

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Wizards 118, Knicks 117

Q. What led to the offensive performance tonight against a good defense?

BRIAN KEEFE: We had good spacing. We were organized better. I think that allowed us to see where the passes were, where the openings were, and then the guys were very willing passers, which I think we've been throughout the whole preseason, but I think we had some good growth tonight in terms of that. Organization.

Q. Overall what do you feel like your team and your staff accomplished this preseason?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we established how we're going to work and how we're going to approach every day, how we're going to try to improve on a day-to-day basis. I think we established some of the ways we want to play, but obviously that's always going to be a work in progress. We'll never get there. You're always working at that stuff. But I think our approach and our mindset are the two things that are the most important to me, and I've liked how we've established that so far.

Q. I know it's not about one person, but how happy are you for Johnny to have a moment like that, actually a couple moments at the end of a game like that?

BRIAN KEEFE: Thrilled for Johnny. Johnny has been great. I worked with him individually myself last year at the beginning, and I've seen the time behind the scenes, so you root for guys like that who's put a lot of time into his craft, then to get to be in a situation like that to close the game. Really excited for him. Really thrilled for him.

Q. Where is the growth you've seen in Johnny's game over the last year?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think the biggest thing to me is his defensive impact. Even that last play, he was involved in kind of breaking that up.

But his physicality, his defense, his ability to make hustle plays, that's been really important for us, and he's been really good at that.

Q. Bub got a really tough matchup today against Jalen Brunson. What's important about getting that kind of experience and how do you feel he did?

BRIAN KEEFE: The only way I think you're going to learn any of these things is to get thrown into the fire, and he got thrown into the fire against a great player, obviously. He's a very veteran player, knows all the ways to manipulate the game, and what a great challenge for Bub. I thought he handled it well, and he wasn't afraid of the moment.

Q. In that final huddle before that offensive possession where Johnny scored the lay-up, did you say to him you're going to get the ball and put it in the hoop?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yes, it was all coaching. (Laughter).

No, we had multiple angles in that, but Johnny was the initiator. You could say we had the ball in his hands pretty much down the stretch, and we wanted him to make plays, and obviously he made a great one there.

Q. I think it might have gotten lost because of how well Johnny played at the end, but two players, Taylor Funk and Jared Butler really played well there. What do you think their impact could be on this team going forward?

BRIAN KEEFE: A testament to those guys, their work ethic. Both guys have been in our program for -- I think we got Taylor midway through the year last year and then Jared has been with us. Also a credit to our Go-Go staff and Cody Toppert. Those guys played a lot of games for us last year down there. Jared was on a two-way so he played with us, too. But just that one organization where we're all kind of connected to each other, that's just an example of guys that when they get the opportunity here, they're really prepared by their coaches, but most of the

credit always goes to the players first.

Q. What has stood out to you about Taylor's development in particular? He played quite a few years in college but had the big Summer League. What have you seen from him?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just has a good sense of how to play. Really knows our system pretty well. Rebounds better than you would think. Obviously everybody sees the shot making, but it's his way to operate within the context of our system is pretty impressive.

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