

**Why We Hate the Warriors**  
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Colin Cowherd recently posed a rather intriguing question on his radio show regarding the Golden State Warriors. He could not wrap his head around why the general public so intensely dislikes the team from The Bay. Rightfully, Cowherd stated that we typically embrace and celebrate dominance in American sports, as evidenced by the New York Yankees, Los Angeles Lakers, and Duke Blue Devils (basketball, of course). We applaud the excellence of these teams, along with other dynastic sports brands, so much so that when these teams underperform, their respective leagues are less interesting because of it. Baseball's always better when the Yankees are good. Basketball's always better when the Lakers are good. So why is it, Cowherd asked, that we resent the Golden State Warriors? Don't we like dynasties? Don't we enjoy witnessing greatness? While it is more than a fair point, there are definitive reasons why the Warriors are perceived the way they are by the average sports fan.

**Reason #1: People are resistant to change.**

The sports community is accepting of excellence displayed by the Yankees, Lakers, and Blue Devils for one simple reason: They've always been successful. We are so used to these teams being great because they've been great for decades. It's almost as if we are conditioned to believe these teams will always be the standard, so when other teams surpass them, we naturally become skeptical. If the Lakers win three out of four championships, we see nothing wrong with it. But when the Golden State Warriors, all of a sudden, win three out of four, we're taken aback by it. Why? Because the Lakers are the Old Money and the Warriors are the New Money (yes, this is a Great Gatsby reference). The Lakers have been a prosperous franchise throughout so much of basketball history that it's almost as if they were born into success. When the Lakers take home a championship, nobody blinks an eye at it, as is the same when Tom Buchanan buys a new mansion. After all, he was born into money. However, when the Jay Gatsby's of the world find a way to match the superfluity of the Old Money, a tension boils within the social order. Where did he come from? How did he get all that money? Or, in the case of the Warriors, how did they rise to prominence? What made them so powerful? We question it because we're frightened by it. And it doesn't matter how respectable their climb to fame was; at the end of the day, they still had to climb. They are a threat to the way we have always looked at sports, and because of that, we are in no way accepting of them.

**Reason #2: Fads die out.**

Let's not forget that there was a time when it was cool to like the Warriors. It started when they were playing the Clippers on Christmas day seemingly every year. As the team received more national exposure, the likes of Steph Curry and Klay Thompson came to be quite popular. They were, of course, dubbed the Splash Brothers, and fans were in awe of their ability to light it up from deep. Steph Curry even landed a deal with Under Armour, and people all across the country proudly wore his apparel as he led the Warriors to the first title of their dynasty back in 2015. Support for the Warriors was soaring during that Finals run. It was something we hadn't seen

before in the NBA: A group of undersized, scrawny shooters taking down the bigger dogs on the biggest stage. And the fact that they beat LeBron, arguably the best player in the history of the game, was the icing on the cake. However, the fact that they faced LeBron *again* in 2016 did not help their case in the slightest. At this point, they had already established themselves as the best regular season team in history. 73-9. The phenomenon I explained above caused many people to jump off the Warrior bandwagon—it was no longer the cool thing to like Golden State, because they were beginning to disrupt the structure of the NBA. On top of that, it was simply more popular to root for LeBron in that 2016 series. He, for the first time since 2007, was the underdog heading into the Finals. He was trying to beat the best regular season team ever. He was trying to bring Cleveland its first championship in over 50 years. He was trying to be the first to lead his team to victory after a 3-1 deficit. And, overall, he was trying to rewrite history. People desperately wanted LeBron to win, and they wanted Golden State to collapse. They had a great run, but their time in the spotlight needed to end, because the average sports fan had embraced the more popular item on the market. Isn't that what happens with all new fads? We love them until the newer and cooler trend comes around?

### **Reason #3: Kevin Durant...**

The Warriors realized they were in big trouble after the 2016 Finals. LeBron had one of the best Finals performances ever in his *13th* year in the league. He was showing zero signs of erosion, and he was actually becoming more efficient as a player. They also knew the only reason they beat him in 2015 was because Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love weren't on the floor. Golden State needed to make a change, so they went out and recruited the second-best player on the planet in Kevin Durant. This, obviously, is what solidified the Warriors as the most hated team in the NBA and, perhaps, the most hated team in current American sports. Before I dive into this, I must first say that none of the hate should've been directed towards the Warriors for acquiring Kevin Durant. If you're a GM trying to win championships, and you have the opportunity to sign a player as talented as KD, you'd be an idiot to pass that up. He makes any team exponentially better solely because of his presence, and you can't knock the Warriors for wanting him on the roster. Not to mention, this was the first acquisition they had made in this era of their franchise that significantly improved their team. Steph Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green—all those guys came through the draft and were developed internally. Granted, only a small percentage of the hate was directed towards the Warriors, as it was overwhelmingly directed towards the man who signed on the dotted line, Kevin Durant, himself. This was an unprecedented move: A superstar player who was right on the brink of defeating a powerhouse ultimately blew his shot at victory, and rather than attempting to improve his game, come back next year, and redeem himself, he decided to join the powerhouse and turn it into an absolute monopoly. It was the worst way he could've possibly overcome his failure, and he instantaneously became the NBA's villain because of it. Very few people wanted him to succeed, so consequently, very few people wanted the Warriors to succeed. And that still holds true today.

