

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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CJ McCollum

Media Conference



Timberwolves 141, Wizards 115

Q. Can you just speak to how much Rudy Gobert impacts the game, even if he doesn't score very much?

CJ McCOLLUM: What did he have, 18? I mean, he's very tall, obviously protects the basket really well, good timing. Obviously a good rebounder. Makes the game very difficult. You have to be aware of where he's at all times. It's hard to crack back on him when he drives or Daniels drives or anybody drives. It's hard to crack back because he's just so tall.

Q. Alex didn't have as good of a game tonight as he's had recently, partially because of Rudy Gobert, so he can obviously use this as a learning experience. When you were in your second and third year in the NBA and you maybe didn't have as good of a game, what kind of lessons would you take from those games going up against older players at your same position?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, my second year I didn't play a lot. I was getting DNPs. It was just about watching film. Watching the film, figuring out how you can be better, figuring out where you can be more aggressive, where you can maybe hustle a little bit more on certain plays, and I think we always look at the shooting, the box score, field goals made and stuff like that. But it's the little impactful plays that I think make the difference. Were you in the right spots, were you making the calls defensively, were you in the drop, were you at the level when you should have been at the level. Those are the things that team feeds off of.

You're going to make and miss shots throughout the season. It's a long season. That's the way it goes. But it's about doing the little details well and kind of stacking those days. But you're going to have nights like this, and you just watch the film and move forward.

Q. The little things is something you guys have been focusing on a lot, especially as of late with the stretch

you guys have been playing in. When you have a night like tonight, and Corey mentioned something that I thought was very interesting, looking at this as more of a fluke type of thing and not the trend moving forward with how you all plays. Does it feel like that for you as well as the rest of the locker room, and how do you guys look at the film and see what can be worked on and then move forward and kind of put this behind you?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, we didn't have great energy tonight. We didn't protect the basket. There was no real resistance. There was a lot of things that we did poorly tonight that hasn't been consistently who we've been from a basketball standpoint, so I think it's watching the film and understanding that we took a step back tonight, but we can take two steps forward in our next game and that there's a lot of games to be played, back to backs. We haven't been able to practice a lot. Those types of things impact performance sometimes, so we've got to get back to the drawing board, get back to the basics tomorrow and stack some more good days heading into four in five nights or whatever it is.

Q. Entering tonight, this was the franchise's probably best stretch of basketball, at least since last year. What did you think accounted for that improvement?

CJ McCOLLUM: I think guys are just understanding what it takes just to stay in a certain level of play throughout a game. There's going to be lulls. There's going to be times where teams go on a run, but being able to refocus the energy, refocus playing style and getting back to what Coach wants to execute I think is the difference. Obviously guys are getting more comfortable, playing better defensively, passing the ball a little bit better, causing deflections, getting out running in transition. Those things make the game easier.

But I think we're just stacking and sustaining longer levels of high-level play and activity.

Q. A second straight game with 19 turnovers for you guys, 37 in the last seven quarters. What is the fix for



that going into the next game?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, just be more decisive, better spacing. Sometimes just get off the ball. We're trying to make something happen, especially when we get down, and sometimes the easiest play is the next play.

Q. What do you think makes Ant so good, and how do you think you can go about not stopping a player like that but just throw him off his game a little bit?

CJ McCOLLUM: How many points does he average?

Q. Almost 30 per night.

CJ McCOLLUM: So you're not stopping him. He's getting 30 a night. Bad night is 28, right? I think it's just about making it difficult, making him shoot tough twos. He's going to get his threes off. He's going to get to the rim. Tonight he scored on three levels like he's done all year, and he got five over his average, or four over his average tonight.

Q. Adding on to that, just making any player's life difficult, like with Rudy Gobert, is there any advice that you give or have been giving to the bigs that you've seen trying to make his game a little difficult, especially with the offensive rebounding?

CJ McCOLLUM: Yeah, I think for Rudy, it's just about being patient, trying to pull him away from the basket at times. We've had success doing that a lot. He's big. He's going to protect the rim. He's got great timing. He's a second jumper. He's going to get rebounds, and he's going to take advantage of all missed shots around the basket and late lob plays. Sometimes we just try to pull him away from the basket.

But as you learn and grow and evolve, it gets easier to play against those types of players, but you've got to have some of these types of nights.

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