

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Corey Kispert

Media Conference



Trail Blazers 129, Wizards 121

Q. What's your thoughts on the overall team intensity on defense tonight?

COREY KISPert: Poor, especially to start the game. We didn't really set the tone like we wanted to play very hard today, and you could see that kind of in our communication. You could see that on the glass. You could see that also on the offensive end of the floor, the way we turned the ball over.

When you set a tone like that to start the game, it's kind of hard to flip the script, and we just didn't have it. To start tonight there were definitely flashes where we played much harder, but we're not a team that can afford to come out flat.

Q. Corey, can you speak to Richaun Holmes' contributions, not just tonight but the whole season really contributing on the floor in limited minutes and also what he brings to the locker room?

COREY KISPert: He's unbelievable. He's unbelievable. The professionalism, the maturity to be basically sitting on the bench and have a lot of DMPs in a row when it's not necessarily his fault, and to come out and maybe takes one game to get in shape and then all of a sudden he's dominating, dominating on the glass. Made all his free throws tonight. Didn't miss a shot. He's plus 12.

The motor that he brings and the intensity that he has is something that everybody on our roster could learn from, especially when he's been in the league as long as he has. There's no excuse for us not to bring it just like he does.

Q. Corey, when you're hot in the fourth quarter like you were, how much strength does it take to make a play and not just chuck the ball as soon as it touches your fingertips?

COREY KISPert: Oh, it doesn't -- that's the way the game goes, and that's kind of what I'm wired to do. I was

proud of the way I made plays tonight and got to the rim. I missed a ton of lay-ups and that's unacceptable. I usually finish the ball a lot better around the rim, and tonight I didn't. It could have been a much bigger game for me than it was just because of that.

But I was proud of the way that I attacked the paint, obviously made a bunch of shots, and when I got it going in the fourth quarter like that, it's easy to let it fly and see the ball go in.

Q. As the longest tenured Wizard on the team, is there any additional pressure to take the team home in the clutch?

COREY KISPert: No. We kind of are starting to figure out how to close games out, and we tend to do it by committee. Obviously we have guys who handle the ball more than others, but it's been Jordan some nights, it's been Bilal some nights, it's Khris some nights. Those guys are all wired to do what they do in the clutch and do what they do down the stretch, and now that we're competing in more of these games, I expect our end-of-game stuff to get sharper and sharper.

Q. What was it like catching up with Deni?

COREY KISPert: Oh, it's the best. I miss him. I love that guy. There's so much that he brought to our locker room that made him an amazing teammate, an amazing friend, and I know he's doing really well in Portland. He's having a hell of a year.

It was unfortunate for him to go out so quickly tonight in his return here. But it's been a blast watching him play. He's been a blast watching him grow and see how he grew here and how he's doing in Portland, as well. Super happy for him, and it's awesome having him back.

Q. What have Marcus and Khris brought to the defensive end as a duo?

COREY KISPert: Yeah, maturity, toughness. You can

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literally see the game change when Marcus gets on the floor. Not only is he changing the game, he's also teaching everybody else how to change the game, too. He's always talking with us, always teaching, helping us learn, and when a guy like that tells you about defense, you definitely listen.

It's not very often that guards win Defensive Player of the Year anymore, and he has that honor.

I'm really happy to have him on our team, and I think he's like a Hall of Fame Mount Rushmore guy of, like, you hate to play against him but you love to have him on your team. So I'm glad he's with us.

Q. You mentioned earlier about how you were missing some shots inside. Do you see yourself primarily as a catch-and-shoot three guy or still someone who can drive in the paint and attack?

COREY KISPert: Absolutely someone who can drive in the paint and attack. Obviously that's what teams are going to force me to do, and I'm taking huge strides throughout my career in finishing around the rim. It's a concentration thing. I practice them every day. I'm relentless with how I try to practice finishing around the rim, and those usually fall for me.

With the way I feel shooting the ball right now, as soon as it clicks and I start finishing the way that I normally do, I'm going to put together some really big nights. I don't think it's anything to worry about, it's just going to keep me up tonight with how frustrating it is to trick off a bunch of easy ones.

Q. Obviously it seems like Bilal is kind of coming into his own offensively the last couple nights. What do you have to say for that?

COREY KISPert: Yeah, he's a problem getting downhill. He's super efficient in the paint. He makes the right decision. He doesn't force too much. He's just a super gifted athlete.

He works a ton on his jump shot. I see it every day. We have confidence in him to knock those down when he gets them. It's kind of the inverse of me right now, man. When he starts knocking them down from the outside at a really high rate, which we have the faith in him to do, you're going to see him put together big night after big night, and he's going to be a force in this league for years and years to come.

Q. How did you approach the offense tonight, and what were you looking for in terms of opportunities

against the Trail Blazers' defense?

COREY KISPert: Yeah, they're super physical. They switch a ton. They have a lot of really good active defenders with great hands. A lot of times when you play teams like that, you are the most open when you catch it. With how good they are on the ball, you have to take advantage of that split second that you catch the ball and you have a look. A lot of times if you turn down good ones and you try to dribble too much, you might not get a better shot later on.

Just trying to be quick with my reads, quick with my decisions. Whatever I choose, whether it's drive, pass or shoot, do it with like a .5 kind of mentality.

Q. You seemed to be in the eyes of a lot of the driving guards like a vision today when you were getting some open shots off. How important do you think that is?

COREY KISPert: It's great. It's something that we all talk about. My job on this team is to open the floor up for those driving guards. It's a two-way street. If I'm standing around out there and kind of doing my thing and moving around and cutting and spacing and playing without the ball and they don't find me, I don't make those shots, this floor gets constricted. If they do and they kind of -- if they're looking for me and they're passing it and we're moving the ball and playing kind of -- not hot potato but sharing the ball, all of a sudden the third quarter comes around, the fourth quarter comes around and you get big lanes like Bilal had today on his dunk. That's kind of the waterfall effect of how we play together.

So it's a two-way street. Those guys get me open shots. They find me when I'm open, and in return, the floor is spaced and they can get downhill and rack it.

That's the relationship that you kind of have with guys who drive the ball and guys that shoot like me.

Q. You move real well without the ball. Do you see that as a declining skill in the NBA now?

COREY KISPert: Yes and no. Cutting is so important with how much the floor is spaced. It's really easy to take out a guy who just stands in the corner and shoots. So you have to have that element to your game. You've got to be able to move without it and create those open lanes and looks for you.

I was able to really cut and move and learn those skills my first couple years. That's how I got a lot of easy baskets off of that, and now that I'm being a little bit more of a main part of this offense, the shooting comes along with it and

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driving the lane comes along with it and having the ball, but I haven't lost the ability to cut and to be able to play off of these driving guards.

It's really helped, and it's a skill that I'm going to take with me for the rest of my career.

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