



THE GOLDEN State Warriors celebrate after defeating the Cleveland Cavaliers 108-85 in Game 4 of the NBA Finals to win the title on Friday in Cleveland.

(AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

Get used to a Golden State world, NBA

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — The NBA might have to get used to this.

Stephen Curry is under contract for basically the rest of his prime. Kevin Durant says he isn't going anywhere. Steve Kerr has more than proven himself as one of the game's best coaches. Free agents will line up for the chance to move west even if that means taking some pay cuts. There's even a new arena coming in a year or so for the Golden State Warriors to call home.

It's their league now, without question.

For the third time in four years, the Warriors are champions of the NBA world. They've gone back-to-back, beating the Cleveland Cavaliers 108-85 on Friday night to finish off a sweep of these NBA Finals in the fourth consecutive meeting between those clubs.

The Cavs may very well be coming apart.

The Warriors look very much built to last, and no matter where LeBron James goes this summer it'll probably be Golden State as the prohibitive favorites to win it all again next year.

"You don't want to cheat the moment," Curry said, the victory champagne still drying on his clothes and skin, wanting no part of any talk about dynasties or anything like that. "So we'll have plenty of time over the summer to talk about what next year's going to look like and what it's going to take for us to get back to this stage next year."

Houston probably isn't going away and remember, the Rockets gave the Warriors all they wanted this season. Had Chris Paul not gotten hurt, who knows if the Warriors even win that Game 7 in Houston and take the West title. The East might be a wild race, with Toronto, Philadelphia and Boston probably all likely to enter the year thinking they have NBA Finals potential — as will any team that has James on its roster next fall.

This much is clear: Golden State has no designs on giving up its throne.

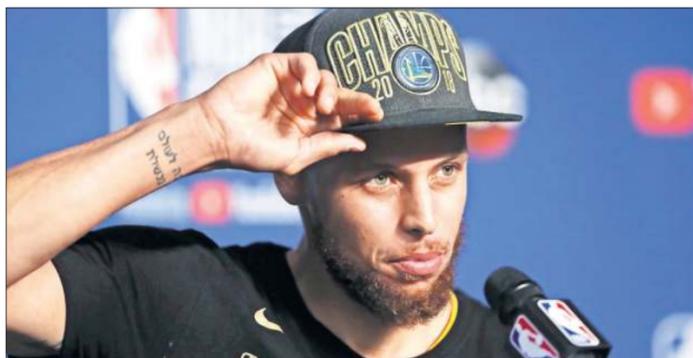
"I've just got to keep getting better," said Warriors star Kevin Durant, now a two-time champion and two-time NBA Finals MVP. "I think I've got a lot more to go. So I'm just trying to prove to myself that I could just stay in it for the long haul, and hopefully I continue to have some success. Just keep growing as a player. That's my only concern."

Durant was voted the best player in this series — and he wants to keep growing.

He can't be guarded now — and he wants to keep growing.

Ask the 29 other NBA teams their reaction to that statement and they would likely say some form of "welp."

"They move at such a pace, and they have five guys on the floor that can dribble, pass and shoot," Cleveland coach Tyronn Lue said Friday night, a few minutes after the season ended and a few minutes into the Warriors' celebration down the hall. "They can make plays. So if you make a mistake, they're going to make you pay. That's the beauty of their team."



WARRIORS guard Stephen Curry speaks during a news conference on Saturday after the Warriors won the NBA championship over the Cavaliers.

(AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver marvels at how the Warriors have put themselves in this position. They drafted well. They drafted lucky, too — Draymond Green as a second-rounder is an all-time bargain. They spend a ton of money, but they do it smartly.

They are built for the long haul. And they are having more than their share of fun along the way.

"Klay just Googled himself and it says three-time champion already," Green said as he sat next to Klay Thompson after Game 4, the Wikipedia world having already updated pages with the Warriors' latest championship accomplishment.

"That's dope."

Every other team this summer will try to figure out how to beat Golden State. Some will try to do so in 2019. Others will wait for a more opportune time, a few years from now. Not many teams are in position to even think about

knocking the Warriors off their perch.

Plus, Golden State will get better. Durant has already challenged some of the Warriors' young and promising players to raise their games. They will retool their roster this summer, change the look of the bench a bit. They will add pieces. "When you get on the hard work that you put into it and all that you've been through led to that moment, it never gets dull," Curry said. "It never gets boring. It's always a freshness about that moment."

This is why Curry does what he does. This is why he'll be back in the gym in a couple weeks, restarting the process. Opening night is four months away, after all.

"I've got a big smile on my face right now," Curry said. "I'm going to try to hold onto it for as long as I can."

It might be there for years.

JUSTIFIABLE! RACING GETS 13TH TRIPLE CROWN WITH JUSTIFY

By BETH HARRIS
AP Racing Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Justify defied all the odds on his way to achieving Triple Crown immortality.

The late bloomer won the Belmont Stakes by 1 1/4 lengths on Saturday, giving the sport its 13th Triple Crown champion. American Pharoah ended a 37-year drought in 2015 and now just four years later, racing is celebrating another sweep of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont.

Justify began his racing career on February 18, a scant 77 days before the Derby. He won his first three races by a combined 19 lengths, making trainer Bob Baffert a believer.

The big chestnut colt with the appetite to match burst onto the national scene with a 2 1/2-length victory on a sloppy track in the Derby. Two weeks later, he survived a challenge in the fog-shrouded Preakness, winning by a half-length, again in the slop to set up a Triple Crown try.

"The raw talent is there," Baffert said. "He just came on there and broke every curse there was. It was meant to be."

On a cloudy 80-degree day at Belmont Park, Justify proved a cool customer.

He didn't flinch when greeted by 90,327 roaring fans as he walked onto the track. He stood so quietly in the starting gate that jockey Mike Smith wondered if he'd respond when it sprang open.

Did he ever.

Justify led all the way in achieving one of the sports world's toughest feats 45 years to the day that Secretariat won the Belmont by a record 31 lengths. Baffert called Justify one of the all-time greats.

"I think he's the greatest of all time," Smith said. "I just won the Triple Crown, man. He's my champion."

Justify accomplished a lot in a very short time.

At 6-0, he joins Seattle Slew in 1977 as the only two undefeated Triple Crown winners; he's the first to sweep the series without racing at age 2 (because of



JOCKEY MIKE SMITH, second from right, trainer Bob Baffert, right, and owners Kenny Trout, second from left, and Teo Ah Khing pose with the Triple Crown trophy after race horse Justify won the 150th running of the Belmont Stakes horse race on Saturday. (AP)

a pulled muscle); and he's the only horse to beat nine rivals in the Belmont with a Triple try on the line. Slew also was a wire-to-wire Belmont winner.

Justify's human handlers also made history.

Baffert became the second trainer to win the Triple Crown twice, having overseen American Pharoah. James "Sunny Jim" Fitzsimmons guided Gallant Fox in 1930 and Omaha in 1935.

"It never gets old," Baffert said. "American Pharoah, he'll always be my first love."

At 52, Smith became the oldest jockey to win the Triple Crown. He celebrated by grabbing white carnations from the winner's blanket and tossing them in the air.

"He just puts an old man out there to sit still, who stays out of the way and lets a good horse be a good horse," Smith said,

crediting Baffert for using him.

Smith and Justify took a curtain call before entering the winner's circle. Back in New York where he dominated in the 1990s, Smith took Justify on a walk past the packed grandstand, soaking in the cheers and giving the crowd a closer look at racing's newest hero.

Justify's victory gives racing its second Triple Crown winner of the

FERRARI'S SEBASTIAN VETTEL WINS CANADIAN GRAND PRIX

By JIMMY GOLEN
AP Sports Writer

MONTREAL (AP) — Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel has won the Canadian Grand Prix after leading the race from the pole to the checkered flag — and then some.

Vettel picked up his second career victory at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve and the first for Ferrari in Montreal since Michael Schumacher won three in a row from 2002-04. The only hiccup was that the checkered flag was waved prematurely, while Vettel was still on his last lap.

"Tell them not to wave the checkered flag when it's not done yet," he radioed back.

With the victory, Vettel took a one-point lead in the Formula One standings over Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, who was fifth.

Valtteri Bottas was second in his Mercedes, about six seconds back. Max Verstappen was third and the other Red Bull car, driven by Daniel Ricciardo, was fourth.

It's Vettel's 50th career win and his third of the season.

Starting cleanly and pulling away from the field, Vettel led all 70 laps at the 2.71-mile (4.36-km) track named for the Ferrari driver and Montreal native who earned his first Formula One victory on this track 40 years ago.

Vettel grabbed a Ferrari flag and waved it on his way to the podium.

"I feel very emotional," the German said. "It's just a day to remember the great Gilles Villeneuve."

The day was less positive for two-time world champion Fernando Alonso, who was celebrating his 300th Formula One race. He retired to the garage after 43 laps — the eighth time he failed to finish at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Last year, Alonso was headed for a Top 10 finish before running into engine problems in the 66th lap. He parked his car alongside the track and climbed into the stands to watch the end of the race — to the thrill of the Montreal fans.

It was also a short day for Brandon Hartley and hometown favorite Lance Stroll, who locked up heading into Turn 5 on the first lap. A year ago in Montreal, Stroll picked up the first Formula One points of his career.

Sergio Perez skidded onto the grass on the restart but managed to straighten himself out and rejoin the race in another early mishap.

decade. The last time there were two Triple Crown champions in the same decade was the 1970s, which produced Secretariat, Seattle Slew and Affirmed.

Purchased for \$500,000, Justify earned \$800,000 for his Belmont win, giving him \$3,798,000 in his brief career.

The powerful colt with the blaze running the length of his face showed no signs that the rigors of running a compressed schedule had gotten to him.

On a fast, dry track, Justify was just as good in his third race in five weeks at his third different track.

Sent off as the 4-5 favorite, Justify ran 1 1/2 miles — the longest race of the series — in 2:28.18 and paid \$3.60, \$3.50 and \$2.80.

"This horse ran a tremendous race, he's so gifted," Smith said.

"He's sent from heaven. I tell you, it's just amazing," he said.

Vino Rosso finished fourth, followed by Tenfold, Bravazo, Free Drop Billy, Restoring Hope, Blended Citizen and Noble Indy.