

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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## CJ McCollum

Media Conference



Hornets 139, Wizards 113

**Q. A young team always seems to be a fits-and-starts kind of situation, and I just wonder how you keep them seeing that stacking days will matter when you had a great performance Friday followed by a good half and followed by a terrible half?**

CJ McCOLLUM: Terrible, it's crazy. It's America. I think everybody wants success right away. But success takes time. It takes sacrifice. It takes dedication. It takes selflessly.

I think at times we have all those things, but I think in order to be good, you have to be able to do the little things consistently over time. I think we're growing towards that. I think they have the right principles.

The staff is great, they preach the right things, they work towards it every day, but it takes experience. It takes real game experience. It takes real execution. It takes some failure before you're able to succeed, and I think tonight kind of showed a tale of two halves.

Back to back and they're still getting offensive rebounds, they still scored in transition, they still pushed tempo, and I think we've just got to have more resistance, and it starts with the older guys. We have the most experience. We've been here before, so we've got to continue to lead by example, continue to do things the right way, but also continue to bring them along.

I think it's early in the season. It's a few games in. We're all missing shots we could have made. We're all a little late on rotations. There's things that are going to happen from a communication standpoint that you build over time, and I think that a week from now we'll be a lot better than we are today.

**Q. How much does winning reinforce that, or can you reinforce that in losses when you do good things out on the floor?**

CJ McCOLLUM: Obviously you want to win, but you can win games with bad habits. Talent is talent, right, so I think it's about the right types of principles. We played a well-rounded game in the previous game, right, but it was defense. Offensively we didn't shoot the ball that well. We didn't get to the free-throw line a lot. We turned the ball over. But we were so physical defensively in terms of challenging guys. Cooper was challenging, he felt contact. There were some hard fouls. It was a physical game.

I think tonight it was a free-flowing game. It was shoot threes, come off clean, floaters, offensive rebounds, a lot of dunks. It was a free-flowing game. It wasn't physical enough, and I think that was the difference. We could have won this game tonight with a better second half, but that still doesn't reinforce the fact that we've got to be better in transition. We've got to communicate. I missed a couple switches where I didn't call, I didn't communicate, I wasn't physical enough at the point of the screen. Those are things that as we get more reps, as we get more comfortable, kind of engaging in spurts, I think we'll be better.

**Q. You've been around long enough to see good first halves sustained into good second halves. That wasn't the case tonight, but being a vet, how much responsibility falls on your shoulders and on Khris's shoulders to galvanize the team and lead that efficiency in the second half?**

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, I think it's pace is timely, boxing out is timely, making an extra pass is timely, getting pressure. Obviously we can generate threes in this league the way it's played now, but it's being able to get quality threes, being able to make them is important, being able to get to the free-throw line is important, but I think from a communication standpoint just constantly talking and making sure I'm in the right spot, making sure guys are in the right spot and making sure we understand how we're going to be successful over time.

The guys are really talented. The sky's the limit for a lot of them. But as they get better at the little things, I think that's when we get better and make the jump as a team.

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**Q. What was it in the second half with the adjustment that the Hornets made that it seemed like -- I don't know if it felt like for you on the floor, but it seemed like they got you guys offensively a little bit more stagnant than what we saw in that first half?**

CJ McCOLLUM: They switched a lot. Teams are going to be switching throughout this year (indiscernible) but once they sub and they get someone a little more small and athletic, they switch, and a lot of times that stagnates the defense, and that's kind of where the NBA is now. When they switch you've got to be able to create advantages not just off the bounce but with movement. That's when that matters. That's when getting your feet there, getting into the paint, all of those things matter, and we didn't do it consistently.

Then a part of it is spacing, reading the spacing correctly. I've got to be able to deliver the pass to the corner or to the slot. I've got to know they're going to be there and then I've got to deliver it on time on target and one of the times I threw a bad pass with the left hand, but spacing matters, patience matters, decision making matters. Then if you get stops, it doesn't matter if they switch or not because you can get out and run, but we didn't get enough stops, either.

**Q. From your experience, you talk about reps. Kyshawn has two really strong games to start the season. Obviously he's going to be at the top of the scouting report for sure coming into this. Doesn't have the offensive punch that we've seen, but did have an effect on the game. What are those conversations from a veteran mindset for him to bounce back going into Tuesday against Philly?**

CJ McCOLLUM: He puts more pressure on himself than any type of pressure the outside world can put on him. He's a talented player. I think tonight he didn't have a great whistle. Foul trouble kind of messed up his aggressiveness, threw off his pattern from a rotation standpoint in and out of the game. But I just tell him it's a marathon, just keep swimming. It's a long season, can't get too high, can't get too low. There's going to be great nights, there's going to be nights where you don't play your best. But if you're consistently working and doing what you're supposed to do on a day-to-day basis, over time the results, they won't vary, you'll be consistent.

I think he's heading in that direction with his consistent approach to the game. He loves the game. He lives the game. He won't have too many of these types of nights. I think he's fouled out one other time in his career, so I don't foresee this being a problem going forward.

