

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Marcus Smart

Media Conference



Magic 109, Wizards 97

Q. Marcus, Bub set the Wizards' rookie record tonight with seven threes made in the game. He also had a career high. What have you learned from playing alongside him?

MARCUS SMART: We all know -- we love Bub. He brings energy every night. Just his presence alone, to be in the locker room, to be on that court with him is something that we cherish.

I've only known him for the couple months that I've been here, but it's genuine. His energy is genuine, and it's definitely a gravitational pull that he has. We're proud of him. He's been through a lot, and yet he comes in, day in and day out, smile on his face, and he competes. We're glad for him to have a night like this, so congrats, Bub.

Q. As a vet, how would you like to see the team develop over the next five games?

MARCUS SMART: Just continue to work. We've got a lot going on right now, guys injured, guys out, and that allows some of the younger guys to step up and show what they can do, and they've been doing a really good job. Now we've just got to continue to focus on ourselves, not really worry about the outcome, and just go out there and play.

Q. What was the challenge of defending Banchero and also Wagner, especially considering you were missing Bilal and Kyshawn?

MARCUS SMART: It was a great challenge. We've got Colby Jones guarding him, Jaylen Martin. We even put the old man in there, Anthony Gill.

But no, it was great. It was a full team effort on those guys. They're really great. They're really good at getting to the free-throw line and putting pressure on the other teams. I thought we could have done better, but I thought we did okay. The guys came in and they fought, like I said, and they played their heart out, and that's all you can ask for.

Q. AJ Johnson is a guy who's been standing out over the past few weeks. What's your perspective on him as a fellow guard?

MARCUS SMART: Oh, he's great, man. He's crafty. He still has a lot to learn, but he's asking questions, and he's finding his way. That's what you want. We want that confidence for him to continue to grow and for him to just continue knowing that, hey, you're in here for a reason, go make something, and he's been doing a great job. Like I said, we're proud of him, and obviously there's more to learn, but we like the path he's on.

Q. What have the last few weeks been like for you as a veteran, being in and out of the lineup, being in and out of the rotation on a team that is not necessarily focused on the short term right right now?

MARCUS SMART: It's been a little bit of a challenge. You know, I'm a competitor at the end of the day, so I want to play as much as I can. But like I said, I understand the situation here at hand, and at the end of the day, I'm a hooper, too, and I love to see other hoopers do good. My teammates out there, even though I might not be playing or I might be playing a little bit, I'm still excited and ecstatic to see those guys out there working. It's been great for me. It's obviously not as favorable as you would imagine a guy for me in the years that I've been playing, but like I said, to see these guys developing and on the right path, I'm excited.

Q. Last night Bub talked about learning how to navigate screens and getting better at that. He gets hit on a lot of screens. What have you seen from him since you've been here as a defender? How has he grown?

MARCUS SMART: His tenacity. Bub doesn't back down from anybody. We all know that. When he asks a question or he's learning and trying to figure it out, he goes out there and puts what he learned or the answers we give him to help him out to the test, and that's what you want

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from a guy like that. He's very coachable, and he understands I've got to bring that energy, and he does it day in and day out for us.

Q. What's your impression overall so far of the entire organization and the city of D.C. since you've been here?

MARCUS SMART: It's great. For me, I've only been with three organizations, so it's short lived, but they're at the top of my list I think when it comes to organizations. They can compete with anybody. They're just young right now, and we're figuring it out. That's all you can ask for. Control what you can control in that moment, and that's coming in every day and trying to pour into these young guys and this team and help everybody get better.

Q. How about Alex Sarr in particular?

MARCUS SMART: Yeah, I mean, we all know what Alex can do. He's been challenged throughout these last couple games with having to navigate some of these tougher matchups that he has on the offensive end where he's not the most athletic guy, the quickest or the strongest, and he has to figure out a way to still produce and help this team.

He's figuring it out. That's kind of the thing that you're going to hear me say a lot is they're figuring it out, and that's all you can ask for. I'm very proud of him and his work ethic, and he's going to be all right.

Q. Coach Keefe, he mentioned that he sees some similarities between you and Bub. When you think about it, do you see a little bit of yourself in him?

MARCUS SMART: No, for sure. I'm the youngest of four boys, and I'm kind of the goofy person, and that's Bub to a T. Me and Bub have sat down and talked, and we definitely have some similarities. So I can see that in him. It's a great comparison. I love Bub. I love everything he stands for, and I love his competitive nature.

Q. In the third quarter you helped lead that group to closing in on the deficit. What was your mindset in that moment, especially as a veteran knowing that you may have to step up a little more with the young guys around you?

MARCUS SMART: Yeah, that was it. Just understanding that my veteran presence is something that's probably going to be needed and especially when things start to get a little rough, start to get out of hand. I give credit to those young with guys. They understood the magnitude of the situation, and they found me, and I rewarded them back, and they're playing the right way. As a vet, that's what you

want to see, and anytime you try to do what you can, and I got hot, and like you said, started that little run, and Bub continued it for us.

Q. I'm sure a lot of veterans offer advice to younger players, but we've seen on multiple occasions you actually demonstrating things during time-outs, especially to Bub. Why have you taken that approach?

MARCUS SMART: It's just who I am. Like I said, I'm a competitor, and I'm on the floor, but at the end of the day, I love my craft, and I love my colleagues, and we're all out here working to be the best we can.

I just want everybody to be the best they can, so for me to be able to get out there and demonstrate it, I think that that speaks volumes, and it helps more just talking because a lot of people -- you can talk to them all day, but showing them, they see it from a different light.

I just want to be able to do that and show these guys that I'm here and they can lean on me.

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