

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Brian Keefe

Media Conference



What did you like about that dull NBA game?

BRIAN KEEFE: I liked we stayed with it. We didn't come out and really set the tone defensively in the first quarter with the amount of points they scored, but we kind of revved it up quarter by quarter, and I think our offense was pretty good the whole game.

We were really sharing it and moving it and our guys showed a lot of resiliency, toughness, grind that one out down the stretch. We just kept making the right play offensively too, like the ball was moving, just hitting the open man, trusting each other and that led to good things.

Q. How do you describe the emotion you guys expressed on the court and maybe in the locker room?

BRIAN KEEFE: They were thrilled because it's a really great team. We're progressing. I think they were all happy because of how we played and how we did it. We did it as a unit. We needed everybody tonight. Everybody was part of this. When you do that, that feels good. For sure.

Q. You said it this year about the rookies, but especially with Alex dealing with some of the best bigs in the league, that the second time he sees them, he's made the adjustments with the work he's put in. Went toe-to-toe with a three-time MVP and gave him everything he had on both ends of the floor. What did you think about the way he performed?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, he was great, obviously. That's obviously his career high.

Tough matchup. Guy is a great player. I love that Alex just went out there and played his game and was aggressive and attacked. His teammates were able to find him. He made some big shots late. Terrific game by him.

Q. The rookies as a whole, another game where they not only offensively give you something, but especially on the defensive end, kind of withstood everything that the Nuggets threw at them in different situations. What

have they been able to do over the course of the last five games on the defensive end with their growth taking such strides?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I just think when we're physical and we can disrupt things and we've got our hands on balls, you can see our intensity level growing by the game. When we do that, we're pretty good. Still not there yet, got a ways to go with that, but I thought our defense was terrific the second half.

Q. You didn't go back to Chris late. What was your --

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought the guys had a good rhythm. Chris was over there and I said, hey, I might hold you for a second, see how these guys were going. He was good with that. But I just liked how our group was playing. I just wanted to keep that rhythm out there.

Q. Jordan was quiet through the first three quarters and the fourth quarter came alive, as we've seen him typically. He told me, getting ready for that final offensive possession, he told the guys, just do what we got to do, get me the ball, and I'll make a play. He knew whether it was him getting the shot or somebody else, the ball in his hands was the best type of action for you guys. Having that type of leadership from him at such a young age, how does that trickle throughout the rest of the team?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought the thing Jordan did great today is they were putting two on him the whole game. And the start of the game, he just kept getting off of finding the right guy. That allowed Alex to score and all the other guys. And when he needed to at the end, the ball came back to him and, obviously, he made some big shots there late.

But he trusted the game, showed great maturity, and just played winning basketball. When he needed to, he made the shots when we needed him. And then we got Kyshawn that three, too. He just kept making the right play, and I thought that was a terrific thing for him tonight.

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Q. Did you like that shot when it left his hand, Jordan's game winner?

BRIAN KEEFE: Jordan works on that shot quite a bit, so yes, that was the kind of the shot we wanted. There were some options on that, but they backed off him. He was open. Let it fly. Great shot.

Q. With Alex and obviously the career high, what do you think allowed him -- what do you think he did to put himself in position to score?

BRIAN KEEFE: Aggressive rolling to the rim, got some easy ones early, and then obviously he made threes tonight, too. That helped. I just liked his aggressiveness overall. Setting screens, rolling to the rim, was active, was on top of there. Really good stuff by Alex tonight.

Q. He cooled off in the second half but did not hesitate to take that (indiscernible) game late. What does that say about his resilience?

BRIAN KEEFE: Alex has always been that way. He's got no fear. That's one of the things we noticed about him very early on. When he's open, he's going to shoot it. He's going to be aggressive. We want him to continue to do that. He obviously hit a big one late.

Q. 32 of your 44 rebounds came from guards. You've talked a lot about the rebounding being an achilles heel for you. On a night where you guys get the rebounding advantage against a very good rebounding team, what did you like about the way that the guards were also crashing the glass, not just relying on Richaun Richaun Alex to clean up?

BRIAN KEEFE: You got a gang rebound. We're not the biggest team physically yet, so we have to do it as a group. When we do it as a group, we're pretty good. That can start our transition. I thought that was terrific effort by everybody on the boards, especially in the second half.

Q. Any update on Corey?

BRIAN KEEFE: No, no update yet.

Q. As process driven as you and the whole organization want everyone to be, what could these two wins do for the young guys' confidence the rest of the season but more importantly during the off-season?

BRIAN KEEFE: I just think being in these type of games is just great experience for all those guys. Time and score, shots we want to get, the defensive execution we want to

have. Being in these type of situations is just great for our growth. Obviously, we've played with some pretty good poise the last couple games, but just being in them is great. They're great learning experiences.

What our team is going to run, what we want to run, the execution we need on both ends of the floor, and we thought we did that really well tonight.

Q. How much pride as a coach do you take -- I know you don't like talking about yourself, you always want to keep the focus on the team, but from day one of training camp to where you sit right now with the team and the growth, how much pride do you take in the habits they've built, the culture that you've been building, and it all starting to kind of meet ahead at a specific time of the season?

BRIAN KEEFE: We're obviously playing better. You want our group to play good. You guys know me. I'm not going to talk about myself at all, ever. We've got more work to do. We're just starting here. We've got more games to come up the rest of the season. Let's continue to get better. That's all we focus on here. Great win tonight. We're thrilled. But let's keep getting better. That's what we're going to focus on our daily habits, things that we can control. We've got much more work to do.

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