

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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**Brian Keefe**

Media Conference



Wizards 123, Hornets 114

**Q. First game back for Malcolm and Corey. They both had huge impacts on the game. Talk about what you saw from them tonight?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, great to have them back. Thrilled they were back with the group. They kept the scoreboard moving. Those guys were super efficient tonight. They just kept playing the right way, making the right pass, and obviously they made some shots for sure. Malcolm was really going in the first half, and then Corey had a tremendous end of the third, start of the fourth, that kind of propelled us to the lead.

Nice to have those guys back, balance off the team. We kind of had a more even 48 minutes offensively for sure.

**Q. With Alex specifically, what did you like about him working off of the short roll in this game?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, they were putting two on Malcolm, two on Bilal at times, so he plays in the pocket, he makes good decisions on that stuff. That's what we've been saying all year. Then we were even playing him in different positions that he was play making out of. He did a good job.

**Q. How pleased were you with the way you guys were able to hold LaMelo to a low shooting percentage considering how well he's been shooting?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, sometimes -- I think we tried our best and I think we tried to pressure and contest some shots. I think it's a little bit of both. I think our energy and effort was great.

I think he probably can make some of those. He can make tough shots, so tried to make him work as hard as he could tonight.

**Q. What did you think about the ball movement on offense?**

BRIAN KEEFE: That was great. I thought we played a simple game, made the right passes, hit the open man. Missed a few of our open threes to start the third, but that game turned, and we made our threes down the stretch, but they were all good shots, and that's what we've been looking for.

**Q. You guys did a good job not letting them go on a larger run. What did you like about what your team did to stem the bleeding when there was bleeding?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I think a little bit of it was just the presence of having more of our full roster, Malcolm, Corey, Jonas, big help with that. They just kept the scoreboard moving maybe when we were in a tough spot. They'd make the right play, get us a good shot. They keep that thing moving.

Then our defense, I think we didn't rebound really well in the first half. They really hurt us. It wasn't like terrific-terrific in the second half. They got one late, so it was really 10 second-chance points I think from them in the second half, but we did a little better job on the boards.

**Q. What was your view of the Bilal dunk?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Pretty good. It was pretty good.

**Q. What is the organization-wide impact that the Justin Champagnie situation is like, a guy that was in the G-League, gets minutes, earned those minutes, and then continuing to be in the rotation? What type of influence do you think that can have throughout the organization?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it's just a credit to -- first of all, Justin deserves all the credit. He's been with us for a while now since we got him last year. He was with us throughout the whole summer. He's been training with us the whole time. Then he got in some early games in the G-League for us and played really well and played high minutes, so when his opportunity arrived to play with us, he was ready,

and that's a credit to him. Credit to our Go-Go staff, too, that we're really just one organization, and he's a great example of our player development program for sure.

**Q. Do you think that has impact on other guys in the Go-Go saying, hey, I saw Justin do this, maybe if I continue to work, my opportunity comes, as well?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, we've seen Jared has obviously been a part of that, Johnny has played down there this one year game. We've had a bunch of guys do that. Tristan played the last game down there for him, so we use the Go-Go. We think that's a great place for our guys when they're not always in the rotation getting minutes to get some time, some game action, to learn from the game. So it's really helpful for our whole organization.

**Q. Wizards had 18 turnovers but the Hornets only had eight. How do you think you were able to overcome the discrepancy?**

BRIAN KEEFE: To be honest it was the three-point shooting. We made 17, they didn't make as many. That's what really was the game. They out-rebounded us and we turned it over a little bit, but that was one of those nights where we made our threes and they probably just missed some that they usually hit.

Sometimes that's the game, but the process was right. I thought the defense was much better in the second half. I thought our ball movement was really improving as the game went along, and we got great shots and we ended up making them. Good for us to continue to play the right way when it wasn't going in all the time.

**Q. With Bubba and Kyshawn, neither of them really popped off to score this game. I think they had a combined five points. What did you see from them?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Kyshawn is a connector when he's on the court. He's always positive when he's out there. He's one of our guys that just connects the team with his basketball IQ, his ability to space, read the game. I thought he was good, helped us. Nice to have him back.

**Q. What did you think of what Malcolm brought you guys?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Just brings a steadiness to us, a calmness. Obviously he's got some scoring ability, and we all know he's an efficient player, always has been. He just brings what he's been doing his whole career.

**Q. For Alex, pretty good on the boards. What did you think of his overall effort?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought he was good. Protected the rim, got better on the boards in the second half, and then was making plays, making the right reads, and then when he had the shots open he took them, and he made some length. That was great.

**Q. What was your message to the team after the game?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Just keep the work, keep getting better. Happy for the guys, but tomorrow we get back in the gym, keep working, keep getting better, keep working on the things we're trying to stress. To us, that's all about the process of how we get better every day.

**Q. Do you have an update on Kyle Kuzma?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I do not have an update. Wasn't feeling well. No update on the long-term injury stuff yet.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Alexandre Sarr's short rolls. What did you think about that attack?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I think that's one of his good skill sets. He can read the game pretty well. He hit Bilal on a back-door pass, finds guys. He's got a good sense for the game. They were putting two on the ball, and that allowed him to play there and make the right decision, four on three on the backside and he was making the good decisions. We've seen that all year from him. He's got a good basketball IQ for that.

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