

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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**Brian Keefe**

Media Conference



Wizards 107, Nets 99

**Q. You guys held them to 12 points in the fourth quarter. How did you do it?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We went small. Tristan got in foul trouble. We brought Justin in at the 5. That group that was out there was really the group that kind of amped up the defensive pressure of the game that started in the third, and that carried over until midway through the fourth, then we brought the other guys back. But just the intensity level was really high. The commitment to defense was pretty impressive.

**Q. How pivotal was Marcus Smart in all of that?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Pretty good, yeah. Pretty good. Obviously he's been doing this for a long time. Nice to have him on our team. Played against him for many years and saw him do this. His ability to disrupt the game is impressive, but his ability to stay in the moment and move on to the next play -- he's not a perfect player and he knows that, and that's a great example for our team on how you just keep moving forward in the game.

**Q. Kyshawn, three blocks, three steals. Can you talk about his defensive impact?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, growing. Physicality, had some nice ones there in that fourth quarter. He's growing defensively. That's what we're asking of him, and he's showing that.

**Q. I looked back at the steals and blocks that he had and most of them were in the paint if not all of them. Has he worked specifically on active hands in the paint?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think he's showing his hands and using it as activity. Then some of them are verticals, and some he's just getting in there on the weak side, being active, being in the paint. That's where the ball is. That's where he can get some steals.

**Q. Khris, just seven points but the highest plus/minus on the team. What did you see from him, particularly late, that allowed him to be so --**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, he's been in these situations before. He just settles us down. Him and Jordan were having their own little connection out there on what we were running at the end. He just has a comforting effect on our team. Knows how to make the right play. He was great defensively down the stretch, too.

**Q. You said that these guys are here to play, not just to be mentors. What did it mean for you to close with them or what went into the decision to close with them?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I just felt like we had extended some other guys, too. Like we had to change the lineups a little bit because we went small. Khris was going to come back, and then we decided Marcus's defense we needed down the stretch.

**Q. It was a very physical game, chippy at times. How do you feel like your team responded to that?**

BRIAN KEEFE: That's the nature of competition. Competition can get that way at times, and I think that's the beauty of competition, when people care.

The key is can you move on to the next play and stay focused. Sometimes those things can be distractions. We didn't let that distract us. We just kept playing. I think that was a good lesson from us tonight.

**Q. You guys won despite having 23 turnovers; how were you able to overcome that and what was the common thread to the turnovers?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Credit to them; ball pressure, they started that, started right away at the start of the third quarter. That's kind of what they do. We weathered the storm, and I think that was a good lesson for us tonight. We didn't



play a perfect game. We scored 40 points in the second half. We struggled to score at times. We're still learning chemistry with the new guys.

But that didn't stop us from staying competitive and staying with the game. We really won the game tonight with our defense.

**Q. The chippiness of the game, philosophically how do you deal with that as a coach? Do you like it when players are amped up like that or do you tell them in the huddle, settle it down a little bit?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I like when guys care. That's great. That's just the nature of sports. Stuff like that is going to happen. If you've played in high-level games, which I've been very fortunate in my career to be in a lot of that stuff, that stuff happens all the time. The key is how you move on, how you keep playing. This is a competitive thing. People want to win. This is why people come to the games, because they like to see the competitiveness, and this was a really competitive game tonight.

**Q. Bilal Coulibaly had the most shot attempts on the team. Is that something that you were telling him throughout the game to be aggressive, or is that just on his own?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Some of it was just making the right reads. Early in the game he came out and they were putting two on the ball, and we just moved it, and he got some open shots. Then we always want him to be aggressive attacking. He got some nice finishes down the stretch. Had two good finishes there in the fourth.

He's a creator for us. Liked how he played tonight. He got in a little foul trouble, and he still came back. Really good.

**Q. Can you go into more detail on how Poole calms the young guys in general and then today?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought he did a really good job, him and Khriston Davis down the stretch with their poise and what we were running and how we wanted to score. They were communicating with each other, what they thought was the best option. Obviously Jordan made some really great shots there down the stretch.

**Q. Kyshawn, five assists, five turnovers. What did you see from him as he starts doing a little bit more initiation?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Great. Like he's being aggressive. That's going to happen. If you look at the history of the game, the greatest players, they all are high-turnover guys. You're

going to have some of that, and that's part of the learning process for him.

We want him to be aggressive. We want him to get downhill because he has the ability to finish and make plays for others, so these are part of his learning development, but we're going to continue to put the ball in his hands.

**Q. What do you want him to take away from the plays where he does commit turnovers?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Well, I think that's part of the learning process. Failure is part of learning. He'll say, okay, look -- he'll watch film. This guy studies the game. I'll say, okay, where is the open pass, where can I make a read. Maybe it's finishing, maybe I'm trying to over-pass. Those are just things, like I've said a million times, you've got to go through the fire, but we want him to be aggressive.

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