

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Knicks 122, Wizards 103

Q. At one point down 33 and then you guys go on, I believe it was in totality, a 42-10 run to cut this to four. What was it that that second unit and mix of guys with Marcus Smart as the lonely vet, what were they doing that allowed them to get back into it?

BRIAN KEEFE: It was just playing the right way. Showed great resolve during that period, resiliency. Obviously getting down that much, and the guys just continued to make the right plays on both ends of the floor. It wasn't like home run play, it was a box-out, a deflection, making the right pass, and then they stacked possession after possession, and to do that for a long time was terrific. That group was terrific. I loved the fight. Was really proud of that group coming in for sure.

Q. Why not stick with them a little bit longer? Were they just running out of gas?

BRIAN KEEFE: They were running out of gas, and they were going to bring the other guys back. They can't finish the game like that. You could see them because they expended a lot. That was the normal rotation, so we were always going to stick with them, but give those guys credit for fighting, and I liked the energy of the whole group the second half.

Q. It was an eight-man rotation through the third quarter, less of the -- seeing different lineups than we'd seen in some recent games. What went into switching a little bit more?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just who was playing well. We were just trying combinations that were going to get this thing going, so we went with the guys that were playing well. Sometimes you've got to do that in games. You feel those things out. I liked that group. They gave us a lot of energy, and we stuck with it until we got to four. Really impressive that we fought back.

Q. What are some of the ways that you guys are going

to help Alex try to get more consistent, improving on his offensive shots? I know it was a rough night coming in --

BRIAN KEEFE: That's the thing. Have you been watching? He has been consistent. Guys are going to have off nights in this league, but he's actually been pretty consistent for the last three or four weeks, and his game is getting better and better. Shots didn't go in as much as he would have liked tonight, but still was out there battling, competing on the defensive end. You're going to have games like that. Everybody does. That's how you bounce back and you move forward, and he's bounced back well this year in those situations.

Q. A heavier balance of minutes, especially early in the game, to those first eight guys in the rotation, less minutes today for Colby and Jaylen. What went into that decision?

BRIAN KEEFE: Like I said, it was just the feel of the game.

Q. Last time you guys played, did a more unconventional look against Towns with Justin guarding him, tonight with Alex. What went into that decision?

BRIAN KEEFE: Try different things, try different coverages. We had some success doing that the first time -- the second time we played them at home. Didn't have as much time the second time we did it. We wanted to try something different, give different looks. Towns is obviously a handful to deal with so we wanted to mix up some things tonight, try something different.

Q. How did you think Alex did?

BRIAN KEEFE: Good moments and some tough moments. Our whole team had tough moments in the first half. I didn't think we played great at all, so just a credit to our guys to fight back in the second half. I was really happy with that.

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Q. At half, I talked to (indiscernible) about the three-point shooting, and he said a lot of that predicated on you guys wanting to see them touch the paint more than what you saw in the first half. It seemed like they started to do that and the threes came a little bit more of what we've been seeing of late for you guys. How do you try to do that to get them to do that from the beginning of the game, knowing that you've had success with that paint touch?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just keep stacking those habits. I didn't think we were getting the type of shots that we wanted early. When we were able to get in the paint early, we were able to get some good shots. I thought we capitalized much more on that in the second half. It's just having the mental stamina to do the right thing. We went on that run. We just kept making the right play. It wasn't home run plays; it was simple plays. We've just got to keep getting back to those habits.

Q. Low three-point percentage today. Did you like the looks that you guys were getting?

BRIAN KEEFE: I liked some of the looks we got for sure, yeah.

Q. Tristan didn't play much tonight. He had a couple good defensive games. What do you see -- do you see any improvement on the defensive end because that was not on him when he came to --

A. For sure, yes, pick-and-roll coverage is getting better, his rim protection, understanding some of that stuff is getting better. Overall defense in general, making growth. We like how he's developing for sure.

Q. Colby, very efficient when it comes to plus minus, and I know that's an antiquated number for some people, but your best plus minus in just under 12 minutes. He was part of that group that made that run. What have you seen from him in a very limited time with what he's been able to accomplish so far?

BRIAN KEEFE: I like his game. He plays hard. He's a competitor. He makes nice simple plays offensively. If he's open, he shoots it. If not, he can drive it, put it on the floor, reads at the rim, more pass-outs. I like how he's playing.

Q. It felt like Alex struggled with Towns, especially when he had to guard him, dribble drives and post-ups. What did you see from the defense? Is there anything you want him to clean up in those areas?

BRIAN KEEFE: Like I said, he had some good moments, and then he had some moments that weren't great. But we weren't connected, weren't physical enough. It wasn't just him; it was our whole team. We made a shift in the second half, and that's how we were able to go on that run.

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