

Washington Wizards Media Conference

Monday, December 29, 2025
Washington, DC, USA

Brian Keefe Media Conference



Suns 115

Wizards 101

Q. What did you see out of your defensive board? Do you feel all those second-chance points for the other team was the difference in the game?

BRIAN KEEFE: Absolutely. I think they had 23 second-chance points in the first half to zero for us. Got to give them credit. But we didn't have the necessary force.

I thought we made the adjustment in the second half. That's where we were able to cut the lead to four there in the fourth. I give our guys credit.

We didn't have the necessary force to deal with them on the boards. Last two games we have been. Got to get back to what we were doing well. But you can't have those type of numbers. It's impossible to win that way.

Q. What do you attribute the worst game tonight from your halfcourt offense?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it's the same thing as we had with the defensive board problem, was we were sticky. We didn't want to make the extra movement or the extra pass or the extra movement it takes to beat defenses the way they were pressuring us. We got very stagnant with that.

But give our guys some credit here, we were pretty resilient. We were not playing a very pretty game to get it to cut, but you can't dig yourself that type of hole with turnovers and rebounds. Makes it really difficult to win.

Q. When you look at the way the turnovers kind of crept in a little bit more than what we have also seen as of late from you all, what is it just the way that Phoenix was defending you guys causing those turnovers or was it things that were careless upon your part?

BRIAN KEEFE: Got to give them a little credit, they were physical. We didn't combat that with good ball movement or getting into our stuff quickly or making the quick swing-swing. We tried to beat them on the first pass.

That's what they do, they do a good job of playing in the gaps, getting their hands in there. We fed right into that. That led to the turnovers.

We're still learning and growing. We're not where we want to be. These are good lessons we have. But that's what good teams do, they up the physicality. That bothered us. We didn't have the necessary pace with our offense to combat that tonight.

Q. With no Khris and no Kyshawn, you kept Tre in the starting lineup, went with Jamir. What was the decision instead of maybe...

BRIAN KEEFE: We've done that with Jamir a couple times. We want to put him out here. Thought he was good. Actually hit a couple threes in the first half.

Want to see his physicality defensively when we can put him with Alex and Bilal, see what he can do defensively with those lineups.

I thought he was good. He's shown good minutes every time we put him out there. That was the reason for that. I think he actually had some really bright spots tonight.

Q. Other than something simply being a good shooter, what does Tre do offensively to enable him to get hot?

BRIAN KEEFE: He knows how to get open. He knows where to find the space. He knows how to move without the ball. You can obviously make shots, but you have to find shots. It's hard getting up shots in the NBA. He has a knack for finding the right space, when to burst, when to come off, when to set up guys.

This is obviously something he's been doing his whole life. His points helped carry us tonight. He helped keep us in the game. Credit to him.

Q. What have you seen from Malaki Branham with the increased minutes he's been getting lately?

BRIAN KEEFE: I like how he plays. Gives us defensive pressure. Another ball handler out there. Ability to attack the paint and make plays. Given us really good minutes and really pleased with him when he's gotten his opportunity here lately.

Q. You were keying in on stopping them from the three-point line. How were they able to break through?

BRIAN KEEFE: Some were second chance. Some were kick-out threes. We closed short a few times. We didn't have the necessary ball pressure. They were sinking that ball around too much. Again, a little bit of a physicality part in all areas was an issue tonight.

But give them credit, they swung the ball, moved the ball well tonight.

Q. You mentioned Tre's ability to get the shot up. The release seems unusually quick. How unique is his ability in that regard?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's his ability to do the work before the ball even gets there. That's the amazing part. You don't just shoot it quickly. He gets his feet set quick. He knows how to move without it, get his balance from long distance. Those are really hard things to do.

This is a guy that put obviously a tremendous amount of time in working on that stuff. That's a very unique skill he has for someone his age. It's very impressive.

Q. You talk about the long distance with Tre. As teams start to respect him a little bit more, what are the downstream effects that can have?

BRIAN KEEFE: I don't think there's any. You're going to have to guard him. Like, he brings (indiscernible) to the court. He's already shown that. Teams are coming up with coverages. They know when he's in the game. They're trying to take stuff away.

You don't see that that might lead to a (indiscernible) for Marvin or Alex or a kick-out three for someone else. Corey does the same thing when he's on the court. Those guys bring so much value.

You have to guard them as soon as they step over halfcourt. He's learning how to function with our offense. He's going to drive our offense great just by being on the court and his movement. We're already seeing that. This

is very early in his career. It's pretty impressive.

Q. Did you notice any fatigue with Alex playing in the second half?

BRIAN KEEFE: Just didn't have his best game tonight. No, I did not, though.

Q. Going back to Tre for a second. The work that you have to do before the ball even gets to you, how much of that is the physical part of moving and how much is reading and reacting to what you're seeing the defense do?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's a lot of the reading and reacting obviously. He's been doing this his whole life. He's been guarded like this his whole life. He's used to this. He's seen every coverage he probably saw last year at Texas.

But these are big guys in the NBA. He's still doing it. That's impressive. This is not easy. Like I said, they got some really good defenders on that team. He was still able to get those shots off.

Just shows you how much he's grown and functioning with how we play. This is just the early part of his career. We're really lucky to have him.

Q. (No microphone.)

BRIAN KEEFE: We're always going to coach these guys. You can probably hear my voice out there sometimes, for sure.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports