

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Magic 120, Wizards 105

BRIAN KEEFE: Before we get into any of the basketball stuff, I just want to say it's been a tough 24 hours for our organization, and I want to give our thoughts and condolences to the Carrington family, and especially to Bub. He's been a tremendous part of our organization, a bright, beautiful young man, and this has obviously been a very difficult, like I said, 24 hours.

Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family, and we're just wishing the continued best for him.

I'll open it up for basketball questions only after this, but our hearts reach out for them, and we're really thinking of them, and they're a big part of this community and this -- people can feel that, and we're here to support Bub. But we can go on to basketball now.

Q. Just the decision to have him play?

BRIAN KEEFE: I'm not going to talk about anything other than basketball. Thank you.

Q. Paolo had a really strong game. What did you think of Kyshawn's defense?

BRIAN KEEFE: He hit tough shots tonight. I thought make him take shots that we wanted him to in the areas that we wanted him to take them. He just happened to make them tonight. Contested threes, still got to the rim some, but some of the contested threes we can live with, give credit, pat him on his back and we move on to the next one.

Q. It seemed like at times his weight and size gave Kyshawn some problems. What did you see from him in trying to deal with a stronger player?

BRIAN KEEFE: I was actually okay with that. Some bump-offs here and there, but for the most part, like I said, we got him into the areas that we wanted him. He hit tough shots. Give him credit. He had some contested twos and some contested threes. He played really well.

Q. What did you see from your team's defense overall?

BRIAN KEEFE: I didn't think our physicality was there tonight. We didn't disrupt as much as we have been. We were a little bit on our heels. I think that lead to them getting rhythm into their game and rhythm into their offense. We've been really disrupting teams as of late in the last, really, post All-Star, and really since February 1st. Our defense wasn't as physical as it has been. We'll look forward to getting back after it tomorrow.

Q. Another game, Alex Sarr has been really stringing together a lot of really good performances. Would you say the key to unlocking him was showing more aggression, more touch around the rim?

BRIAN KEEFE: I just think his game is growing and learning. He's just getting more comfortable with what he's doing game by game. I think that's his a natural progression of the work that he's done behind the scenes. That's what I've always said about these guys is that when you put in the time, the effort in all areas, your game will improve.

He's a great example of that. He started this back in July with us, and he's continued to build every day, and now you're seeing progress on the court. We also know that he's still got a ways to go, and he knows that, so we're just going to continue to use these last games to continue to get better. But you can see his progress, and we're happy with his progress.

Q. What happened offensively in the third quarter?

BRIAN KEEFE: We got a little stagnant. I think it was a little bit of both. They were making shots and then we were not, trying to find solutions, attacking the paint. We were maybe taking a little bit of quick shots that were kind of threw out of rhythm a little bit.

But I loved our fourth. Our guys really -- especially the

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guys that came in there at the end really put it to them and really cut it, which I was really pleased with.

Q. Another really good game for A.J. Johnson. It's still early, but do you guys have vision yet what kind of player you want him to be going forward?

BRIAN KEEFE: Still learning him for sure, but really happy with what he's doing. You can see his ability to attack the rim, make reads, his athleticism, his speed. But again, he's an improving younger player who's still growing on the job, but we like what we see, and he's one of those guys who loves the game, and when you love the game, you can get better quickly.

Q. You mentioned his speed, his ability to get downhill. What has stood out about his assertiveness and how aggressive he is in using those skills?

BRIAN KEEFE: That's what we're learning. Those are the parts we're learning. What you're seeing, we're seeing, too. We want him to be aggressive, and when you have that type of athleticism, that can create shots for yourself but also can create shots for your teammates. So his ability to get downhill gives us a dimension that's really nice, and he's going to start seeing those pictures better and better with more reps, as we've talked about a lot.

Q. What was your thoughts on Tristan tonight? He had a nice behind-the-back pass.

BRIAN KEEFE: Tristan always has had a great feel for the game, reading, obviously you saw the pass late, but he's got a great, unique skill set offensively, seeing the game, making the reads, and obviously, the touch around the rim, and then the three-point shooting. He's just a good offensive player.

Q. I respect you if you choose not to answer, but what did you see from your guys, your coaches who obviously love Bub in terms of how they rallied around him tonight?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just what I would expect: Supportive group like we are. That's probably as much as I'll say. It's just a group that cares for each other and pulls for each other.

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