**Q. Where are you at in developing chemistry with your new teammates, and what can you draw from being in this position before?**

CJ McCOLLUM: I'm a work in progress. I'm trying to find a rhythm, trying to understand spacing, flow, trying to understand play calling, tendencies. (Indiscernible) is completely different when we play through games, so I missed lay-ups, missed free throws. Going into tonight I was 10 for 3 which I don't do that very often. It's just about being patient, understanding that change sometimes can be difficult, change sometimes can test you, can test your mental, can test your game. But I think I'm built for it, so I'll be fine. I'll be better each night. I'll be more consistent each night. Once we kind of find our rhythm and flow and get used to each other, the results will be more consistent for us and we'll be more competitive.

**Q. You talked about the changes they made on defense in the second half. What about the changes they made on offense?**

CJ McCOLLUM: I think the offense was more of the same. They tried to find matchups they liked. They slipped out of a lot of pick-and-rolls. Obviously Ball is a very talented player, shoots with range, he's got the floater, he's got the pass. He's like 6'7" so he can see over the defenses.

When they got their matchups they hit the ball in the middle a lot in the pocket and the front rotations -- I was late on one and that was on me, and then the other ones we were able to rotate over more and get to the corner. So it was kind of like pick your poison. There's things that we'll work on tomorrow. It's not getting any easier. We've got Maxey coming in, you've got the young kid who's a monster, and then Embiid who's a problem. It doesn't get any easier, and I think I think we've got OKC, so welcome to the NBA.

**Q. New locker room today, first time you guys got to use it. What did you think and how did it compare to the other one?**

CJ McCOLLUM: It's beautiful. It's the most beautiful locker room I've ever been in. I asked all the young guys, do you know how lucky and fortunate you are to be in a situation like this at 20 years old? When I was 20 I was thinking how I could manage subtraction at Lehigh University.

They've done a great job. Ownership is all in on developing. They're all in on providing resources, and you can tell they care. I think that's the biggest thing; they care through not just their words but also their effort and their actions.

**Q. What's the conversation you have with Bub? He struggled offensively tonight, but defensively he showed a lot of strength where it's not going one way but it's going the other way? What are some of the conversations you're going to have with him?**

CJ McCOLLUM: I think you can't let making or missing shots dictate your attitude. I could be 1 for 10, but how I prepare, how I communicate, how I fail has to be consistent. If you guarantee you should be able to tell I've got 30 years (indiscernible) growing towards that, and I think for him, it's impacting the game. Change the pace, get in the paint, make plays, take the pull-up when it's there, get your kick-out when it's not, be active defensively, finish on the basket. Everything will continue to kind of figure itself out. It's early in the season, and I think you can't get too caught up in makes and misses this early. The law of averages, it always shows up when it's supposed to at the end.

**Q. Do you have a specific moment you remember when you encountered a situation as a young player?**

CJ McCOLLUM: I was not fortunate enough to be playing meaningful minutes my second year. I was an afterthought. I was in that (indiscernible) of 15. If we're blowing up, I may get in. If not, I was a stay-ready guy. I played in stay-ready games. Those were my games. My path was different. He played in all 82, 30 minutes a game, which is incredible and impressive in its own right. The developmental curve for him is probably a lot faster than it was for me because I wasn't playing. I was just 2-on-2, 3-on-3, and our staff wasn't as good as what they have here, the guys we're playing against now.

I think he's going to be fine. Two weeks from now we won't be having these conversations.

**Q. How do you feel like Tre has adjusted to the NBA game so far?**

CJ McCOLLUM: I think he's been great. I think he's a gamer. I think he enjoys playing in games. Obviously he's fearless, got quick release, knows how to find shots. I think his poise is at a high level, and his work ethic is really impressive, especially for 19, 20 years old. He's always in the gym, takes care of his body, which is rare for a lot of the young guys who kind of neglect the body early and then double back late. So I think he's got the makings to be a really talented player for a long time.

**Q. You've joined teams as a young guy and you've joined teams as an experienced vet. How do you encourage everyone holding each other accountable? You mentioned communication and there were some**

**mistakes, and you've been all over the range of the clouds, so how do you make sure when you're talking to players, they're talking back to you?**

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, I think it's early on, but if I see something I say something, but sometimes you've got to let them correct it on their own. I've got two kids at home; I'm not here to parent anybody. I'm here to help. I'm here to develop guys and be a part of the process. I also continue to try to play at a high level. But I'm not a preacher, so I'm not going to preach. When I see something that needs to be corrected, I'll say it. Sometimes they've got to figure it out on their own. Sometimes I've got to step in and help.

But I think it's a fine line and a fine balance to where you've got to pick and choose your moments. Too much of anything can be bad, so sometimes just got to let it ride and double back the next day, or if you're watching film on the plane, hey, this is what I see, this is how I think you're looking better, and it starts to -- I'm going to make shots, I'm going to miss shots, but what's the intentionality of how you're playing. You're playing to win. That's what's important. Making winning plays. It comes down to making winning plays. You're going to make shots, you're going to miss shots, but what is your intention out there. What's the forest? Are you giving back? Are you making the extra pass? Are you getting in the paint? What type of impact are you making in the game because the scouts are watching everything. They don't see the box score, but the real scouts are breaking down to film to see is this a makeable shot, did he make the right play when he got to the paint, is he in the right spots defensively consistently. That's what teams are going to want, and I see all the time -- there's not a lot of lifers in this league. There's only a couple guys that play on one team forever. You're being evaluated consistently and constantly by this organization and others. So you want to be able to provide good results and good feedback so when the time comes, you have other opportunities that are going to be there for you or you'll stay because you're one that they needed.

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