

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Bucks 133, Wizards 120

**Q. Brian, what did you dislike tonight and what did you like?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I did not like the start. They came out and gave it to us pretty good, obviously, in the first quarter. I thought we responded a little bit in the second, but we really responded obviously in the second half. Played with more force, started getting some stops. That allowed us to get out and get some easy baskets and share the ball.

I thought our ball movement was really good in the second half, too. I think we had 16 assists in the second half, so the pace was good, we were attacking the paint and kicking out to shooters.

But you can't start games like that; hard to keep up.

**Q. Specifically what did your team not do well at the start?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We just didn't play with the force that we would have liked. They got some easy baskets in transition. We didn't close to their shooters well enough. We just didn't have the necessary force to start, but we got that in the second half.

**Q. That third quarter you guys started off with multiple stops that allowed you guys to get out in transition, get some offense going. Was it as simple as getting those stops on the defensive end, or was there more to it that allowed you guys to get that rhythm that you were looking for?**

BRIAN KEEFE: No, we changed our disposition, the stops, and we were able to get out and run. We've got talented guys offensively; we can do that. When you're taking the ball out the whole game, it's not easy to play that way. So it's definitely starting with our defense. I think there was five or six stops at the beginning of the third quarter that helped us get going.

But guys responded well, but got to be better to start the game.

**Q. The turnovers, as well, too, you cleaned that up in the second half, only five to finish the game off. Was that a part of what allowed you to get the offense going as well, too?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, we got much more organized. We were flowing into things. We were kicking the ball ahead, which we wanted to do. That really helps us when we just get that ball out and we throw it ahead to our guys and we trust the pass. You could see that we were able to score pretty well in the second half.

**Q. Alex only played five minutes. Was there any kind of minutes restriction on him?**

BRIAN KEEFE: He's just returning. He's only played in a few games, so we're just ramping him up as he goes. This is only really his third game that he's played since coming back off the calf. But I thought the minutes were good for him tonight.

**Q. Second half you switched him more on to Giannis. What led to the switch, and what did you like about it?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We tried some different things. We went small with JC for a little bit. You saw Kyshawn was in foul trouble, so we switched the matchups a little bit. I thought he got him a few times, but Alex did a good job a couple possessions, too. But obviously he's a load. Good player.

**Q. Alex the double-double but didn't take a three tonight, which is much different from what we saw from him last season. Does that go into how he has looked at the game a little bit different with seeing what the defense was offering him and taking that rather than taking the shot he wants to take?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I think he was good just attacking the rim. I think he had a couple ones that I thought he got fouled on, too, just attacking, which is what we want to see. He's going to shoot threes. As we start to get more



chemistry on our team, he's going to take them. We want him to take them. But we wanted him to put pressure on the rim, and I thought he did that tonight.

**Q. Tonight obviously the talk going into it was about Khris's return. I noticed multiple times in huddles he would sit with guys and talk them through things. He obviously knows the scouting report on Milwaukee very, very well. The leadership he showed on a night that was about him but making sure he poured into the guys, what does it say about who he is and the type of player that you have in him?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Not surprised. This guy is an amazing guy, amazing character, like I said before the game. Obviously that's a big moment for him coming back to this place, and I thought they gave him a nice standing ovation, which was nice to see. But it didn't affect him. He just played his game and was the teammate that he always is, and obviously he was very productive out there. Not surprising by Khris Middleton.

**Q. What did you think of Tre Johnson's minutes tonight?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Good. You obviously can see what he can do putting some pressure on defense with his shooting ability and his off-ball movement. I thought he was aggressive. That's what we want him to be. Good first game.

**Q. You talked about the poor start and the force you guys were lacking. What wasn't there in the first half? Was it a mentality thing? Was it an intensity thing? What led to the lack of force?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Who knows. I don't know the answer to that. But I'd like the change. That's the thing that matters the most is I like the character in our room. We made a change. We made a mindset shift at the half, and we saw what we're capable of doing. Like I said, we've got to do that the whole game. You've got to start games -- it's really important to start games that way. We've got another challenge the next day down in Dallas. But I liked our competitive response in the second half.

**Q. When Ky picked up that fourth foul, a lot of coaches would elect, especially with a young player, to take him out just to try and save him. You elected to keep him in. Was it a challenge to see how he could handle it and to see what he could do knowing he was playing a little bit of Russian roulette, if you will?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Just because I trust him, and he was playing well, and you're going to have to play like that in big

games. So I trust our guys to play smart. We only gave him a couple more minutes out there, but that group was flowing pretty good. I didn't want to disrupt that. But Kyshawn is smart enough to know how to play with four fouls.

**Q. What were your impressions of Cam's regular season debut for you guys?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, you could see what he can do when he attacks, right? Pressure on the rim, his physicality, I thought he got downhill. I thought he helped spark us at times out there when we were struggling. I thought it was a good first game.

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