

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Brian Keefe

Media Conference



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Q. The composure from your team to close out the game, what did you think about it?

BRIAN KEEFE: Some good and some bad, some great learning lessons. Being in these games is always good because you can learn so much -- execution at the end of the game, things that you want to run, things the teams are doing.

Some good, some bad, like I said, but great learning experience. Those are the things that are going to help stack things that we want to do when we keep building this thing the right way.

I thought we did some good things down the stretch. Definitely things we can work on, though.

Q. Alex played really well finishing inside. He seemed to play with real force at times. What did you see that allowed him to do that?

BRIAN KEEFE: He was aggressive from the beginning. He's getting his legs under him from being out for a while. So he had an aggressive mindset, which we talked about before the game. He looked to attack, and then he built from the outside.

But he was at the rim early, and I think that was really a big thing for him tonight.

Q. When he got to the rim, he seemed really effective. What did you see -- what do you want him taking away from performances like this?

BRIAN KEEFE: Physical, just be aggressive. Establish yourself early in the paint, and that collapses the defense.

He's such a good passer too. That's going to lead to him finding other guys, which I'm not sure what he had assist-wise. I'm sure it was pretty good. I think he had four at the half. But we want him to be aggressive for sure.

Q. Would you say that this was the best performance from the rookies as a unit this season?

BRIAN KEEFE: Good question. I think we've had some good ones. I can think back to the New York game back in December. These guys have played a lot of good basketball together throughout the year. We had Atlanta early. I can't count all the games.

I thought we had some tough moments in the game. The one thing we did tonight is we really shared the ball. The ball was moving.

Q. Alex against Filipowski was a good matchup. How do you think Alex did?

BRIAN KEEFE: Good. He ended up not really guarding him because we were switching pick-and-rolls. He was on Collier at times. That just shows you the versatility of Alex to guard multiple guys, and then his rim protection was really good in the second half.

Q. What does it say about Kyshawn to take the shot that he did, be questionable for this game, come back and maybe have one of his best games of the year?

BRIAN KEEFE: We talked about this after the game. We didn't play our best game down in Miami, and we had a lot of guys who answered the bell. That's part of the NBA. When you're not playing well, go to the next game, how are you going to bring it? I thought our guys brought it tonight, and he was an example of that for sure.

Q. Did you sense some discontentment or irritation from the team with how they played in Miami that helped them tonight?

BRIAN KEEFE: We're growing. I think we're looking to build consistency. I think that's the thing we've been showing here lately, can we build habits? They're going to live consistent games to be in games like this, A, to learn, but obviously to want to win.

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I think our habits are just improving. Sometimes you're going to have tough games and sometimes you have tough shooting nights, but how you respond is important in this league. I like how our team responded tonight.

Q. What could you say about Khris Middleton and Alex Sarr together on the court? Khris Middleton had six assists tonight and him and Sarr really looked good tonight running the pick-and-roll.

BRIAN KEEFE: I think that's a very underrated skill is people don't know about is Khris' ability to process the game, make plays. Obviously he's going to draw huge crowds, and I think him and Alex are developing a nice chemistry. It's only been three games here with Alex, but I like what I'm seeing so far.

Q. What kind of growth have you seen in Alex on both ends now that he's had a couple of pretty good outings coming off injury?

BRIAN KEEFE: You see his versatility, right? I think that's what we all have been impressed with him is the ability to do multiple things on the court -- play make, handle the ball, switch pick-and-rolls, be a rim protector, and then a floor spacer.

He's learning. He's getting better, but he's getting more consistent in the things that he's really strong at. We're learning his game as we go. We're not going to put a ceiling on Alex. We're going to continue to push him to expand because he's got some unique skill sets.

Q. What did you think about Alex as a roller today?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought he was pretty good. He got some rolls, got some good finishes around the rim, put some pressure on the rim, got some kick-outs for his teammates. I thought it was good.

Q. Is that an area you've seen growth in him this year?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think he's got the ability to do both, which is unique. He can roll and pop. He can play make out of both. He can play make on the short roll. He can play make on the pop. These are unique skill sets for someone his size, and that's why we have him.

Q. With Utah, them having so many guys out with rest or injury management, they're obviously in a situation where they're looking for draft odds a little bit. How do you view a situation where a team isn't necessarily maximizing their night-to-night capability to win?

BRIAN KEEFE: I don't ever -- we worry about the guys that we're playing against, but I don't think in terms of those things ever. We're focused on what we're doing here. I've got great respect for the Jazz organization and what they're doing, but we're focused on what we're building on the day-to-day. I don't have enough time to worry about the other 29 teams.

Q. I'm looking at the field goal attempts stat. Kyshawn had 17, and then Khris, Alex, Bilal, Bub, Justin, Tristan, Marcus each had 9-plus. In terms of spreading the wealth to get the opportunity to shoot the ball, how do you think the arrival of Khris and Marcus has led to that?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we were playing that way beforehand, it's just you see it more because they fit into how we play.

We've been a ball movement team, multiple ball handlers, multiple guys making decisions all year long. They just fit into that. Obviously they have experience, so it looks good too.

They're developing into our chemistry with our own guys that we have, but I think they just fit in well to our system.

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