

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

## Bilal Coulibaly

Media Conference



**Q. How you feeling?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Feeling good. Feel a lot better, getting really close to being back. (Indiscernible) anytime soon.

**Q. As far as improvement in the off-season, you took great strides offensively. Is that really the focus for off-season?**

BILAL COULIBALY: For sure. Ball handling, too. Yeah, just like even more confident coming in next year.

**Q. With your offensive game, what are you proudest of and what are the things you still need to work on?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Proudest? I'd say just the fact that I had the opportunity to play a lot more with the ball, being able to show that I can. It was a good part.

I think I still got to work on, like, my game all around. Ball handling, shooting, my pace. Sometimes rushing a little bit. Yeah, I think I got to work on all of this.

**Q. This is your second off-season after entering the league. How do you plan on making it different than the first off-season?**

BILAL COULIBALY: First of all, I don't have the Olympics so I have more time to take care of my body, rest, and work on my game, too.

Yeah, I have more time, like I say, just taking all the time I need, to get better.

**Q. A couple years into your career, who are players you're trying to model your game after?**

BILAL COULIBALY: I watch a lot of Kawhi, Mikal Bridges, some guys that play both ends of the floor. That's what I want to be.

**Q. You guarded star players last year. This year you**

**had more success against Steph Curry, Jayson Tatum. What changed? How different did you feel when you were in those situations?**

BILAL COULIBALY: I just felt like I knew them, having a year under my belt. I knew the tendencies. Watching a lot more film, too, about them, what they like to do, what they don't. Just learning about their game helped me to get better.

**Q. We've been hearing about Marcus Smart's impact. We've seen the demonstrations he's been doing sometimes with you during timeouts. What has he given you in terms of advice, and what have you learned from him being around him?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, big time. Every timeout he going to stand up and show you something. Whatever he sees on the court, he going to tell you. When he first got here, I told him what I was struggling on defensively. He was like, I got this for you, try this. If it didn't work, Try this. Every time he got something new for you. He's been really good.

**Q. Who would you say the player is you learned the most from this season on the team?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Definitely the rooks because I definitely didn't know them. I feel like they got better throughout the year, Kyshawn, Bub, Alex. They all got better throughout the year. Yeah, I'm really happy for them.

**Q. In terms of the player you can become in the future, what would you say once you're done developing and you're in your prime, who are you going to be at that point, what kind of player?**

BILAL COULIBALY: I want to be a great two-way player, play both ends of the floor, guard the best player every single night, chalk up points, assists and all that throughout the game, too. Yeah, that type of player.



**Q. You said you were going to work on your shooting, among other things, this off-season. How do you plan going about doing that? Are you working with a shooting coach, the Wizards' staff here in DC?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Wherever I go I know the staff will be here with me. They'll follow me. If I'm in DC, they'll be here. If I go to Paris, they'll follow me. We already talked about it. Yeah, the DC coaching staff will be here.

**Q. The on-ball reps that you mentioned, improving in that area, what kind of workouts does that entail for the off-season?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, working on my body, how to get low. Working on my mobility, abs, ankles, too. Yeah, it's a lot of work.

**Q. Are you planning to make technical adjustments to your jump shot?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Not really. I feel like it's just reps, confidence. That would be it, yeah.

**Q. When you look at the last 12 months that you've had, rookie season, go right into Olympic preparation, then jump right into this season, what thoughts come to mind when you think of what your body was able to do? The amount of work you put in to get your body to that point, to be able to sustain this as long as you could this year...**

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, we were just talking about it with a couple of guys. Yeah, I didn't realize I did that much for the past 12 months. Yeah, it's been a lot. It's been a lot. I'm glad that I've been through all of it. Obviously I got hurt late in the season. Yeah, it's part of it too. So, yeah, just got to accept it.

Yeah, I feel like I've done a pretty good job taking care of my body, getting better throughout the past 12 months. Yeah, it's been long, but I made it, so it's cool (smiling).

**Q. How proud of yourself are you for being able to do that so early in your career?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, really happy. Olympics was crazy. Was a lot at home, too. It was, I'd say, the most stressful moment I had probably in my life. Yeah, been through that. Loved it, enjoyed it. Yeah, I'm really proud of it.

**Q. (In French.)**

BILAL COULIBALY: Like you say, coach said I was a

creator. I've shown this year I was able to play for others, too, play-make, being able to feed the bigs, the shooters, too. Finding the open men. That's the way I play. I just don't force it. I try to find the easiest shot as possible. Yeah, that's just how I play.

**Q. You talked about the work specifically with Alex. Can you talk about all the noise he dealt with earlier this season and improved throughout the rest of the year?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, I love it for him. He definitely heard about it. Me talking to him and all that. He never took it personally in the wrong way. He took it in the right way. He was like, All right, I'm going to get in the gym and show them what I'm able to do. He did a great job on that throughout the year. The past few months he's been incredible, being better and better each and every game. I'm really proud of him.

**Q. You say you pride yourself on guarding the best player on the other team. Mentally, how do you prepare yourself for going into a matchup?**

BILAL COULIBALY: Yeah, I'm starting more shootaround, watching film (indiscernible). We talk about their tendencies, what they like to do, what they don't like to do, what I should try to do defensively to see how they react.

Yeah, after that get in the locker room before the game, watch a lot of film again. Sometimes I just hang out on the court, I watch them prepare for the game, see how they move and all that.

So yeah, it's just, like, watching it. That's how I learn, I'd say, watching the game.

**Q. How would you describe your season compared to what you were thinking at the beginning of it? You talked about your off-season. Do you plan to be part of the French national team this August for the Euro Basketball? What will be the objective?**

BILAL COULIBALY: This season has been about creating consistence. I think I could have been better on that. I'm glad that I wasn't perfect because I know I can be better, then. Yeah, I'm going to work every day to be more consistent.

We definitely have, like, tough moments during a season. It's a long season. You have ups and downs. Yeah, just going to keep working. I think it's been, yeah, overall a solid season, I would say.

For the French national team, I'd like to be a part of this.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

It's a new team we are building, a new generation. Yeah,  
I'd love to.

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