

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Wizards - 117, Mavericks - 107

BRIAN KEEFE: I'll start it off for you guys if that's all right. I thought it was really just a great team effort by our guys. Our bench came in and really changed the game. We played 11 guys, and everybody had a contribution to that. We were able to establish the physicality against a pretty veteran, big team from the get go.

Even though we didn't make shots at the beginning, we stuck with the game plan and trusted what we were doing. And Alex was an absolute monster on the rim -- protecting the rim, changing shots, three blocks, a steal. Just having the defensive anchor down there.

But it was the whole group. Bub setting the tone early. But then it was our pace on offense, sharing the ball, getting up-and-down the court. But we stayed with it, and that was the great part about the game.

**Q. Talk about Ky's individual performance these last two games and how he's progressed since just the summer.**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought -- he obviously scored, obviously shot the ball really well, but I thought his impact on defense -- I think he ended up with three blocks himself, two steals. His activity guarding a guy that's a lot bigger than him. Obviously the shot making and the playmaking was impressive.

This guy has put in a lot of time. He's growing. Tremendous performance for him.

**Q. Can you talk about guarding a guy bigger than him. He also guarded at times Flagg, guarded Davis, guarded Hardy. What does his defensive versatility allow you guys to do in addition to having Alex as well?**

BRIAN KEEFE: It just gives us versatility, that size and length. I thought a lot of our guys did that tonight. We were able to switch and do some things. We were able to

keep the ball in front of us, and we kept the pressure on the whole game.

That's what we wanted to do, and we were able to execute that pretty well by our guys tonight.

**Q. What is it about him as a defender that at such a young part of his career he has the ability to play at a high level that he does defensively while in foul trouble to gain the trust that he has with you to keep him out there?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think this was something that he started doing last year. We started seeing him make that progress throughout the year. This guy's an intentional guy. He's gotten bigger and stronger. It just goes into the work that he's put in over the summer, but the mindset is the key for him. He embraces the challenge.

**Q. You talked about it pregame, but it also seems like he's kind of developing into one of the leaders of this group. What have you seen from him in that area?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we have a team with a bunch of that to be honest, but everybody does it in their own unique way. I think most of our roster is like this. We have guys who love to work. There's a shared standard for how we work here and how we go about things. He's obviously a great example of that returning, and he kind of sets the tone for us.

But we have a lot of guys who do that. That's why this team is a fun group to coach because they want to put the time in, and Kyshawn's right at the top there for sure.

**Q. Corey Kispert played 21 minutes tonight. At the start of the game he was vocal off the bench even when he wasn't in, yelling at the guys, telling them when to switch or when to pick up a player on defense or even recognized the special offense. How important is it to have a guy like that off the bench?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we talked about this pregame with Corey, the stuff that he brings, the intangibles, but also just

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his leadership. He's another guy who leads by example, how he plays, how he communicates. He hit a big shot late for us in the fourth quarter when we were a little bit struggling on the score.

That was the great thing about tonight. It was a total team effort. I really thought that second unit came in and really changed the game for us. We have some depth on our team, played 11. Everybody contributed. That was a good team win.

**Q. What did you think of Tre Johnson's intensity on defense?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Terrific. I think everybody's was tonight. I thought he was fighting. Fighting over screens, pressuring the ball. I think what they ended up with turnovers -- 21. I thought that was a group effort, but I thought his intensity was high.

**Q. It seemed like he helped set the tone. A lot of guys set the tone, but there was one play where he was up on a ball handler, committed a foul, and you were very happy. What did you see with that sequence?**

BRIAN KEEFE: For us, we want to pressure the ball and make teams uncomfortable where they're running their offense. If you're going to get an occasional foul while playing hard and we're not in the bonus, no problem. That was great.

He was pressuring, trying to set the tone for how we were picking up to extend their catches and stuff, but he wasn't the only one. We had a lot of guys do that tonight.

**Q. You mentioned the 21 turnovers but also the 11 steals. I imagine you obviously have the metrics a lot quicker than we would. This would have probably been a very high deflection rate night as well too for you all. What was it about the activity on that end of the floor -- and I know you guys focus on picking teams up in a specific area, but what was it that allowed you guys to turn them over and just be as active as you were on defense?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it was just the commitment of the whole group to do. There was no let off with that in any part of the game. Even when we weren't making shots early, we continued to guard, and that stuff is contagious. It was 1 through 11, all the guys we got out there were doing it. We got a turnover on the first possession.

Just trying to put as much ball pressure as we can, make them uncomfortable. But we did it for 48 minutes, and that was really the key was we were able to keep that pressure

on. There was no drop of intensity on either unit.

**Q. Two things that I heard you mention tonight is that it's a fun group to coach and everyone is working to get better. I know it's still early into the season, but how important will that be when it gets later in the season and it's a little tougher?**

BRIAN KEEFE: One thing we always talk about is how we're going to get there. The get there is the day-to-day process, enjoying the habit building, something we take very seriously as a group. I have a group that loves that stuff because that's going to get you through all the tough times. There's always tough times in every team in the league for sure. That's just part of the deal.

But how you can be consistent, how you can be resilient, I think it's just by the work and just getting used to doing that stuff on a day-to-day basis. That's what we're going to keep focusing on.

**Q. Just talk about how Cam acclimated to this team. I know it's early, but just how he's been able to adapt to this team.**

BRIAN KEEFE: He's been great. He gives us a great element of putting pressure on the rim, physicality of defense. He can see when he can attack, he can finish, and he can see the kick out passes. Just a nice presence. Really enjoying getting to know him and have him be a part of our group. I've been thrilled with the way he's been playing so far.

**Q. There was a moment where he took a stepback three and you called a timeout shortly after. It seemed you weren't particularly happy with that shot selection. What did you see? What did you not like?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We're always going to play to our standard. When we can play downhill and kick out, we're pretty tough to guard. That's everybody. Just a quick adjustment and back to play.

**Q. Second straight game where you guys have gone down early. Second straight game where you guys have come back and won. What does it say about the group?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Just playing the full 48. The game is a long game, but we stayed with it. We didn't make shots early. That's okay. That's going to happen. That's part of the game, but can we keep defending? That was the story of tonight, we defended the whole time.

**Q. Dallas seemed to have some momentum there in**

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**the fourth quarter. What was it that either stayed your team or stemmed that momentum and just shuttered it out on the road?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Had a couple of stops. Corey hit a big three. Bub hit a big three that ended up being an and one. Stayed the game down. Khris made obviously a big shot there.

It was really our defense. Teams are going to make a run in this league, and we all know that. I liked our composure down the stretch. We made a couple turnovers, but for the most part, we knew what we wanted to get to. We shared the ball, and we were able to get good shots and continue to set our defense. That's what we were trying to do at the end, and it worked out.

**Q. Bub seemed a little discouraged at points during the game, and at the end of it, Kyshawn kind of put his arm around him. What does it say on a night like Kyshawn had that he does that?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We all try to help each other out. It's being a good teammate. Bub had a terrific night. He set the tone for how we were going to play. He was terrific tonight for me.

**Q. I know it was a team effort, but how good were some of Kyshawn's closeouts and some of his multiple efforts there?**

BRIAN KEEFE: He's growing defensively, yeah. Obviously we can see a little bit of him on the perimeter and also getting some stuff at the rim. We want him to be a two-way player. That's what we want all of our guys to be. I thought he had some good moments tonight.

Like I said, it was really the whole team. It was a whole team effort tonight.

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