

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## Landry Shamet

Media Conference



### **Q. Generally how was this year for you from a personal standpoint?**

LANDRY SHAMET: It was different, very different, given the teams I've been on and coming here. I will say the biggest takeaway I'm walking away with is I've never felt closer with a group of guys than I do with these guys.

I will say winning can mask a lot of stuff that's going on in a lot of other organizations, and I think it was encouraging to see that there's a real vested interest in building a foundation of community and connectedness here, and that definitely was noticed. I have made some of the -- beyond even the word teammate, just best friends I've made in my NBA career this year with this group.

You don't go through a tough year, struggles of a year like this, without being able to lean on one another and connect and grow, collectively so. That's one thing I'm super grateful for. I miss that.

Personally, this is the least amount of games I've played in a season with injuries and having to be away for personal reasons, so disappointed on that front. But overall lots of silver linings I can take away. Developed and grew as a leader, a teammate, and I still know I have a lot that I'm capable of offering as a basketball player.

I'm grateful for all of it. Can't say you're happy and grateful to be in the NBA only when you're winning games. There's positives to take from all experiences, and I'm grateful for this one.

### **Q. This group is at such an important place in where the rebuild is. With a coaching search coming up, what do you feel like this group would benefit from most? What type of coach, characteristics, on-court stuff? Do you have any thoughts on that?**

LANDRY SHAMET: Well, we're not going to go and win 81 games next year, so I think keeping the things that I just talked about at the forefront, you're building a foundation here. You have to sometimes takes dips to go up. That's

not uncommon. You see it all over the place. Build foundation to build on top of that. That requires digging and getting lower than maybe you would like to at times.

That's part of it. But I think still making the important things the important things, and that's accountability, a level of setting a standard, regardless of winning games. We were still competitive to finish the season. We might not have won games, but that level went up in terms of how we competed, how we showed up, game in, game out. So somebody who's going to set that and make that a priority, like hey, we're going to still instill values of winning even if we're not winning right now. Learn how to win on the way to winning.

I think those are some of the things that would be important. But making the general vibe and feel of the organization the priority and holding people accountable from top to bottom.

### **Q. You mentioned this being a difficult year for you with being away from the team, injuries, personal reasons. How did you manage the mental and emotional aspect of that as a professional and still being present for the guys, especially with the camaraderie and brotherhood that you guys built with this team?**

LANDRY SHAMET: Yeah, I mean, that was definitely part of the challenge for me, I think in this part of my career that I wanted to take some pride in. I don't think any of this is worth it if you can't find ways to give back.

I'm super honored to be 27 and looked at as like a vet with this group, and to be able to lean into the young guys and still have that be my impact this last stretch where I wasn't playing or at stretches during the year when I was hurt. I took a lot of pride in that. That's not to say it was easy because in a perfect world I want to play. I want to play 82 games and be competitive and win games. That's what I want to do.

But when it's taken away from you for whatever the reason,



injuries, whatever, you've got to find other ways to be impactful, and that's kind of what I tried to do and one of the things I can definitely be proud of this year.

It was hard. Sometimes hard to get up and put that right face on, when I wanted to be whatever, pissed off about still being hurt, rehabbing, whatever. But that doesn't do any good for the young guys who are trying to figure out what this whole thing is about, and that's part of building that foundation here. I think that's important. Just kind of setting the standard even when I couldn't be on the court. That was kind of the thought.

**Q. If you can take us behind the curtain and tell us, was there something that happened that allowed you guys to kind of internally look to each other, build that brotherhood, or did it just come organically as the season began, season went on, especially with, as you said, the dips began to happen, but coming out of the highs and seeing those incremental wins that you can look at for positivity?**

LANDRY SHAMET: I mean, organically for sure, but that type of growth doesn't come without putting some effort in. I will say just a great group of guys from top to bottom. A lot of it was pretty organic from a personal standpoint, on the plane, bus, whatever, connecting that way.

But I give BK a lot of credit because him coming in and his level of accountability definitely was felt throughout and made it easier for guys like myself or Tyus, other veteran guys who we have around here, AG, people who -- from top to bottom, you can name anyone, but we made it easier to implement, echo those same sentiments that BK was expressing.

I'll give him a lot of credit for setting the tone on that, and it's nice when Coach is saying about, but it ultimately comes down to the players buying in and believing it. I think it was twofold.

We were able to do that.

**Q. You said you can take pride in being impactful despite playing with injuries and fluctuating role and minutes and everything. How were you able to do that because it's a lot to deal with in one season? How were you able to get through that?**

LANDRY SHAMET: I think realizing that certain things are out of your control, in life, basketball, whatever the case may be, so trying to dictate and impact what I can control. I think that was the main focus and all that's really worth putting your energy into.

