

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Wizards 133, Hawks 120

BRIAN KEEFE: I'll start it off. Really impressed with how we responded the second half. Our defense wasn't great in the first, wasn't as connected as we wanted to be, and I thought we really amped up our pressure, bothered them a little bit, caused some turnovers, and then we really shared the ball in the second half. That's kind of how we've been envisioning play, so it was nice to see us have two games in a row good second halves, really good starts to third quarters. Good job by the guys; congrats to them.

Open it up for you guys.

Q. How about doing all that with such a young lineup, especially with three rookies in the starting lineup?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, and a 20-year-old, too, with Bilal, right? The veteran of the crew.

Yeah, those guys, they're learning and growing daily. The habits that they're putting in on the court that we get to see every day, now they're getting to show in games. What great lessons. I thought they really responded after we challenged them at halftime and they really came out in the third quarter and really amped up the defense, and the ball movement was terrific. Was really pleased.

Q. What has impressed you about the way Jordan has started this season?

BRIAN KEEFE: I've talked about the defense for Jordan has been the most impressive thing. Him getting in there, digging balls out, steals, being active. The offensive stuff, I know he can do that, and he's obviously been efficient. He carried us, kept us afloat in the first half, and that's what your big guys have to do. They've got to keep you when you're struggling, and we were struggling a little bit, and he kept us in that game, made us a little push at that end of the quarter, gave us some life. So Jordan has been great.

Q. Can you talk about Jonas, his professionalism and him coming up with six assists?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, that's why we have him here. He's a steady presence for us. We can play through him offensively. He brings a sense of physicality. But it's the everyday stuff that he's teaching us, how to prepare, how to be a winner, how to be a professional in this league. He's been impressive. Thankful to have him here for us and our organization.

Q. Bilal another career high. What can you say about the performances he's strung together in the early season?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, and we're putting him on the best matchups nightly. Young was going to come out aggressive; we knew that. I thought he battled him in the second half pretty good after picking up some fouls, so these are learning things. He had three at the half, and he continued to play through that and didn't let that deter him from doing the job.

But he's been great. Like I said, we want to put the ball in his hands more. We've been doing that. We think he's a play maker. He can get on the rim. He forces a lot of pressure. He's been good.

Q. Where are the biggest improvements you see in his offensive game from last year that gave you the confidence to put him in these more primary situations?

BRIAN KEEFE: One thing he could do really last year is he could get in the paint. Didn't always make the right play or finish it well. Now he's learned the nuances. He's added strength. Now he's finishing, he's getting on top of the rim, he's making plays for others. This is kind of how we envisioned him when we got him here.

Q. I noticed that the rebounding was a little better and I noticed the slower, more methodical offense that helped to set up the high-percentage shots. What do you think you could change to get these kind of results more consistently throughout the course of the



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season?

BRIAN KEEFE: Well, that's the goal for us. We're trying to establish habits that are going to lead to something sustainable. That was an example of how we wanted to play. Second half, really good defense, rebounding. First half wasn't as great, so we need an adjustment at halftime that we're going to rebound, we're going to play with some pace, and then we just found the open man. That's how we want to play. Just kind of open, keep the court spread and just keep that ball movement and make the right play, and I thought we saw a lot of that. We ended up having I think 32 assists, seven guys in double figures, I believe. Pretty good.

Q. Were you happy with the composure from Bub after he was the recipient of two hard fouls?

BRIAN KEEFE: Great. Bub is a competitor. I love the mentality he brings. He's growing every game. You can see it out there. He controlled the game for us late, got us settled, got us in some easy sets, and he was the one who got that ball movement a lot early in the third quarter, throwing the ball ahead, finding guys. His maturity is pretty unique for someone his age.

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