

Washington Wizards Media Conference

Sunday, January 5, 2025

Washington, DC, USA

Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Pelicans 110, Wizards 98

Q. What do you think made the difference in this one?

BRIAN KEEFE: You know, give them some credit again. They played a little bit better. They made some more shots than we did a little bit. I liked our process. We missed some ones that we usually make, but they made some really second-chance points hurt us. It wasn't a lot, but when they got them, they capitalized on them with threes.

But we won the second half. I thought our guys were trying to find some energy. Jared came in and gave us a little bit of a push. We just couldn't overcome the hurdle. We got it to nine I think once or twice.

Q. You mentioned them hitting some threes. There was a sequence with about nine minutes to go in the fourth where the lead was cut to nine and they hit back-to-back threes. How significant was that?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, that kind of pushed the game ahead, but we still made a run late. I give our guys credit for staying with it; even on a tough shooting night we still found some energy there to make it a competitive game at the end.

Q. What did you think of the impact of Jordan's absence on a night when the team struggled to shoot from the field?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, obviously we'll never use that because we've played well without him before. He missed a game a few games ago versus the Knicks, so we just believe the next guy will step up. Whoever is in there gets the opportunity. You always want all of our guys healthy, so we'll never use that as an excuse here.

Q. With the three-point struggles that you guys had, was that mostly missing good shots, or what did you see?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it was a little bit of them, too. They threw us off our rhythm. I didn't think it was all that clean in the first half. Second half I thought we had some better looks that we did make a few on, but they threw us off. We weren't cutting, and our speed and and our movement wasn't as good as we move liked. I think that threw off our rhythm of our shooting.

Q. You talked about the consistency for the team had been a lot better. Does having two games against a team that's pretty similar record-wise to you guys and losing both, does it feel like a step back in some kind of way?

BRIAN KEEFE: No, it does not at all for me. We didn't love -- that game was a competitive game down there with turnovers and offensive rebounds for us tonight. We fought them. We just didn't -- some offensive rebounds, threes went their direction. But we're trending. We're doing stuff that's positive in the right direction. Sometimes you have these games. We move forward.

Q. The percentage of Kyle's shots at the rim have been much higher since he came back from injury. What did you think about his aggression tonight and how it's upticked since he came back from the injury?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, he's starting to find his rhythm, but he's been attacking the rim even before the injury, and now he's starting to find that rhythm again with that. We always like when he gets downhill. It draws such a crowd for us. We want him to continue to play that way.

Q. What happened with Malcolm?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just right foot soreness. We'll know more as we go.

Q. Didn't shoot it particularly well tonight, but over the last six, seven games you guys have really shot it well from three. What's been the driving catalyst behind that?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's our pace, our ball movement, recognizing some of the patterns, the shots we want to take, so again tonight, I thought the second half the process was better that led to good shots. That's what we want. We just want to continue to find good shots within our offense. I think we've been doing a better job with that. But they took away some of that tonight.

Q. One thing that's been clear the entire year, Bub's comfortability in the mid-range. I know you do a lot of player development. How much have you seen him grow in that area over the last month or so?

BRIAN KEEFE: We can't take any credit for that. Bub shot really well in college from mid-range. He's always shot that shot pretty well. He's got good size that can get up over people. I wish we could, but that's all Bub.

Q. With the team approaching -- a few games away from the halfway mark. What kind of conversations are you having with the three rookies about -- the college season is normally about 30 to 35 games. How do you talk to them and help them prepare for the home stretch for the rest of the season, their first time going through a full NBA season?

BRIAN KEEFE: We talk to them about that stuff -- not about what the totality of the games are. We talk about habits and what you need to do to train to get yourself ready to play. That's really a big thing for our organization, putting the structures in place for these guys to be able to perform, teaching them what that looks like. Those guys have been terrific in all of that, which we knew that they would, and they're going to continue to push through this as they learn and grow. But it's about what you do on a day-to-day basis, how you take care of yourself. That's how you make yourself consistent in this league, and those guys are doing those things on a high level.

Q. I know you want Kyle to get downhill and attack the rim as much as possible, but has there been added emphasis since he's come back to try to avoid mid-range shots?

BRIAN KEEFE: I wouldn't say we had the conversations. I think one of the things he wanted was to be more efficient this year. I think efficiency is -- one of his strengths is getting to the rim. He's such a strong force driving. Obviously his cutting game has really improved, too, so this is a great example. This is a guy who's in the prime probably of his career, and he's still improving. He's still finding new things within his game. Kudos to him. He's getting better and better.

Q. With Alex continuing to shoot it well, when he first

got here, has there been changes to his shot mechanics, and is that something you're still working on?

BRIAN KEEFE: If there was, I wouldn't tell you. Two, it's just the work. He's put in a tremendous amount of work. We're not giving away any state secrets in here, joking aside.

Q. Has he found some spots on the court that he's more comfortable from shooting when he's out from deep?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think he's just found more comfortability within what we're doing. You can see his passing. You can see his driving. Obviously you guys -- the threes stand out, but I see the other stuff. That's the stuff that's even more important, his ability to play through him, run an offense through him. He's growing, and we like it.

Q. You talked about his ability to deter shots before the game. How often are you seeing teams turn down lay-up opportunities because he's there waiting?

BRIAN KEEFE: It happens probably more than people think. He's definitely a presence down there, and this is only -- like you guys said, 30-something games into his career. He's going to get better at that, but yeah, you can definitely see it throughout the game.

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