopes it was not the last time he could do so as a coach. With the Kings' impending sale and possible relocation to Seattle, he finds himself torn.

"I think everybody knows I'm a Seattle guy and I want basketball back in Seattle, but I don't want basketball out of Sacramento," Karl said. "It's a politically correct answer, but it's a truthful answer."

Karl coached the SuperSonics to the 1996 Finals, where they lost to the Bulls. That season, the Sonics beat the Kings in a first-round series.

Karl said his ears were ringing from the arena noise after the Sonics clinched the series in Sacramento.

"It's a fun city to come to," Karl said. "I hope (NBA Commissioner David) Stern will consider expansion, but I don't think he will. I don't know who will make the decision. I hear the board of governors, the lawyers, the courts. I have no idea who will make the decision."

Karl recalled several cities that had teams move, such as Baltimore losing the Colts to Indianapolis and the Cleveland Browns relocating to Baltimore and becoming the Ravens.

Then there's the Sonics' move to Oklahoma City in 2008.

"There's still hatred 30 years later over these situations," Karl said. "I know there are a lot of people in Seattle that are still upset about the Oklahoma City Thunder, and they're never going to let it go."

Curry's shooting stroke built to last

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notch this season.

Stephen missed being selected for the All-Star Game, but his high-visibility 54-point game against the Knicks did two things. It introduced Curry to casual NBA fans, and, among the league's more hardcore hard core, it elevated the appreciation and respect for his game.

Jerry West, a Warriors special adviser, bristles when he talks of the All-Star snub.

"He should have been on the All-Star team, period, OK?" West says. "A lot of coaches who didn't vote for him should maybe look in a mirror. He was worthy, he was worthy."

Some people — I'm one of them — are starting to throw Curry into the discussion of the game's best pure shooters, now and all-time. I pulled Warriors' backup point guard Jarrett Jack into the discussion Tuesday, because Jack is a student of the game.

"I don't know where to put Steph, all-time," Jack said, "but he's definitely the best-shooting point guard in the league right now. By far. Not even close. Not even close. It's like there's him, and then there's a blank space, and then there's somebody else. I just think that's how far ahead of everybody else he is."

What does Jack like about Curry's shooting?

"Everything. Form, distance, the (variety of) ways he makes his shots — off the dribble, catch-and-shoot. A lot of the time he just really leaves me shaking my head. ... There are (three-point) specialists, but he's definitely the best player and shooter I've ever played with. ... This kid is unbelievable. And the percentage he's hitting from three-point range is ridiculous. Eleven of 13 in New York? Come on, man, that's crazy."

"The thing is, it's even harder when you're the focal point. It's not like he's just a guy, 'Oh he caught us by surprise.' No, the scouting report that night (against the Knicks), especially with David (Lee) being out, and Steph being obviously our go-to guy, probably was all about him. Their whole defensive premise was about him. To be able to do what he did, that's ridiculous."

Jack always makes a point to shoot with Curry.

"You like to look at his mechanics," Jack says. "And I pick his brain. But it can be discouraging, like when he makes 29 (three-pointers) in a row."

Curry has a distinct skill/personality set. To find someone with a similar blend of plus-plus hoop attributes, you'd have to go all the way to the Warriors' executive offices, to Mr. West.

Not surprisingly, Jerry West



Carlos Avila Gonzalez / The Chronicle

Stephen Curry shoots over Rudy Gay in the second half of Monday's game, when Curry made half of his field-goal tries.

Mechanics get Swish of approval

I happen to be a disciple of Northern California shot coach Tom Nordland and his "Swish" method, which is mechanical and aesthetic purity. Nordland and Stephen Curry have never connected, but Nordland says Curry's shot is a classic demonstration of the Swish method. Here's Nordland describing Curry's jump shot:

"Open stance (right leg closer to basket), legs straight to start, ball in front of stomach, ball/hand/eye/target aligned. Legs initiate action, then dipping arms and setting ball link arms to leg energy. Inertia is created by ball moving in-line, shot is one-piece, no pause, quick, with wrist and hand relaxed. Hand bounces, follow-through held. Swish!"

— Scott Ostler

is a big Curry guy. West praises Curry's passion for the game, his quiet confidence, his old-school modesty, his growing shot repertoire, his expanding ability to size up situations and match-ups, his free-throw shooting, his quick release, and, "His range is right up there with the best we've ever seen."

West had a trick. Shooting off the dribble, he would pound his last dribble extra hard, creating speed and momentum to carry up into his shot. He says Curry does the same thing.

