

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Khris Middleton

Media Conference



Bucks 104, Wizards 101

Q. Khris, how would you describe the night, the emotions of making your debut, and it happened to come against your former team?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, tried to honestly block it all out, to not let myself get too distracted. Definitely a lot going on these last couple weeks. It's a little strange and coincidental how this is my first game here with the Wizards against the Bucks, but for the most part, just tried to block it out, play basketball, focus on what I need to do, and have those conversations that are probably needed or wanted to have after the game. Just kind of the way I looked at it.

Q. How did you feel out there in terms of being up to speed, obviously learning the ways of a new team?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, I've still got a lot to learn as far as the terminology, how they play. I think I have somewhat of a good grasp on that, but it's just going to take time to see where I can fit in or pin myself in the right positions, and with their spacing and how they move and whatnot.

But it's been a great start so far. These guys have been talking to me a lot, which I need from them to help me out a lot, but I know I still have a lot to go. I thought it was decent tonight but still have a long way to go.

Q. How hard was it for you to try and separate the emotions of obviously going against your former team in this game?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: I'm not really an emotional guy. So it really wasn't that hard at all. I played against all of them before. I played against Giannis before in the World Cup. That was weird. That was the first time where it was weird playing against him, so this time wasn't as weird. But just tried to focus on the game and the task at hand.

Q. What was the reunion afterwards, getting to hug

everyone on the bench? What was that like?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, it was cool. But you know, a five-second embrace can't really do the justice of how you really want to talk and what you really want to say, especially with a lot of people around. I'm a pretty private person. But at some point I know I'll be able to catch up with a lot of those guys and we'll have a lot of conversations and lives and stories and whatnot.

Q. I don't know if you've played with Marcus Smart before. I know you've played against him --

KHRIS MIDDLETON: I have played with Marcus, yeah, in the World Cup.

Q. What was it like being in the same boat as him making your debut?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, one, to have somebody with me going through the same thing. Maybe not as weird, but being around Marcus, I know I'm glad to have him on my side, going against him so many different times our freshman years as an opponent. But he's going to be great for us, great for me, great for this team just with the way he plays. He's one of the best players out there, defending players out there that this league has seen in a very long time, very experienced, knows how to play. So I'm excited to play alongside of him again.

Q. Given the disparity between the teams' ages and frankly records, were you surprised by the Wizards' ability to hang intense-wise?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: No. These guys can play. I haven't watched them play that much, but playing against them I know we've had to take them seriously. If not, we lost to them last year where they'll come in and run you out of the gym.

But these guys are great. They just have -- we have lapses like we saw tonight where teams go on runs and how do we stop it for one, how did we settle down and how

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did we respond from it. I thought we responded great late in that fourth quarter.

But it's a process. It's a day-by-day process. A lot of ups and downs, a lot of frustrations, but just got to stay with it.

Q. I know you said that you're here to win games, not just mentor. Do you see yourself at all in guys like Bub, these positionally diverse guys that can score and play make?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: For sure, in all different aspects of the game. Bub with his mid-range, Kyshawn shooter. Bilal, I can't do a lot of what he does; he has a lot of length and size, knows how to play. Same with Alex, and everybody knows how special JP is.

But it's not me coming here and telling them, I think you should do this. It's just me adding a weapon next to them. That's just the way I want them to look at it.

Q. Early in the game you drew a charge with Giannis and I noticed your smile. Did you guys talk trash to each other?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: No, no, I'm not very big on talking. But the charge is something that was there, had to take. I know it's a little thing between me and him that I know about charges, how it can change the game for the opponent, and it got him in foul trouble. We were able to get two charges on him tonight and fouled him out.

I'll be happy about that. He won't be too happy about that even though he got the win. But I am happy about that a little bit.

Q. Did Giannis say something to you?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: No, no. He probably gave me a look. I didn't want to look at him. Just play. But yeah.

Q. Can you elaborate more on Bub's mid-range, being a mid-range attacker like yourself?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, I'm starting to see that more and more. He's a guy that is letting me know that, also, which I love.

But he's a guy that, like you said, his strength is mid-range in a league where mid-range isn't very popular. So for him following the balance and knowing when to shoot that pull-up and when to keep driving up front of other players is important for him.

I think he's reading that. The coaches have been doing

great with that. But you can never lose confidence in your mid-range no matter how the league is going because it's one of the hardest shots to stop.

Q. What's it like being reunited with Malcolm Brogdon after so many years of watching him come up in this league, and at one point you were probably mentoring him in Milwaukee?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, he won't admit it. He doesn't like me to say it, but he was my rook at one point. But it's great to be back with Malcolm. He's a great player. He won Rookie of the Year when he was with us, and I know the type of player he is. I know the type of person he is. He's a guy that I trust, I know how to play with him, I know how he rocks, and he's a good guy to have around for sure.

Q. Can you take us through the last two shots and also what it meant for the Wizards to play through you late even though it was your first game?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: Yeah, they gave me an opportunity to beat my old team, which I appreciate. Didn't go the way I hoped it would have went to, but we ran two sets where I thought I got decent looks. Brook blocked one. The other one was a tough shot where maybe I could hit, maybe not. But got to be aggressive in those moments and live with the results.

Q. The charges, is that something you felt like you knew Giannis's moves from playing?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: It's probably anticipating knowing what the play is, knowing what he likes to do on those screens, but then also being in my position in the team defensive spot. A lot of guys in that position are going for blocks. I'm not a guy that's going to jump with a lot of people, so my job there is to take a charge.

Q. How did it feel Coach Keefe giving you the keys at the end of the game?

KHRIS MIDDLETON: It was great. Put a lot of trust in me. I tried to make the right plays. That's all I could do, miss, turnovers, whatever, I just tried to make the right play for the team.

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