

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Hornets 139, Wizards 113

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought there were some really good positives in the first half. Shared the ball, 16 assists, our ball movement, how we finished the end of the second quarter. Our defense until second quarter was really good, 20 points. We learned not to foul as much. We just didn't carry over our efficiency on offense or defense in the second half, but there were some positives we can take away from this.

Obviously we've got another game on Tuesday. We'll look at the film, get better tomorrow.

44, tough, that's on me helping them get into position. They made some adjustments at half. They started putting us in some different things. Obviously we got into a little bit of foul trouble, as well. But some positives to take away, but there's some stuff to learn, and tomorrow we'll look at the film and get better.

**Q. What changed from the first to second half? What in particular did they do with their offense?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought we were doing okay a little bit. It turned a little bit. They were just getting downhill. We were really protecting the rim pretty well in the first half and scrambling around. Those turned into some easy baskets for us. They obviously made some shots in the second half. I think they were 3 for 20 maybe in the first half or 3 for 15. I think they went 11 for 16 from the three. But they were able to get into our paint, attack us a little bit, and we were scrambling a little bit more sure.

**Q. LaMelo, 38 points, triple-double. You tried a bunch of different defenders on him. Obviously without Bilal, what did you think of your perimeter defense?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought we were okay in the first half. He took a lot of shots. The free throws was the problem. I thought early -- we cleaned that up. We were trying to make him -- that's why we were able to hold him to 20 in the second, but he was able to get loose there obviously in

the second half.

**Q. Alex focused his offense in the paint early on and then kind of drifted out as things went on. What did you think about his shot selection?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought Alex was good, putting pressure on the rim. Obviously stepped out, hit a three, long two at the end of the half. I liked how Alex played tonight. Really positive.

**Q. How much did the foul trouble specifically with Kyshawn impact the personnel decisions late?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We got a deep roster. You saw I played a lot of guys in the first half. Those things are going to happen in the game. We're never going to use that as an excuse ever here for sure.

We put some different guys out there, but give credit to them. They did a good job making some adjustments and things that kind of messed up our timing offensively. I think that led to some defensive troubles also.

But that's part of the game. You've got to deal with those things. It's a good lesson for Kyshawn.

**Q. You mentioned the lack of defensive efficiency in the second half. I think 88 points allowed. What does the team have to do in future halftimes to carry over that efficiency from the first half to the second?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Those are lessons to be learned, right, what were we doing well. Sometimes you talk about why you lost a lead but they don't talk about how you got the lead. We got the lead because we were defending pretty well and we were sharing the ball. I think we got a little bit stagnant there in the second half and that bled over to our defense just a little bit. But give them credit. They upped their physicality. It'll be a good day to get better tomorrow, look at some film.

**Q. You mentioned the physicality. What else do you feel like their adjustments in the second half forced**

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**your offense to become a little bit stagnant?**

BRIAN KEEFE: They went smaller. They started switching more for sure, and we had some different rotations out there that are learning how to play with each other. Nothing abnormal, but give them credit.

**Q. You didn't still have multiple players in double figures. Is that kind of the balance you have to figure out with the offense is clicking, but then how do we maintain that for the full 48 consistently?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, the way we want to play, we want to have a lot of guys in double figures. We don't have like a dominant ball handler on our team. We want to share it. When we're playing pretty well, which you saw in the first half with 16 assists, when that ball is flying around, we're playing some good basketball. Like I said, we look forward to taking a look at the film and seeing how we can continue that to be efficient on both ends.

**Q. What did you think about how CJ played compared to the first two games?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think CJ has been great. This guy, I think, is 18th in all-time three-pointers made in NBA history, so was not concerned ever about CJ McCollum hitting shots. I liked how he played the first two games. Obviously we want him to be aggressive. He can put pressure on the defense. Never concerned about CJ.

**Q. You're still trying to stack days at this stage. When you're coming off a good win like Friday, how do you keep them from overreacting to, okay, we had a bad half tonight but we did play well Friday, but we did play poorly the second half tonight?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I think to us it's like how you build that consistency. I think that's what every team is looking for. We're no different.

I think that's what you use tomorrow for; what can we learn, what can we get better at. Let's acknowledge the things that we did well. Let's see if we can continue to do those better. Look at some of the adjustments we made when the game changed. That's part of it.

