

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Kyle Kuzma

Media Conference



Pelicans 110, Wizards 98

Q. What do you think made the difference in that game?

KYLE KUZMA: I think our lack of energy and shot making. I think we just came out a little flat. We were a little tense at the beginning of the game. When they got that lead in the second quarter and we kind of played a little bit better from there, then had a couple just lapses throughout. Stayed steady but need to be better still.

Q. You scored 28, a season high. Do you think your aggression on the floor makes players rally around you?

KYLE KUZMA: I think when I'm aggressive, I do a good job of just making the right play, just being able to be out there and get to the rim or create shots for my teammates when I'm situated like that.

Q. After a lengthy absence how do you think you can build off a good offensive night like tonight going forward?

KYLE KUZMA: I think I've been building every game since I've been back. I think I've been playing really well since I've been back, defensively and being efficient, which I have been. I think I've been building off every game, and every game is always going to be a different game, but it's about being efficient and playing defense.

Q. You've been taking a lot more shots at the rim since you came back from your injury. What do you think has gone into that?

KYLE KUZMA: Well, just playing on a minute restriction. Coming back, just trying to get easy shots. Sometimes shots are a little sporadic when you're on a minute restriction and you have to come back and you're getting in a flow.

One, I feel really healthy. I feel great, in shape, which I

haven't necessarily been healthy and in shape. Obviously that's also why I've been getting to the rim, and that's who I am.

Q. So the health has been among the reasons that you feel more comfortable going to the rim?

KYLE KUZMA: I mean, yeah, for sure. With health comes being in shape. Tearing muscles and breaking bones. But I'm getting over that hurdle now, and I feel really comfortable, and I'm very confident in my body and my movements. I think you've been seeing that over the past couple games being back.

Q. How has your comfort grown in this new role playing off the ball? Your cutting has been great as of late.

KYLE KUZMA: I mean, I'm comfortable anywhere because I know how to play basketball. I'm not just an on-ball person. I'm on and off. I'm able to cut and play and be on the ball. Role is definitely different, but at the same time, it's still basketball, and it's all about just being efficient. That's what I'm focused on.

Q. Three-point shooting has been a strength for you guys lately. Is there something they did defensively tonight to make it tough on the perimeter?

KYLE KUZMA: Not at all. Not at all. I think we just missed shots today. I loved every shot we took. I felt like Corey made more than he did, and Kyshawn, they all had great looks. Everybody had great looks. They just didn't go in. But that's how it goes sometimes.

Q. Kyshawn has had a bit of a problem with playing without fouling. Can you teach him anything about playing that end of the floor without fouling?

KYLE KUZMA: Yeah, at one point in time -- I wouldn't say fouling, but I couldn't guard anybody when I first came in the league, so I definitely had a little issue. A lot of times when that happens, teams try to pick on you because they

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know you're like a foul candidate. But it just comes with experience, and this is his first year. He's super young, very energetic on defense. A lot of times refs are automatically just going to give him a foul, too, sometimes.

There are certain times in the game where you can see some players, they get that touch, and he just doesn't right now. With experience he'll get better. He's got all the measurables to be a good defender.

Q. When Bilal it out it seems like Bub steps into tougher assignments defensively. What have you seen from him lately and his growth in general this season?

KYLE KUZMA: Well, Bub is very courageous. He's someone that takes challenges, and his next evolution is just KYP and just knowing personnel and knowing what the offensive players really want to do on the court. I think that goes with all rookies. It's very tough when you come in the league and you don't -- you're not used to people's play style, so it's easy to get fouls or easy to miss an assignment or shoot a gap when you know you shouldn't, just knowing those type of things, and he'll get better as he goes, and he watches film, and he watches just more NBA games on his off days. He'll be a lot better defensively because he's got like a dawg mentality.

Q. With the read-and-react way that you guys play on offense, it gives a young guy so many chances to make decisions on the court. How do you think that helps their development and how have you seen them grow this season?

KYLE KUZMA: Oh, I mean, it's the best thing for their development at the end of the day, for all those guys, Bub, Kyshawn, Alex, Bilal. These guys are getting the ball a lot and having live game reps. Anytime you have live game reps over and over, that's how you get better. You don't get better from being in practice. You can only get so much better. You have to go out in a game and be confident and do it, and that's what these guys are getting this year, a great first step into the NBA for their development.

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