

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

## Corey Kispert Media Conference



Timberwolves 141, Wizards 115

**Q. Corey, first game back. How does it feel to be back out there? I know your last stint was a little shorter than you would have liked, but you seemed like you were moving very well, especially with the hamstring tightness?**

COREY KISPERT: Yeah, no, felt really good. The hamstring was not an issue. I never dealt with anything like that before in my career, and I'm really glad we took the time to get it right. Was moving good today. I've only played once in the last six weeks, so it felt like I was a little bit outside of my own body trying to find a rhythm, but the shots were falling and shot it pretty good today. Just the team collective effort was disappointing on our end for sure.

**Q. Because the injuries happened so quickly together, did this feel like just an extended time that was mentally a little bit tougher than you might have thought going into it knowing that it was -- you just got back and then this pops up?**

COREY KISPERT: Yeah, absolutely. Spent a month out with my thumb and was really ready to go playing in Charlotte, and just some of the freak stuff that you can't account for in basketball. Obviously didn't want it, wasn't expecting it, and yeah, just kind of had to take my medicine and sit on the sidelines a little bit longer.

The overwhelming feeling tonight is I'm really happy I made it through the game, and I'm really happy I'm back, too.

**Q. BK mentioned tonight obviously not playing the way you wanted to, especially on the defensive end. He mentioned it's one of those ones where you look yourselves in the mirror and hold yourselves accountable. What does that look like from a player standpoint?**

COREY KISPERT: Well, yes, BK is right. Looking in the

mirror, taking accountability, playing harder. We didn't really make Minnesota do anything special tonight. We just kind of were there and provided no resistance.

But thankfully over the course of the last 15 games or so, we've proven that this isn't who we are, so it feels like more of a fluke than a bad trend. So we're really optimistic, and we're excited to get back out there and change the narrative and flip the script.

This isn't who we are. This isn't the way we want to play. This isn't the way we have been playing. Really confident that we'll come back out in two days' time and make a better effort.

**Q. Over the last two weeks Tre Johnson has played really well, has a lot of range to his shot. What do you think about his game and his upside as a player?**

COREY KISPERT: Yeah, unbelievable range, unbelievable confidence for a guy his age. I just marvel how kids - and I can say that now - kids that come into the NBA at their age, how ready they are to play. I was a bum at 19. I definitely wasn't ready to play in the NBA at that point. It just marvels me over and over again.

Tre has a ton of runway ahead of him, a ton of work to do. But what he's done and the confidence he's showed and the way he can shoot the ball especially. That's the main thing in the NBA today is you've got to have a really elite skill, and that's obvious what Tre's is.

If he continues to work hard and continues to put the work in and do the right thing, he could be very good very quickly, just with that skill alone to play off of.

**Q. You mentioned the team has been playing a lot better lately. What has stood out to you as a big positive or something you've been encouraged by in particular?**

COREY KISPERT: Yeah, well, first of all, it feels like we've just kind of settled into the season. The first 20 or 25 games of the NBA season everyone is kind of feeling each

other out across the league, within your own team, and it takes a while to kind of settle into who you are. We finally clarified what we were trying to do and what we wanted to play like. We took the best of the first 25 games or so and really focused on those things.

When we play fast, we share the ball, we rebound on offense and defense, and when we cause havoc on defense, those things lead to better basketball. That's what we really focused on over the last 10 games. When we kind of clarified our focus to three or four things rather than trying to do everything, it turned out really well for us.

We've got to get back to that recipe in a couple days.

**Q. Corey, was there any advice you gave the young guys that you saw them follow over the last 10 games before this one?**

COREY KISPERS: Yeah, they are unbelievably confident, and I tend to give advice to guys who feel like they're kind of deer in the headlights or not really sure of what they're doing. These guys are ready to play and play hard right now.

A lot of just little stuff. That's all they need. How to move off the ball, when to cut, when to space, how to get guys' hands off of you. When you're an elite shooter, people are very close to you all the time. It's like Velcro. So you've got to create that space to free up your game. Little stuff like that. It's not anything revolutionary or anything mindblowing.

These guys have a really good coaching staff, really good support systems, and I just try to be part of that.

**Q. Kind of following up on that, what is the value of having guys like Khris and C.J., the stuff they can say and how they go about their business to trickle down to the rest of the roster?**

COREY KISPERS: Yeah, it's probably the most important part of the phase of where we're at, other than developing the talent that we have. It's having guys that have been there and done that before, that not only are giving advice, but they're not just advice givers, like they're players, and they play really at a high level still. To have that kind of unique combination of guys like Khris and C.J. who can still play at a very high level and also be mentors is a really unique blend because a lot of times on teams like this you see older guys who don't play much anymore kind of be those advice guys but kind of having generals on the floor that can run the team and run the show and be helpful to the younger guys is a really special blend for a rebuilding team.