"You can see him take that

last quick dribble," West says, "and the subtle changes of directions he has — side-to-side, clever little dribbles, he'll kind of freeze the defender, and all you need when you shoot the ball quickly, particularly when you have the confidence he has, all you need is just a little room. He's learned how to create that extra little space he needs so he doesn't get bothered as much on his shooting."

And as for shooting ...

"For pure form," West says, "I don't know many guys I would pick over him, I really don't."

3-pt FG pct leaders

2012-13*

Player, team	Pct
1. Kyle Korver, Atl	46.2
2. Martell Webster, Was	45.2
3. Stephen Curry, GS	45.1
4. Jose Calderon, Det	45.1
5. Steve Novak, NY	44.0
6. Shane Battier, Mia	43.6
7. Danny Green, SA	43.5
8. Ersan Ilyasova, Mil	43.2
9. Steve Nash, LAL	43.0
10. John Lucas, Tor	43.0

*Minimum 100 attempts

CAREER*

Player	Pct
1. Steve Kerr	45.4
2. Stephen Curry	44.5
3. Hubert Davis	44.1
4. Steve Novak	43.7
4. Drazen Petrovic	43.7
6. Jason Kapono	43.4
7. Tim Legler	43.1
8. Steve Nash	42.8
9. Danny Green	42.7
10. Anthony Morrow	42.5

*Minimum 250 made

Most 3-pointers made all-time

Career leaders for three-pointers made and their percentages:

Player	3FG	Pct
1. Ray Allen	2,817	40.1
2. Reggie Miller	2,560	39.5
3. Jason Kidd	1,962	34.9
4. Jason Terry	1,881	37.9
5. Chauncey Billups	1,803	38.9
6. Paul Pierce	1,787	36.9
7. Peja Stojakovic	1,760	40.1
8. Dale Ellis	1,719	40.3
8. Rashard Lewis	1,719	38.8
10. Steve Nash	1,663	42.8

Source: basketball-reference.com

Note: All stats entering Wednesday's games

West believes that last season's big trade, Monta Ellis for Andrew Bogut, has benefited Curry.

"There's obviously been some expansion of (Curry's) game," West says. "I like Monta Ellis a lot, because he competes so hard, but I wonder if — and again, I don't know this — if it hasn't helped Steph grow a little bit as a player. ... It has probably allowed him to flourish a little bit more."

Since shooting guard Klay Thompson doesn't attack the paint the way Ellis did, Curry has expanded his own driving game.

Also, Curry handles the ball more now, and Thompson has helped ease some of Curry's defensive duties.

Also, West feels that Bogut's assimilation into the lineup will be hugely beneficial to Curry's (and every other Warrior's) game.

As a kid, Stephen was small and slight, and his "jumper" was a heave that started super-low, below the belt.

"Between his sophomore and junior year" of high school, Del Curry says, "I told him, 'If you want to play at the next level, college, you're going to have to move your shot above your head, or else you're going to get it blocked every time.'"

"So we just took that summer and changed his shot. It was pretty frustrating for him, he almost quit playing that summer, but he stuck with it and got to where we all wanted it to be."

Stephen was a practice junkie, loved-loved-loved to shoot.

"He used to get mad on days he couldn't go to practice with me," Del says, "and it wasn't because he wanted to go hang out with the NBA guys. He wanted to go to the gym to work on his game."

Stephen's little brother Seth is a senior at Duke, averaging 17.0 points and shooting 44 percent from three-point range. Del says Stephen rates an edge over Seth because Stephen is doing his shooting in the NBA, but, "I think they're even right now, as far as putting it in the hole."

I asked Del Curry to name some of his all-time favorite shooters. He mentioned Ray Allen ("Because of how quickly he prepares himself and squares and sets up, and he's got a quick release") and Dale Ellis ("Who was kind of like me — run off screens, catch-and-shoot guy, very-very consistent").

As for his older son?

"The way he handles the basketball, and the way he shoots off the dribble, is second to none in the league," Curry says, adding, "I can't remember a guy in the league that shot it that well. ... He can create his own shot, he's got unlimited range. And the way he passes the ball ... if he's in the pick-and-roll area, you gotta pick your poison."

Nobody should be less surprised than Del Curry when Stephen Curry lights up an arena, but dad was blown away watching that game in his Salt Lake City hotel room.

"Oh, man, I tell you what," Del Curry says, "the people in the rooms on either side of me, I'm sure they were wondering what was going on in my room. I'm usually not an emotional guy, but I'm glad I was by myself. I was able to kind of let it loose. It was unbelievable. He'd shoot a shot and I'd go, 'No way,' and it'd go in. It was a great emotional time."

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