

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Celtics 136, Wizards 107

BRIAN KEEFE: It's on me to get us to play to a better standard. I thought we had some really good moments obviously to start the game, but we've got to find our consistency at a higher level.

For three quarters they got us for sure. That's on me to help us get better. We've got a home stand coming up, got a Cup game on Friday. We're excited about that. Some positives to take away, but we've got to do this more consistently what we're doing. Starting the game in the right mindset, sharing defense, and then got to give them some credit how they played. They made some tough shots, and I think that affected our momentum, our energy level.

But we've got to get back to work. I'm looking forward to the Cup game on Friday.

Q. This is a couple games in a row where it seems like there's been a little bit of a drop-off at points. What did you notice on the bench with the team's morale during the game?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think they got -- we got hit a little bit. They hit some shots. The momentum got going for sure for them. I thought our energy dropped.

But then we tried to do the right things in the third and fourth quarters, but you've got to give them credit; they made some tough shots and with the momentum kind of got going.

But I liked the group that came in. Malaki, it shows you how important it is to stay ready in this league. He did a great job coming in tonight. I thought that was really positive for our team.

Q. When you talk about getting your team to play to a better standard, is that about energy, execution --

BRIAN KEEFE: It's just about stacking habits. That's the most important thing for us is to stack good days, good habits. We're stacking good quarters, sometimes good halves, sometimes three quarters. We've got to get better for more consistent of the 48 minutes, and that's on me to do and that's my responsibility.

Q. Any update on Bilal's status? When did the injury happen?

BRIAN KEEFE: I'm not sure when it happened, just some lower left leg soreness. That's all I have right now.

Q. I know in a game like this, the positives, you want to try and make them outweigh the negatives, but Alex did have his seventh straight game recorded two or more blocks. What do you see from his activity that he continues to grow in that aspect when it comes to his defense?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, Alex has been great. Had a great start to the season, but tonight is about the team. We're thrilled that Alex is playing better, but we've got to be better as a group. He's part of that, too, and that's on all of us.

Q. It seemed like J.B. and Payton were able to not just affect the game from the three-point shooting but they were able to hit it on three levels. Was it just them simply finding the cracks within the shell and trying to take advantage of that and that kind of led to the momentum going in their favor?

BRIAN KEEFE: They hit some tough non-paint two contested pull-ups for sure. That led to some of it because we actually were on them. Some of them ended up being fouls; some of them I didn't always agree with. That led to some of the momentum change.

Those guys have been doing it at a high level for a long time. They got their team going there in that second quarter, got their energy going. We didn't respond well to it.

Q. When a team has that three-point shooting the way



they did tonight, especially in that third quarter, and the momentum swings in their home arena, how do you try to regroup the guys, refocus their mindset and still continue to put in the work on the things you want to work on and try to get them to forget whatever the scoreboard says?

BRIAN KEEFE: We play possession by possession. This is what this league is about. Every team goes on a run. We were up big, they made a run. They actually made a run really to start the second quarter; that's where it started. I actually thought we kind of staved it off. I thought Corey and CJ did a great stabilizing us. But we've got to do this more consistently. That's the biggest thing. We've got to learn from this.

Q. There was that five-man unit in the fourth quarter. It was Tre, Malaki, Will, Tristan and AJ. They seemed to bring some really nice energy, forcing Coach Mazzulla to call back-to-back time-outs. I know it's just a small stretch, but how can that give you some confidence and give them some confidence that we're doing the right things, we forced a championship coach to call time-outs because he did not like what we were doing to his defense?

BRIAN KEEFE: We talked about that. We're going to play out the whole game when we coach the whole game; those guys deserve that. They've put the time in. I thought that group was good. I was really pleased when they came in the game that they changed the game in a positive way.

Q. What was your message to the team after the game? Was it a little bit more critical than it has been over the first seven games?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's always get back to what our standard is. We know what we're capable of. When we're in some tough moments, we're not going to run from that. We're going to identify where the issues are and where we can get better. But stick together and let's go get this home stand when we come home.

Q. CJ has struggled to shoot the ball early in the year. What have you seen from him on offense? Is it just about getting adjusted to what you guys are doing?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I think it's just getting adjusted to the new team. This is a new environment for him. I have no concerns about CJ McCollum. This guy has been doing this for a very long time.

But it's my responsibility to help continue to help him get comfortable and put him in the right spots to be successful. But I thought even though he didn't shoot the ball well

tonight, in that second quarter, him and Corey helped us get back into playing a good flow of basketball.

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