

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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AJ Johnson

Media Conference



Nets 115, Wizards 112

Q. 14 of your 20 points in the fourth quarter. Take me through what was going through your mind and what you were seeing on the court during that stretch.

AJ JOHNSON: During the fourth quarter, I would just say I was trying to win the game. I was really excited to just go out there and just compete and just win the game.

Q. That big three that you hit with about 30 seconds left, big shot, the crowd was very into it. How do you explain staying so even keel and calm during big tense moments like that?

AJ JOHNSON: I would just say it was something I was born with. Ever since I started playing basketball, I've always had that composure about myself, just being calm. But I was definitely really excited just having my teammates being super lit, excited, all the fans and stuff. It was definitely super fun.

Q. Have you had an experience like that before with this type of environment?

AJ JOHNSON: I don't think so. I've had some type of big games in high school but I don't think nothing like that, honestly.

Q. What was that like having a lot of people cheering for you?

AJ JOHNSON: No, like I said, it was super fun, having your teammates and the fans and stuff being super into it and super excited. Yeah, I don't think I've experienced something like that before.

Q. You, Colby, J.T., Jalen and Tristan have played a lot together lately. What do you think about what that five-man group can do?

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I think we're really competitive. Like we really go out there, we don't just try to toss up the ball

and see who scores the most. I feel like we really try to do the right things and just play hard, go try to get the win.

Q. What do you think you have shown in these games you've played since the trade?

AJ JOHNSON: I would think just energy, effort, competing. Every time I step on the court, just making plays for myself or others. I feel like I just bring a spark to the team. We already have so much sparks on our team, so it's another one to add for sure.

Q. How tiring was it to play all 24 minutes in the second half?

AJ JOHNSON: It was all right, honestly. It wasn't as bad as I thought I would have been, honestly. I thought I would definitely have been more tired, but I feel like I'm starting to get a lot more adjusted.

Q. Did the energy from the crowd help give you a little adrenaline to --

AJ JOHNSON: I would say so too, yeah. Playing in crunch time and stuff like that I feel like gives you extra juice for sure.

Q. What players have you looked up to over the years that have influenced your game or that you've modeled your game after?

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I watched a lot of Shai when I was in high school. I watched Kyrie and stuff growing up, of course, Kevin Durant, a lot of players, honestly.

Q. Do you feel like what you've seen in these last 15 or so games you've earned a rotation spot with the Wizards next season?

AJ JOHNSON: I mean, I don't really want to say too much about it. Of course I feel like I can be in any rotation on any team in the NBA, especially next season after the grind that I'm about to have this summer and stuff like that. I feel

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like I'm going to come back different. I really feel like I can for sure be in the rotation.

Q. Have you thought about your goals this summer, just maybe the top three things you want to work on?

AJ JOHNSON: I'd probably say strength for sure, putting on weight, shooting, film, just studying the game, learning more, because I played somewhat of a season, and now I get to go and just reflect on it and work on the things I'm going to see during the season.

Q. How gratifying is it to seize the opportunity that you've been waiting so long for?

AJ JOHNSON: It feels good for sure. It's definitely a blessing. I'm just excited.

Q. You're still so young; do you ever get nervous going into games or playing against superstars?

AJ JOHNSON: I wouldn't call it nervous, but I get maybe sometimes overly excited. I want to do really good and stuff like that. But I've been learning more of just letting things come to me and just flow and just focus on just competing and getting the win and just letting everything else take care of itself.

Q. After the way Thursday's game went, what was the message from BK after that and how did you feel like the team responded today?

AJ JOHNSON: Versus Indiana?

Q. Yeah.

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, it was like, we didn't want to all the way completely throw it away because that's not who we are or what we want to do. It was definitely something that he wanted us all to reflect on and stuff like that.

We're definitely looking to get our gig back for sure.

Q. What do you think your highest ceiling is in the league, and what do you have to do to get to this point?

AJ JOHNSON: My highest ceiling?

Q. Just your potential.

AJ JOHNSON: I believe I can be a superstar, 100 percent, in this league. I've just got to work my tail off every day, honestly. It's going to take an everyday grind, doing all the little things, what I eat, what I watch, how I work and stuff

like that is all going to play into it. Yeah, definitely.

Q. Looking back at the trade, Kuzma, Middleton, you, I think it's fair to say you were not the headline of that trade. Does that put a chip on your shoulder knowing that Milwaukee included you, you wanted to go to -- when you got to Washington, did you ever think about that?

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, I feel like I always had a chip on my shoulder my whole life. I feel it's something that you kind of created, but being in a situation like that, being the youngest one in the trade, talking being traded as a rookie, I guess it is something like that.

But no, I would say -- yeah.

Q. Before your reverse slam in the fourth quarter, you had a really nice up and under. Have you been working on your finishing?

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, that's something that we for sure work on every day for sure.

Q. Have you thought about how far you've come in your journey so far over the last few years?

AJ JOHNSON: Yeah, definitely. Being here, getting into the NBA and stuff like that, competing versus high-level players has definitely given me a lot of time to reflect and just see how far I've come, how my journey hasn't been the easiest, but I just began to stay focused and kept going. So I definitely took some time to reflect. Definitely a blessing.

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