

Washington Wizards Media Conference

Saturday, December 28, 2024

Washington, DC, USA

Bilal Coulibaly

Media Conference



Knicks 136, Wizards 132 (OT)

BILAL COULIBALY: Bad spacing from us, so yeah, they just got the stop.

Q. The game was close for the most part with you, Justin and the three rookies. What does that say about the faith that this organization has in the young guys to close a tight game out like that?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, that's because we've grown up, like you can tell, game after each game. We were just talking about it, we were like, we don't have that much experience about those games, those types of games, but we're getting there. We're getting so much better. In those situations we're getting more every game, so yeah.

Q. Could you speak to Justin Champagnie and his toughness being at his size and going up against some of the bigger players on the court?

BILAL COULIBALY: I'm impressed but I'm not because he's been doing that. He's been doing that since training camp, so I believe in him, he's doing a great job and he's going to keep going, so I know that.

Q. On that last play BK talked about how you got pushed in a direction you didn't want. Is that an accurate assessment of what happened?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, yeah, kind of.

Q. With JP out tonight, did you feel kind of more responsible to try and assume a more offensive role?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, definitely. I had to bring the ball up much more, so yeah, had to set the plays, play with my teammates, find them as a point guard, so yeah, it was cool. I liked it.

Q. You tied your career high in assists. How do you think that added responsibility went for you?

BILAL COULIBALY: It went pretty good, I guess. Yeah, I tried to make the right plays every time, so yeah, it was pretty good.

Q. As you guys get experience in these close games, what are the things that you've already started to pick up and what are the things that you hope get improved in future close games down the line because of what you're learning now?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, we just trying to get to the stuff that we work on late in the games. Don't try anything new. That's not a moment for that. So yeah, we're just trying to grow up as players, like we said.

Q. Kyshawn had sort of a bounce-back game. What have you thought of the way he's played this season overall?

BILAL COULIBALY: Really good. He's being so mature. He plays with a good pace. He's not forcing anything, takes the right spots, makes the right pass every time, so he's impressive.

Q. What do you think about his skill set defensively and maybe his potential on that end of the floor?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, he's so tough. Even in practice you can tell he be fighting over the screens every time, doing all the right stuff. Yeah, he's going to keep getting better when he knows the players, their tendencies and everything. He's going to be way better.

Q. As good as Anunoby is as a defender, what lessons do you take from that last play in regulation? I'm sure you'll watch the film and have more lessons, but for now, what's the carry-forward part for you?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, definitely. Just be tougher I'd say. Like I say, he's really tough, but got to be tougher. In these games at the end of the game they ain't going to call anything, so I've got to be tougher than that.

Q. Alex has been shooting the ball really well this month compared to the first month. What have you seen him improve on over the past two months?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, like we say, he's been tougher too. When it gets to the rim, he's not falling down, he's not losing the ball, he makes the right bumps, spin move, and yeah, he's been shooting the ball way better. He works every day on that, so yeah, that's nice.

Q. What are some ways you speak about defending without fouling?

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, we talked about that. Sometimes there's nothing you can do; they're just too good at this. Yeah, we've just about show our hands, play with our body, not the hands like we keep saying, and like I said, we're going to get better.

Q. You've gotten to go against Jaylen Brunson a couple times now. What are you trying to learn each time that you go against him, and how did you feel you did tonight?

BILAL COULIBALY: I'm trying to be play with my body like I say defensively, don't foul, just like we say, because he's really good at getting to the line, so don't foul, be the second jumper, and stay on my feet.

Q. How would you rate your performance against him tonight?

BILAL COULIBALY: I would say solid. There were some possessions that could have been better, but yeah, I was probably scared to foul sometimes, stuff like that, so I'll be better next game. I know that.

Q. I'm curious how many times in your career here or in France or in the Olympics it was a really close game at the end and your team needed a bucket and your coach said we want to give Bilal the ball and have him make a shot. Has that happened to you before?

BILAL COULIBALY: When I was younger, yes, but lately, no, it's been a long time. It's been a long time. I was like, yeah, he believes in me, and yeah, I know I'll make a better play next time probably.

Q. How did it feel getting that vote of confidence from the coaches again for the first time in a while?

BILAL COULIBALY: Like I say, it helps you as a player. Your confidence gets up immediately, so yeah, I was like, okay, they believe in me.

Q. With the added point guard responsibilities that you're starting to get, how do you feel your ability to read the game and read defenses on the fly? There was a couple nice passes you made out of the pick-and-roll. How do you feel that's been going for you?

BILAL COULIBALY: I feel comfortable. I used to play point guard, so yeah, I know where to look at and everything. I feel really comfortable coming off the screens. We're making the right plays, like everybody is coming at the right time and everything, so everything is easy, yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports