

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

Friday, November 3, 2023

Washington, DC, USA

## Daniel Gafford

Media Conference



Heat 121, Wizards 114

### Q. How did it feel tonight, the ankle specifically?

DANIEL GAFFORD: The ankle was good. I didn't have any, I would say, problems. I felt normal out there. I felt natural.

### Q. Wes said he was just throwing you back in the mix. Wasn't no reacclimation, wasn't no buildup or anything like that --

DANIEL GAFFORD: No, that's pretty much how it is with me most of the time. I work a lot behind the scenes when it comes to just like all of my injuries, so really just return to play is a little bit more easier for me at the end of the day.

I go in, I put my work in, get my treatment it, and I take care of the injuries and stay on top of those. That's like my main priority. But I just take my time with it. Pretty much I do my conditioning, do my strength training, everything, behind the scenes. Really don't show anybody what I'm doing. Then I come back out, ready to go, whenever the game starts I'm back.

### Q. You've got Jimmy there. Were you like, yeah, I'm back?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Mm-hmm, yeah, for sure. I mean, just getting back in the mix playing in games like this, my eyes lit up. I'm ready for it. Of course first game back, I'm not going to be at 100 percent, of course, but all in all, I feel good. I feel I could have did a lot more, and at the same time I feel like I was holding myself back.

At the end of the day, this was a lesson for me, and for me to be able to progress and be better with my game and stuff, I take this as a lesson. Just learn from it pretty much.

### Q. You're the anchor of this defense; what are the strides that need to be made overall?

DANIEL GAFFORD: For the team?

### Q. Yeah.

DANIEL GAFFORD: Honestly, just -- how can I put this? We just have to have a different approach. Aggressiveness is always great when at the come out, but at the end of the day we get to a point where we get comfortable, and when you get comfortable, you see the guys start to make you uncomfortable. When it comes to teams adjusting against us whenever we're hot and having a great game, it's just we have to have the poise and the confidence and the consistency really to just kind of stay in that motion of the game instead of just kind of like taking a step back, getting lackadaisical when we miss shots and not getting stops at the other end and kind of getting in our heads at the end of the day.

Also, we've got to stop letting the refs kind of control the game for us. At the end of the day there's going to be a lot of bullshit calls. You can't control that.

I had a lapse today for sure. I was frustrated, but got out of it when I came over to the bench. Of course it always doesn't want to be shown, wearing your emotions on your sleeve, but it just happens. We're players in the mix, and it's going to happen from time to time.

But for us to be able to take that step in that direction, we just kind of have to get over this hump. That's pretty much it. We're going to be fine. We're all here for each other at the end of the day, and we all want to win, so we're going to figure out ways to do that.

### Q. Did they do anything specifically differently in that third quarter?

DANIEL GAFFORD: Coach said during halftime that they were going to up their physicality, and I feel like that's exactly what they did, like from 1 through 5. At the end of the day, there was a lot of things that we could have had that we really weren't, I would say, prepared for, and just the starting five being out there, we can't put our second unit in a position to where they're having to climb a



mountain every time they come into a game. That's tough to do every night.

When it comes to all that being said, we have to be the aggressor coming out and set the tone.

**Q. Did in-season tournament feel any different?**

DANIEL GAFFORD: Oh, no. It was just another game to me. Only thing that's different is the court pretty much.

**Q. Is this just part of the process of growing with this new young group?**

DANIEL GAFFORD: Yeah, it's always a process when you get like a whole new staff, players, everything. It's always going to be a process.

But at the end of the day, we have a lot of games to play, and it's going to take time for us to adjust to it, and I'm pretty sure it's not going to take that long.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports