

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Justin Champagnie Media Conference



Wizards 119, Nets 99

Q. 20 points off the bench, a season high. What were you seeing tonight that you were able to have that kind of offense?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Just cutting to the basket, trying to find loose balls, and my teammates were kicking the ball out for three, and knocked two down tonight. Big thanks to my teammates to keep putting confidence in me and going out there and playing my game and letting it flow.

Q. We talk about what you do off the ball all the time, but when you can have nights like this offensively, how much do you think that opens up the entire rest of the offense?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I think obviously the defense will have to guard me if they know I've got it going, and it kind of leads to Bub, AJ, Will, whoever is in the game to have a game on their own. I think it was just a good night. Try to just build off of it and keep doing the little things.

Q. How aware are you of your stats? Do you know that that's your first 20-point game this season?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Yeah.

Q. Do you know it's your sixth in your career?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Well, no, not the sixth in my career, but I know it's my first one of the year.

Q. When you look at how hard you play, do the points matter to you or is it just how can I impact the game?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: No, I think I got into that when I was younger when I first got to the league. Like scoring is cool but it's about how you show up. Sometimes things I do don't show up on the stat sheet but you kind of see it on the floor. So trying to just bank on that and bank on trying to be a winning player, and then obviously offense, it

comes and it goes. Can't be too heavy on it. But it definitely feels good to go out there and score a few points to remind myself I still got it a little bit.

But yeah, I try to just make sure that I'm focused on the little things that I can do, rebounding, passing, screen-and-roll, kind of get my teammates open, and from there it's just letting the game flow.

Q. I asked it originally to get to this question because I kind of knew the way you were going to go with your answer, but that's not a typical mindset that most NBA players have. They want to get the points. Did you have a vet early on, especially with kind of how up and down your career had started that told you, you might be able to score, but if you can do this, this and this, you're going to stick on a roster, and it kind of stuck with you?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: When I was a rookie I had Pascal and Fred VanVleet as my vets, so Pascal always told me go rebound and run. You might not touch it for 20 plays, but when you do, be ready to knock down, be ready to play, so it kind of stuck with me. Rebound and do the little things and the game will reward you. I believe in the basketball gods do the right things and it will come back to you, but that's been my mindset since I got to the league is just how can I affect the game, how can I get myself on the court and then from there just figure it out.

Q. You guys have won four out of your last five. How do you go about talking to the young guys and saying kind of keep doing what you're doing or you can still improve in some areas?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I think there's always room for improvement no matter how well we play. Obviously we try to keep focused on the defensive end of the basketball and try to bring our physicality for that into the ball, and I think from there it just opens up the game.

I think as a group and as a unit we all know that's what's truly helping us out right now is that defensive energy, so I think just keep going into games thinking, let's throw the

first punch on defense, be physical and then get out and play.

Q. What have you learned the most from BK so far?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: That defense wins games. If you don't come to play on defense, then most of it won't happen.

Q. How much of that defensive energy leads to offense for you and for the team in general?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Oh, I love it. I think for me specifically when I get a stop or I get a defensive rebound or whatever, being able to kick it ahead to Bilal, Bub, Will, AJ, CJ, whoever is there, just kind of get running within transition, that opens up everybody's game offensively. Being able to get downhill, drive, make the extra pass, and then just play from there, yeah, I think it's helping a lot.

Q. You shot 9 of 12 from the field, 2 of 3 from three. That's impressive efficiency. Do you know when you go into games like this in pregame warmups when you're knocking down every shot or when you get out there, man, this is going to be a good night for me?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I try to go into every game thinking it's going to be a good night. I don't try to put too much negativity in my head before the game. Obviously I had it flowing tonight. I think just taking the ones you know you're going to make and not forcing it is what I try to do most when I get out there. Yeah, it was a good night. I had it going. Confidence is flying. It's good.

Q. You guys were plus 18 in the rebounding department, biggest advantage of the season so far. Why do you think that is?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Putting the bite on people. I think we knew that they had a big rebounder down there in Day'Ron Sharpe. Trying to get them off the glass a little bit and everybody just trying to rebound, not only leaving it up to Alex, Bags. I think Bilal got a lot today, got eight or something like that. But just going in there and just putting bites on people and going up and getting the ball.

Q. To hold them under 40 percent from the field, six threes, I believe that's a season low. What can you say about the defense?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Intensity. I think going into the game that they shoot the most threes in the league, I think, or they've gained the most or something like that, going into the game knowing that and trying to just run them off the line, try to get them inside three and then play from

there.

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