

Washington Wizards Media Conference

Saturday, March 8, 2025

Washington, DC, USA

Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Raptors 119, Wizards 118

Q. Have you ever been part of a game like that before, especially down the stretch?

BRIAN KEEFE: Oh, if you've done this long enough, you've seen a lot of stuff over the years. I've been involved in a few of those over the years for sure.

Q. What was your reaction when the shot first went in?

BRIAN KEEFE: Give him credit, it was a really tough shot. It was an outside the paint floater with two guys all over him. You give him credit. I thought that was the game, and then obviously it got overturned. But hell of a play by that young man.

Q. What did you like defensively down the stretch from the team, especially with the way the first half went? They were getting on the offensive glass and then things changed in that second half for you.

BRIAN KEEFE: Really started, I think, in the second quarter. We were not rebounding and we were fouling quite a bit. Made a big change in the second quarter. I think they only had two second-chance points and maybe a couple free throws, and then we did a good job at the beginning of the third.

Give them credit, they really crashed in the second half late. That's kind of how they kept themselves in the game. Our rebounding wasn't as good, but we weathered the storm in different parts of the game, so I was really proud of the guys, their resiliency and sticking with it when they didn't have a great defensive game to start.

Q. In a game like this that goes back and forth down the stretch, especially with how many times they got to the free-throw line in the first half, how important was it, and how proud are you of the guys for when it got in crunch time, they did their best to not foul the way they were in the first half?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought we did a good job of really showing our hands. That's how we kind of extend the lead in that start of the third quarter.

Those were fouls in the first half, so good adjustment by our guys, going vertical, showing our hands, and those turned into some easy baskets. Hey, our guys stuck with it. It was a heck of a game.

Q. Conversely, if I'm not mistaken you guys hit a new season high with offensive rebounds yourself. What shifted with the way that you all started to crash the glass, as well?

BRIAN KEEFE: It was Bilal. We've got to give Bilal a ton of credit for what he brought to the game tonight. He was all over the place. His activity, his defense, his crashing, tipping balls out, diving on the floor. He made a huge play in that first quarter that kind of really rallied our team. He dove on it, we got a lob to Rich.

That kind of galvanized the troops, and it just shows you the kind of impact that he can have on the game just by his activity level. It was really good. I was really proud of him tonight.

Q. Jordan Poole, 34 points, first game back. What did you think of him as a shot maker?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought he just played within the flow of the game. This is a good defensive team. They can pressure you, and he didn't force anything. He didn't have to. The ball was moving, and when it came to him he shot it or he drove it. I thought he played a really efficient game, and that came out, obviously, in the stats, but I like how he just let the game come to him, and then he obviously had some big moments. He got us up eight there. I think he hit back-to-back shots, that three in transition. Good to have him back.

Q. Bilal and Kyshawn against Barnes and Barrett, what did you see about those matchups and how they

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

were able to limit those guys?

BRIAN KEEFE: You don't limit them completely, but I thought they did as best they could trying to keep them off the free-throw line. I thought we adjusted, like I said, after the first quarter, but those guys are downhill drivers and it takes both guys, but I thought those guys did a good job on them.

Q. What did you see from Alex Sarr tonight, and what do you want him to improve for the rest of the season?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought he had -- he started off not making some of his shots, but I didn't think that stopped his energy level. I thought he had a really great start to the third quarter, rim protection, rebounding, finishing. Just keep being consistent on the things that we're doing. He's growing before our eyes. I thought he really responded well with a really good third quarter after missing some shots that he normally makes. I liked his energy to start the third. Really good.

Q. Without giving away the tactical, can you walk us through that final defensive possession where you make the change and put Marcus in for Jordan, you have a very long, athletic defensive unit out there. I know they were able to try to get the shot off for what might have been the winner --

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, those are the guys we want on the court. Obviously Marcus is one of the best, so I was joking with him we might have to find somebody else. But no, we want those guys out there. The length, the size, the ability to protect the rim. The kid made a hell of a play. Just got a little lucky there with that one, to be honest.

Q. Did you have a favorite reaction or interaction with anyone after they overturned the ball?

BRIAN KEEFE: Not that I could even think about, to be honest. I don't know.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports