

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

Friday, December 26, 2025

Washington, DC, USA

## Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Wizards 138, Raptors 117

### Q. What did you think the story of that game was?

BRIAN KEEFE: Fourth quarter. I thought we set the tone early defensively, but 17 points in the fourth. Big credit to the guys who started, Bub, Tre, Will Riley, J.C., Marvin. They went on a quick roll run, made some good defensive plays, and I thought that set the tone for the rest of the quarter. But that was the difference. We really guarded in the fourth.

### Q. As well as you defended in the fourth, the whole game long your half-court offense was excellent, probably at an elite level by any stretch. Why was it so successful, and what did you see there?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought our ball movement, our ability to touch the paint. I think when we have 60-something in the paint, our ability to touch the paint, either for lay-ups or kick out for threes, we're in the right play. We just made the right play over and over again.

We keep trusting each other. Our team is really growing offensively with our sharing and our spacing and our passing. But the key to this game tonight was finishing with a big fourth-quarter defense.

### Q. They hit 12 threes in that first half, not necessarily a known three-point shooting team. Speaking with J.J. at halftime, he wanted to see that defense improve. They only made two in the second half. What shifted with the defensive mindset, especially on the perimeter?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought we lost guys a little bit on some scramble possessions in the first half. They only took 12, also, in the second half. I think that was a big key. We were able to get out, close to shooters, contest, but the volume was down, also, so we made some little mistakes where we just lost a couple guys on some communication things, whether a loose ball or an offensive rebound, but

we cleaned that all up in the second half.

### Q. They were also a heavy paint production team. You held them under their season average. A lot of it also seemed to be with Brandon Ingram in the mid-range and what he was able to do. What was it defensively that the guys were able to -- to your point in the pregame, when things started scrambling they were able to lock in and figure out what the solutions were?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think that group set the tone to start the fourth was huge, and then we made some substitutions, guys came in, and they just continued to do what we were doing the whole quarter. That's just focusing on what you can control, possession by possession, communication on defense and physicality, and then we held them off the boards, too. We were finishing possessions, and then that extended because those rebounds turned into some transition baskets or easy baskets in our secondary break. But it all started with the D in the fourth.

### Q. How were you able to hold Barnes in check tonight?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we did it as a group. We tried to show him bodies. Obviously a super talented player. Just tried to make it crowded. You don't stop those guys, you just try to make life as difficult as you can, and I think we tried to really be compact with our shell and take care of the paint. Obviously that was evident with the numbers. But those guys are a load.

### Q. Obviously on offense one of the best games of the season. Was that guys finding good looks or just hitting their shots in general?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's always a little mixture. Mostly I liked our process, regardless if we missed the shots or not. The process was right. We were sharing it. We were moving it. We were hitting the open man. Sometimes the shots go in. That's great.

But the process is the most important thing for us. We were making the right play over and over again, just like

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making singles, making the simple play, making the right read, and when the shots went in, it built our confidence.

**Q. Games like this where you win in the trenches, where you win the rebounding battle and you win the points in the paint battle and you spread the wealth on offense, is this the type of win specifically that you want all your wins to be like because it starts in the paint?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, we want to grow our team. We want to keep getting better. These are the things we've been focused on. We wanted to make a big point defensively, specifically taking care of the paint tonight. I thought we did that. Our passing, like seeing the open man, hitting the roller or skipping it to the weak side, that stuff is growing.

So for us, it's always about the process. Those were going to lead to the wins we believe.

Tonight we trusted that. We trusted both ends, on the defensive side and the offensive side. That was the key.

**Q. Can you speak to Bub building his consistency? He struggled a little bit to start the season and then he had one good game and he's turned that into five or six really good games in a row.**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I thought he was a great spark in that fourth. He was out there with that group controlling the offense. He made a couple threes, but he also made some really good kick-outs. You probably remember the one he threw to Kyshawn in transition. Just making real simple plays, being really efficient out there right now.

**Q. Bilal also seemed to be in a groove tonight. What did you see about the way he approached this one?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I loved his activity to start the game, setting the tone defensively. We really started really well the first five, six, seven minutes of the game, and I thought it was him setting the tone, guarding best player, which we want him to do, and then he found his rhythm attacking the rim and just making the simple play.

When he gets on the rim like that and grabs offensive rebounds, it's things like that. That's the versatility that we've missed with him not being in the lineup. I thought he was really terrific tonight, played a great all-around game.

**Q. And the lineup that you guys used to end the third and start the fourth, Justin Champagnie was a pretty steady part of that. As the season has gone on, the jumper sort of come and went, but now that he shot**

**two for two from three today, how has it been as far as the lineup versatility goes to have a play finisher alongside those --**

BRIAN KEEFE: That's what he does. He shot really well last year. He's going to shoot well this year, plus all the intangible things he does with the defense, getting his hands on balls, and we all know about the cutting and the offensive rebounding. The shot we knew was coming.

**Q. Alex, three blocks. They shot 22 for 40 from the paint. What did you see as far as your ability to protect the rim?**

BRIAN KEEFE: That's what Alex is here for. That's the first thing is the foundation of our defense is protect the rim. We obviously see the shot blocks, but it's also deterring shots, and I think we did a good job of that, and he's obviously the head of the snake of that for us.

We're going to keep pushing him because I think he can be really special on that end. But you saw that example tonight.

**Q. With Bub, it seems like we've seen more aggression with him taking the three-point. It seemed like he was also more aggressive with the passes he was making tonight. What have you seen from his confidence as he's started to get more minutes and play more?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We want him to be aggressive. I think he's been doing this since he's got here. He organizes well. He pushes the pace well. Now he's coming off pick-and-roll, and they've got to make a decision because of his ability to shoot. If they put two on the ball, he's making the right simple play. If not, he can pull up and hit that shot pretty well, too.

I just want him to continue to be aggressive, nothing different. Just continue to play the way he's doing all year and continue to grow.

**Q. Going back to Bub, he's adjusting well to his role, and mostly been a common guard for the most time in the NBA. What could you say about CJ, how he fills that relationship, helping him grow into that role?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think we've talked about this with CJ; he's just a great example, not just for Bub but for everybody, in how he trains, how he treats his body, how he prepares. This guy has been doing this a long time.

Khris is obviously another example of that, too. Those guys have a bunch of wisdom to pass along, and our guys

are willing learners, but it's mostly by example. Those guys live that every day. That's the best thing about our two guys, our two veterans. They're examples of how you want to take care of yourself and prepare to play this game because the game is hard to play, and those guys have been doing it for a long time and they're consistent because of their approach and their mindset.

**Q. You mentioned how you guys finished strong in the fourth quarter. How gratifying was that considering how things went in Charlotte last time out?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, you always want to keep moving forward. You can always take examples of that. It was a close game going into the fourth. Obviously we didn't like how we finished that one.

But we just played possession by possession tonight, and I think that was the key. We just focused on the things that we can control. It's not like we brought that up in the time-out or anything. It's like, what can we control here to the nine-minute time mark; that was communication, getting stops, hitting the open man. I thought that group really set the tone for the rest of the quarter. It was really impressive.

**Q. You talked about Bilal getting to the rim. It seems like he's been very aggressive on offense since he came back. Have you guys kind of implored him to be more aggressive, or where do you think that's coming from?**

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it's just him getting his rhythm. He's been a little bit in and out. We want him to be aggressive. He is one of those guys who can put pressure on the rim, and we want him to do that because then he can make passes, too. It's just a continuation of some of the things he did last year, but obviously I thought he played a really good game tonight.

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