

Washington Wizards Media Conference

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

Washington, DC, USA

Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Clippers 121, Wizards 96

BRIAN KEEFE: Tough game for sure. Harden came out, made a ton of shots early, but we stayed within the game. I think it was a three-point game with five minutes to go in the second quarter. They made a run to finish. We tried to make a little push there at the start of the third, but they just knocked us out in the third quarter, and we didn't recover from that.

We've got a long season. We've got a lot of work to do. People have Thanksgiving tomorrow. Hopefully everybody will enjoy your day and you guys included. We'll come back to work on Friday.

Q. When the team loses so many games in succession, how do you ensure with the young guys that their development is not impaired?

BRIAN KEEFE: You keep coaching. You keep teaching, and you keep showing them the right way to play. We use every moment that we have to take advantage of that.

Sometimes in these hard moments, I think you can grow, and you're learning how to get some resolve, some resiliency, and we showed that this year. I've been really proud of our group this year that we have shown that. Even tonight we showed some moments. I didn't think as much in the second half, but we showed some resolve in the first to cut it, and I thought we missed some shots at the end of the second that would have kind of staved off their run a little bit. We had some wide-open shots.

But we have to accept where we are, and we have to -- but not accept our reality going forward, and how do we get out of this.

I think sometimes in the struggle of things, you can make great changes because this can reveal our character. I talked about that before. One thing I was really proud of these guys in the time-outs and the huddles is they were coaching each other, they were helping each other, and that shows me that we're on the right track, even in a tough

moment.

Q. With the three rookies, considering they haven't been through this before, do you have any concern that the losing takes a toll on them, like a psychological toll that could hamper their growth?

BRIAN KEEFE: I do not. I will differ from most. I believe in the character of our guys, first and foremost. I think when you're in tough things, I think you can really grow, and I think that's what I've been impressed with these guys, that they're continuing to grow even when they're faced with adversity. We're not going to back down from that, and we're going to double down on what we believe in and habits and teaching and coaching, and this will eventually turn some day. But I believe we're in some ways going to grow from this, and that's what we're going to take advantage of.

Q. You said you can make good changes during difficult times. What do you anticipate those changes to be?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's a resolve thing more than anything. It's a mindset. It's a learning how to fight through things. This league is unforgiving. There's some great players in this league, and there's some great teams. It's very cutthroat because guys want to be in this league. It's hard to be in this league. There's only a certain amount of people who can play in this league. So it's a competitive atmosphere.

I think you sometimes have to go through the fire of this. There's a lot of examples of team who have had to do this, who have had some tough games. I've been part of that myself. I believe that we're going to grow from this.

But we have to do the work, and that's where the beauty is. There's no magic to this. It's can you get lost in the process of getting better, and I think that's what our group has continued to do. So I feel like we're going to make a running start forward. We're just taking a couple steps back right now. But we're going to dig in and continue to

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

work. That's what I like about our group.

Q. I believe that's eight out of the last 10 games where the Wizards have failed to score 110 points. What do you think specifically might have caused the offense to go a bit stagnant?

BRIAN KEEFE: I actually thought for the first half we were playing the right way and tried to find the right shots. Some of them didn't go in. I think we got a little turnovers -- tried to play in crowds and force them when it got tough, and that led to them expanding their lead. But we've got to continue with the process of building us the right way, and that's on both ends. That's not just on offense, it's on both.

We have a long year to go, and we're going to get better.

Q. I noticed after that first quarter in which James Harden had such a great quarter you threw him some different looks. What did you think about the execution after those adjustments?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought it helped change at least the rhythm of the game, at least make some different guys make some plays, some different guys get some shots. He was on fire. We had to do something. We weren't just going to let him tee up threes.

So made a little adjustment. I thought it helped a little bit. That kind of gave us a little bit of a run there going into the second, but we just didn't finish the quarter well in the second. That would have propelled us into halftime. But we missed some shots that were open that kind of led to that, too.

Q. After the New York game you were pretty upset with your team's competitiveness. Are you seeing any similar issues after today's game?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought we gave in more in the second half. The first half, give credit, he made some tough shots, we made an adjustment. Also one of our guys goes down -- guys had to step up. But the competitiveness part, only the second half we kind of let go of the rope.

Q. Is it frustrating to have that kind of setback in the second half with the competitiveness in particular?

BRIAN KEEFE: No because -- yes, you always want your group to push forward, but the one thing I told you is in the time-outs these guys were staying connected, so there's no fragmentation at all, which I give them credit that they were trying to fight through it. But they couldn't find the solution, and that's me, too. We're all in this together.

Q. With Bilal, his offense has kind of tailed off pretty steadily in November. Tonight was a pretty tough night. Is there anything structurally that's wrong in his game right now?

BRIAN KEEFE: No, he had a great game offensively versus Indiana, so I always base Bilal's game on his activity and his rebounding, his defense. That sometimes fuels his offense. He couldn't find the rhythm of the game tonight for whatever reason. I know he'll bounce back.

Q. So from the difference between now and when you coached James Harden in OKC, what do you see most from him now?

BRIAN KEEFE: This is a guy who's experienced a lot. I don't know how many years he's now been in the league. At least 15 to 16. So he's seen it all. He's been through it all. Just a cerebral player, seen every coverage, every scheme, everything, thrown the kitchen sink at him. He's seen all these things. Obviously a great player.

Q. What's the report on how Kuz injured his -- sprained his rib?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I don't have much details on it yet. I know it was when he went up on that drive there and when he came out right after that. But I don't have any details yet.

Q. How aware are you of the rugby scene in the U.S.?

BRIAN KEEFE: The rugby scene? I know that Toulouse, the home of Alex Sarr, has a very good rugby program. That's what I know about rugby.

Q. How does a minority sport in the U.S. like rugby, what do they need to do to break into the household like basketball has done to bring people out on Thanksgiving eve like they've done here?

BRIAN KEEFE: Sorry, I don't have the answer to that one.

Q. The rebounding was an issue today. What did you see there?

BRIAN KEEFE: Some of it was they were getting to the paint, and that just led to some traffic rebounds from them because we were protecting. But we've been rebounding actually very well lately in the last five games. We've been rebounding at a super high level. Tonight was not that night.

Q. Jordan had a pretty tough game in his first game back. There were a couple deep threes he took, and it

seemed like after the second one you weren't particularly happy. How do you feel about that shot selection when he takes those deep threes early in the shot clock?

BRIAN KEEFE: Jordan has made some of those this year, so we let Jordan have some license to take some shots that we think that are good shots for himself. He makes some of them. He didn't make that; that's not what I was mad about. And we let him shoot those when he's open.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