We're in the process of getting better, and I like where our team is going. I feel really good about it because I can see when we're playing well, it's hard to guard, and we defend pretty well. The consistency part, when teams make adjustments, that's part of learning. We're excited to attack that tomorrow.

**Q. When you had difficulty with the low man**

**sometimes, how do you -- I guess it's repetition and just working through it over and over and over again, but how do you keep them from kind of falling back into bad habits when they're not doing what they should be doing?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, it's like you said. We just put together -- out of our last eight quarters, we've put together six really good ones. So like there's some really good positives we're doing defensively.

Again, how do you keep that sustained? That's always the thing for every team. That's what we're going to dig into.

**Q. Kyshawn is still making his passes despite getting guarded pretty high in this game. We already knew he could shoot. How important are games like this in helping him grow as that point forward role?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Great. He obviously got in a little bit of foul trouble. This happened to him the other night, too, and I trust those guys to be out there. We made a quick little adjustment, brought Justin Champagnie, who I thought gave us great minutes early to start the quarter. I threw him in there not to mess up the rotations, and I thought he gave us some energy. Always gives us that when he's on the court. But this is great stuff, different coverages, different things, learning process for our guys. These are good things for Kyshawn. He's learning how to face different coverages, different defenses. He was obviously the focal point of their attack tonight.

But I thought he handled it well when he was on the court.

**Q. Speaking of learning, can you walk me through how you're trying to keep Tre Johnson involved in the offense? Are you more interested in what he can do as a creating guard or are you trying to get him involved off the ball more?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think a mixture of both. Obviously we're seeing his scoring ability, his ability to put pressure on the rim. We're learning him, too. The great part is this is his third game. But he's been efficient in three games. Pretty impressive for a young player. These are the positives that we can take away. How can we start using them? I'm learning him, too, and our team is learning how to play with him. But he's been terrific for three games into his career. Really good.

**Q. With giving up 36 free throws, did you see anything in terms of defensive technique that could be improved?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Like I said, the first quarter I thought we

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fouled -- I think we only gave up four foul shots in the second quarter, and that's when our defense was good. They were able to miss. We were able to get out in transition. I think you can see how we want to play. We were able to get stops and rebound. We've been rebounding pretty well. Didn't rebound well in the second half, I thought.

But when we do those things, we're pretty hard to guard. I thought Will Riley gave us a nice little stretch when he came in there at the end of that second quarter and he was out there and got some easy baskets in transition. We can show what we're capable of, but those are the things we've got to keep digging into.

**Q. In preparation going into Philly, I know you mentioned you're going to look back at the film to see maybe details, to see what you guys can do to try and hopefully get that win against Philly. Do you care to elaborate on what details you might be looking for?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Every coach will say this: We've got to look at it more. I think that's what the beauty of this stuff is that we'll all digest it; we'll go home, the coaches will watch it, we'll dig into the film, our players will too. We'll get together in practice, and this is what we're really good at. Our guys love to practice. They love to improve. So we'll look at some things we can tweak, what we can improve, and then we're going to take that into Tuesday night.

**Q. Sharife Cooper made an appearance in the fourth quarter. What type of player do you see him being for this Wizards team this season?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, he's been great. I've been really impressed with what he's brought to us. A, the high character, he's a great guy, great teammate. His ability to get us organized, ability to get into the paint and play with pace, really unselfish guy. I've been really impressed with him so far.

**Q. What did you think what you saw tonight from Bagley and Tristan?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought they were good in the first half. I thought they did a good job. But I think it was all of us in the second half. I thought they've been good.

Tristan and Marvin give us a different look. We did that the other night in Dallas, and I like kind of splitting them a little bit and seeing what different options they can give us. But the whole team, our efficiency on both ends wasn't as good in the second half.

**Q. Then with Bub, his shot hasn't fell to start the year,**

**but defensively I definitely feel like he's making an impact. What have you thought of his ball pressure?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, he's been setting the tone for us, ball pressure, picking up full, fighting over things. It's a sign that being that point of attack guy that's kind of inspiring the rest of his teammates. He's been terrific on the defensive end.

**Q. You talked about you played six out of your last eight quarters you want to play them. How exciting is that for you, and how do you keep it going?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Tomorrow, get back in the gym. We'll learn from this, grow, and then you move on, focus on to the next stuff that you can do to prepare for the next game. I like the progress that we're seeing early in the season. I'm excited to get back in the gym.

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