

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

## Corey Kispert

## Deni Avdija

### Media Conference



Heat 110, Wizards 102

**Q. Deni, why do you think things changed in the third quarter?**

DENI AVDIJA: I think we've got some sort of like habit that we've got to change, how we open up the third quarter. I think we're facing a lot of good teams until halftime, and then when halftime comes and then after halftime comes, when you go out a little sluggish, a little rusty, and we've got to tighten up. I feel like that's where our games a lot of times run away, and if we can fix that and be better in that, we're going to be able to win more games.

**Q. Deni, it looked like you guys had a lot of good looks in that third quarter, especially when shooting went a little bit cold. Do you know what the theme is there when the looks are the ones you want and you're playing good defense on the other end and things just aren't falling?**

DENI AVDIJA: Sometimes you've just got to go through it. We've got good shooters, confident shooters. I feel like if you have an open shot, everybody wants you to take it, and that's the mentality we've got to have. I feel like we did that tonight. Some balls didn't go in, but we're going to continue shooting. We're going to get better. I believe in the group, I believe in us, and that's about it.

**Q. What was the focus on defense? It looked like even if you didn't fluster that much, you kept them to a low shooting percentage.**

COREY KISPERT: Yeah, challenge and kind of playing on your toes with their best players, make them uncomfortable. We held a lot of guys that are really good for them to a pretty good number. But they're really good at getting to the line. They're really good at converting those kind of pain points and rebounding. Yeah, we got beat pretty bad on the boards, too, so we didn't get second and third chances. Guys are too good in this league to

give those chances to, and they ended up converting on those.

**Q. Have you seen a significant schematic change defensively since the coaching change, and if so, what is it?**

DENI AVDIJA: I feel like we trust more our guys in guarding one-on-one. We help less. We count on the last guy on defense to come and help and then rotate from there. I feel like it's been really good for us. We bumped up our physicality. We're boxing out better. Honestly, I'm really proud of the group. We defended really good today. I think so. Shots didn't go in for us. It was a close game versus a good team, physical team. I have a lot of optimistic stuff from this game, like seeing the group kind of being physical and guarding good.

COREY KISPERT: To bounce off what Deni said, as a team, we have a lot of bad habits that have built up over the last two years that we need to fix. It's not going to happen overnight, and it's not going to happen in a week. But I hope you guys and the fans can see how we're kind of unwinding those bad habits and putting a much better foot forward, and that happens with our defense first.

We're not changing much of anything really. There's been a few tweaks that we've done, but that's really it. We're putting more of an emphasis on that side of the ball, and it's a belief, like Deni said. It's a confidence, and it's just kind of a focus towards that side of the ball first, and then we're scoring enough to play with these teams over the last five games. That's without a doubt.

**Q. What did you think of Corey's scoring night?**

DENI AVDIJA: What can you say? He did everything tonight. He was confident. He was decisive. I give credit to him because I think he knows that, too, and I don't care to say the truth; I feel like these last couple games, he shot the ball a little bit less than what he used to. I feel like -- and he still kept shooting it, still kept shooting it and still believing in it. He's a great shooter, and he knows that,

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and I feel like that's a big, big, big step for him that he did today is to continue shooting. He had one of his best shooting nights that I've seen him shoot.

Being able also to put it on the floor and guys close out to him because he's a great shooter is being the next step to go downhill and finish, and he did that tonight, and it was a great night for him and for our team, actually.

**Q. Corey, going against a Miami defensive team, when you're able to create your shot off the dribble and finish strong, talk about your growth.**

COREY KISPert: Yeah, that's exactly right, it's growth. Teams are starting to guard me a certain way, and it's been a concerted effort of mine to take advantage of that and to grow my game to make me even tougher to guard. Miami's defense, like you said, is tough, they're physical, they're really good with getting deflections and being disruptive, and the whole thing with them is just being aggressive and like not second-guessing yourself. If you have an open shot you've got to shoot it because that window is going to be gone in the blink of an eye because they're that good.

Coming out and being really aggressive and trusting my instincts, and it ended up turning out pretty good tonight for me and for the team. We had a lot of great shots, and a lot of them didn't fall. Shooting 26 from the three is not characteristic of us, and if we get those kind of shots the majority of nights we play, we're going to be in really good shape.

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