### **Reason #4: They've ruined the league, but not in the way people on Twitter think**

There is a much deeper reasoning as to why Golden State has ruined the league—a reasoning that is not acknowledged by angry people on the internet. Whenever somebody says the Warriors have ruined the league, they almost always mean the Warriors have erased all competition,

whatsoever. While I think this is indisputable, I don't classify that as ruining the league. Let's face it: Ratings for the Finals have been demonstrably high these past four years, despite the fact that we're seeing the same series over and over again. This year's ratings took a bit of a dip, as many people expected the inevitable Golden State blowout. I have to admit, though, I have never had as much of a rooting interest in the NBA as I did in this year's Finals. I longed to see LeBron knock the Warriors off their pedestal. I had this sense of hope (granted, a small sense of hope) that the King could pull off the impossible, and it was this same hope that kept me invested in a series that was over after Game 1. I thoroughly enjoyed watching these Finals, but for the people who didn't, there is no need to fret. You may be mad the Warriors won again, but history tells us their reign is coming to an end in the very near future. At some point, injuries, contracts, or egos intervene and shift the course of a superteam; just ask the Miami Heat or the Boston Celtics. The Warriors will soon crumble, and once that devolution occurs, the competition in the league will be restored. To say they've ruined the league from a competitive standpoint indicates there will be long-term repercussions, but the repercussions in Golden State's case are solely temporary. They have, however, ruined the league from a pure basketball standpoint. Don't get me wrong; I am a firm believer that sports need to evolve. Baseball has been the same for over half a century, and that's why the average MLB viewer is 57 years old—the regular season is a snoozefest. The NBA, on the other hand, has seen the advent of the dunk and the three-pointer, along with the rediscovered art of the assist. They've seen the short shorts transform into the baggy bottoms—the swagger and charisma take center stage. You can name a dozen more examples, but the point is that the NBA (and the game of basketball, for that matter) seems to evolve with every generation of talent that enters the league. Magic, Michael, and LeBron were the revolutionaries of past generations, but now it is this Warriors team, as a whole, that is determining how the game of basketball will be played for the next decade and maybe even beyond. As mentioned before, this Golden State superteam will not last much longer. Their dynasty could end tomorrow, but the damage has already been done. They've shown the world that you can win NBA championships solely by finesse—the fancy passes, the ankle-breakers, and most of all, the long-distance threes. They are hands down the softest team in the league; just watch any of their games. Opposing offenses target Steph Curry so they can bully him inside, and Kevin Durant, who is nearly seven feet tall, can easily be pushed around by JR Smith. But that doesn't matter. After all, they just need to outshoot teams and everything will be fine. Subsequently, the rest of the league has catered their rosters towards shooters, in hopes of beating the Warriors at their own game, but look how well that's turned out. I watched Game 7 of the Western Conference Finals and witnessed 8 three-point shots in five possessions. That's not how basketball should be played. I then witnessed the Houston Rockets miss 27 consecutive three-pointers and blow their chances at a Finals berth. Rather than work together as a team and set each other up for high percentage shots, the Rockets opted to heave up brick after brick. And they failed. I can't blame them for trying to keep up with the Warriors from behind the arc. As I said earlier, that's what *every* contender has tried to do. Golden State has revolutionized the game, and teams feel the urge to catch up. Kids nowadays feel that pressure, as well. Young basketball players aren't practicing layups or free throws; they'd much rather be launching threes from Timbuktu. The fundamentals of basketball are being tossed to the side considering the game's premier showcase has turned into nothing more than a giant shootaround. And that is 100% the Warriors' fault.

Is there more to the hatred of Golden State? Probably. But these four reasons are the most prominent ones I've gathered from observing history and today's sports climate. The Warriors

are not the Lakers, Yankees, or Blue Devils; their dynasty is not like the dynasties of the past. They are a completely different beast, and we have no idea how to tame them. And until we figure that out, we will always resent them.