

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Cavaliers - 134, Wizards - 124

Q. Very, very close, competitive game for about 42 minutes there. What can you attribute that to?

BRIAN KEEFE: They're a good team. We've got to give them credit, first of all. Tip my hat to them. They got away from us with some offensive rebounds late in the fourth, second chance points, and they made some tough plays at the end.

Credit our guys for fighting the whole game until the end.

Q. I might have worded that incorrectly. The good part of the game where spacing was good and shots were being knocked down, what caused that? The Wizards did have a lead for a good chunk of the game. What went well during that time?

BRIAN KEEFE: Like we talked about before the game, our process has been right. Attacking the paint, looking to kick the ball out, hitting the open man where he's open, just getting it. That's leading to good rhythm shots, getting out in transition and finishing, starting with our defense.

All those things led for us to be a competitive game. They've just got to set the end.

Q. Do you feel there's a weight off the shoulders off the team now the trade deadline has passed and people can take a break and focus on the task at hand?

BRIAN KEEFE: To be honest with you, no. Our guys were amazingly locked in the past week.

I think someone asked me that question pregame. These guys are workers and competitors, and they want to keep getting better. We've shown that.

Tonight was a good example of us playing the way we want to play. We didn't get as much stops as we would have liked, but offensively we're moving the ball, doing the

right thing.

Q. What did you think about the debut of A.J.?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's great. First day with us, we threw him out there, wasn't scared, competitor. You see his ability to get to the basket, not just for himself but for others. Got a good feel for the game.

Credit to him, we just kind of threw him out there. We needed him tonight. He was good.

Q. What can you say about the way Richaun has stepped in over the past week or so and the way he was able to stay ready basically all season without playing very often?

BRIAN KEEFE: It just speaks to his character revealing himself, and he's done that since he's been here, worked behind the scenes. When his number's been called, even going into last year, always ready to play.

Brings an edge to our team defensively, on the boards, screen setter. He's been great.

Q. Although all of the pieces that were acquired during the trade have not been on the court just yet, what are your impressions of the pieces that you picked up and how you think they'll be able to help you compete in this last part of the season?

BRIAN KEEFE: Not to get into specifics, because I don't think everything is quite there yet, but we're thrilled with all the guys that we've added. High character guys, basketball guys, excited to integrate them into the team.

I think they'll fit in well because they're about the right thing and they're going to help our program go forward.

Q. I saw Marcus and Khris were around the team. Are you allowed to talk about them?

BRIAN KEEFE: I would prefer not to.

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Q. Jordan, career high 45. What did you see with him, particularly with his ability to get to the line?

BRIAN KEEFE: We needed him to get us going, drive the engine tonight. I think he felt that. Good players feel the game, what the game needs, and he probably felt like we needed a juice of energy, and he had a lot of it.

Probably ran out of a little bit of gas in the fourth trying to help us. But put on his back, got to the paint, kicking the ball. It wasn't just his scoring. His ability to get in the paint gets up shots for everybody else too. Credit to him for keeping our engine going.

Q. Bilal started off aggressive and seemed to tail off a little in the second half. What did you see from him throughout the game?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought he was good all game, just take what the game gives us. Aggressive early. Obviously we're putting him on top guys too. He's got a variety of things he's doing that's not just attacking with the ball in his hands.

Q. Not just tonight, but with Tristan's ramping up of minutes of late, what have you seen from him?

BRIAN KEEFE: Continuing what we saw last year, a guy who we can run offense through, a good playmaker. Obviously everybody sees the shooting, but he's got a really good feel for the game, good reads, just has a good understanding. He's been a really good contributor since he's been back with us the last few games.

Q. Jordan was at the top of the scouting report before. Now Kuz is gone, Valanciunas is gone. Tonight how much pressure -- how much did they key on him tonight?

BRIAN KEEFE: A lot. They changed up their coverages two or three times out through the game just to try to halt him. Didn't work, to be honest.

He's been that way -- the way we've been playing is helpful because we've got a lot of ball movers, a lot of guys who can make decisions. Once he gets off it, we can keep that ball moving and we're making good decisions.

He's a good trigger for our offense, but we also have other guys who can trigger, Bub, Bilal, Kyshawn, Corey with his shooting and his driving. We still have multiple guys handling. That helps Jordan relieve, but obviously he's a huge engine for us.

Q. Now that Kuz is gone, and he was arguably your 1B threat, and Valanciunas was a high usage guy, how do you keep Jordan productive now that they're probably even going to key on him more, especially in the games that Marcus Smart and Khriston Middleton don't play?

BRIAN KEEFE: I like how we play with our younger guys. The one thing we've all seen is they're good decision-makers. We'll get Alex back, who's another good decision-maker. Those guys could all make good decisions, read the game, and drive out and kick stuff, which is how we want to play. A lot of guys who can initiate, a lot of ball handlers.

Jordan puts gravity for our team, which I think will help everybody else. The ball was moving again tonight, which is what we want to see. We're going to get good shots if we continue to do that.

Q. Kyshawn, another strong all around game both defensively and offensively. What are you seeing from him as he gets more comfortable?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just his ability to make reads, make plays. I don't think it's changed much. Obviously we all see some of the shots going in, but it's the same things he was doing before.

He's probably going to have the ball more as we go, and he's having the ball more because he's in the starting lineup. So you're seeing him handle and initiate offense. He's a good decision-maker, a good processor out there.

Q. We talked earlier about how he's been curbing the fouls. It seems like they've cropped up a little bit. What are you seeing in that area, not only with the fouls, but he seems to have pretty explosive reactions at times to the fouls?

BRIAN KEEFE: He was physical tonight. We want him to be physical. He had a tough matchup, guarding Mobley. He usually doesn't guard those guys. He got in the mix with them. Love it. Keep going, keep competing. He'll learn all that stuff. That just comes with experience.

Some of those things they won't call all the time as he grows too. That's part of the game also.

Q. How do you manifest his feistiness into positive things for him and the team on the court?

BRIAN KEEFE: He does it already, so I don't have to worry about that too much.