I think taking pride in that and knowing that if you play long enough, you're going to have a year or two that looks like this, if you're fortunate to play a long period, which I hope I am. A year or two riddled by injuries, and like you said, different roles, whatever, it is what it is. It's part of the whole roadmap I'm on.

Like I said, lots of positives to take from it still.

**Q. You knew Michael Winger back from your time at the Clippers. This is obviously a different situation. How did your relationship with him change and evolve this year?**

LANDRY SHAMET: It's grown. I was a pup out there in LA. I didn't know anything. I had just been traded. My world is spinning. I'm trying to figure it out, just like a team. Honestly, Michael and I, we had a relationship, but we weren't as -- I didn't know how to navigate -- it can be kind of an intimidating relationship to try to cultivate with a GM when you're a player and you don't really know about the dynamic of the league. Our level of transparency, honesty with each other, we'd have a lot of really good conversations, grow our relationship this year. Super grateful for him and how he's handled everything. I have a lot of trust in him.

Somebody who I respect him and his family, and this year I think our relationship definitely grew on that front.

**Q. You probably have a pretty interesting perspective on the growth that this team made on the court throughout the course of the season having been in the rotation then taking a step back and watching it from the bench. What do you think did grow from this group over the course of the year?**

LANDRY SHAMET: I don't know. We got a little tougher. I always use the analogy of basketball and the NBA is like a fight -- you'd be pretty stupid to go into a boxing fix and be confused if you get punched in the face. Early in the year we'd get punched in the face and we just wouldn't respond well to it and get upset and flustered and crumble as opposed to, all right, that's part of the game. How can we take punches and respond.

As you look at the year, that was a big part of kind of our team down the stretch was whether we'd come out and be down early, we would find a way to respond and make it a close game in the end. Things big or small, whatever it was. I think we started to find ways to handle adversity better. Now obviously the next piece is how do you make those adversities a little bit less dramatic. You can't expect to win so many games when you start off down 20. How do we turn that into maybe 12 or then spread out the gap

between those types of games where we come out flat like that.

I think we showed that we can do that and commit to doing that and learning what that means, though. I think that was a big piece, as well, understanding the details that go into it, and overall showed a lot of growth on that front.

**Q. You guys led the league in pace this year. What was it like being part of the fastest offense in the league, and did it require any adjustment for you personally?**

LANDRY SHAMET: No. I mean, it's fun to play fast, and a lot of that comes from we were better -- found ways to be better defensively. You can't really play fast if you get the ball out of the net every single time. When we could get stops that helped us in terms of playing fast like that, and it's a fun style to play. I think we've got a lot of growth within that. It's one thing to play fast, but how can we add another level of being effective on that front.

I think there's times where it sounds good to play fast, but maybe we can take some steps in being smarter, more efficient with what we're doing offensively.

Lots of good, like I said, but also, as we all know in this room, a lot of areas where we can grow and have to grow.

**Q. You mentioned BK's accountability. What does that look like? Is that him calling the time-outs and saying you're doing something wrong? Is it yelling in practice?**

LANDRY SHAMET: Just calling a spade a spade. There's unfortunately kind of a narrative in the NBA where you're not supposed to coach your best players a certain way or not be as direct on certain things, but BK doesn't have that bone in him. Like he doesn't have it. He's able to be direct, and guys respect that from top to bottom. It doesn't matter if JP messes up a coverage or PBJ or me or whoever. It's the same sentiment, like what are you doing. This is what we're doing.

He's got his few little one-liners and remarks that I'll save, but we hear him. We all hear him. I think seeing that from top to bottom is important, and just that standard alone is accountability in my opinion. It's a big one.

**Q. In addition to the character of the guys in the locker room and the way you guys gelled personally and the trust you've built there, what makes you confident or optimistic about the future of the team?**

LANDRY SHAMET: Yeah, I think just with how we -- we

went through a lot this year, if you look at it. It would have been really easy to just -- we're losing games, got nothing to play for, to really truly splinter and go our own individual routes, and we fought that urge all year and didn't. I think that says a lot about the environment that we built, the kind of character guys that we have in here, and the growth and just maturity and accountability, like I said. I think it speaks volumes.

That alone is enough to be confident about, and knowing that we can go into next year with this under our belt, having experienced what we experienced, and understanding that there's a lot more room to grow. I know I have room to grow. I know what I'll do differently if I'm around here next year and how I'll want to approach things. I think if we all handle it right, we can look internally and come back with a little bit different mindset to have some more marginal growth next year.

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