

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Nuggets 107, Wizards 97

Q. What were they able to do to make things difficult for you guys offensively?

BRIAN KEEFE: Actually, I liked how -- we did a lot of things that I liked what we did. I thought we got good shots. I liked our ball movement. Sometimes the ball just doesn't go in, and that's okay. But what I was really happy with our guys is we continued to do the next right thing, continued to make the right play, continued to defend. We didn't let the non-shot making affect our energy, and that kept us in the game.

Those are great lessons. Sometimes the ball doesn't go in, but we kept doing the right thing offensively. They were in the paint all night, and we were just kicking it out to shooters. Sometimes they don't go in, but we trusted what we were doing the whole game, and I was really pleased with that.

Q. Got an extended look at some guys like Will and Jamir. What stood out to you about them?

BRIAN KEEFE: I thought they were great. I thought they played their roles really well. You obviously saw some of Will's shot making and creation. He's got a pretty high level of that.

Then you saw what Jamir can do defensively, and obviously Anthony Gill, who hasn't been in the rotation much at all, came in and gave us a really positive boost. I thought the bench was really terrific. They held down the fort and were actually a positive when they were out there. It was a great job by those guys.

Q. Kyshawn has had a few of these games where he has a really strong first half and a quiet second or the other way around. Is that the thing you guys are talking about, stringing together good halves, or is it just growing pains or something?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think he played well the whole game, 12 rebounds, seven assists. I don't consider just making shots or missing shots part of, like, playing great. You're going to have nights like that, like I just said; can you continue to do other things. Obviously he did. The rebounding, the passing. Obviously we're playing through him more and more, and there's always a learning curve with those things. But I liked how he played tonight. He did the right thing.

Q. Michael Winger was asked earlier about the kind of job you're doing, and he said good job and stuff. What are the checkpoints you feel like you're trying to hit to make sure you're doing right by the team?

BRIAN KEEFE: Our habits are our number one thing, and we're just trying to build the right habits every day, and those are the things we think are going to lead us to be a consistent winner, and we're just stacking those days.

That's my role as a coach, to instill that every day within our building, and when we travel, when we play games, in every little environment that we have with our team, that doesn't change. We just keep going forward with that.

Q. Bub had 13 three-point attempts tonight. Was that by design or just kind of how the game was going?

BRIAN KEEFE: A little bit of the flow, but we want Bub to be aggressive. Bub is a mid-40s three-point shooter, so the fact that he's able to get that, that's a tribute to him, but sometimes it's hard to get up that type of volume. We wanted to get into the paint and kick out for more threes. Like I said, some of those didn't go in tonight, but we continued to make the right play. His shots were the right shots.

Q. This is an odd question, but your game has been moved up by six hours for Saturday. I just wondered how that impacts everything that you do between now and Saturday.

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, that's part of it, right. We all have things that happen that are out of our control in terms of



weather and stuff like that. Go play the game. It's exciting to us; that's a challenge for us. We're coming off a long trip where we had to come back and play the Clippers, play this, now hit the road again and play an early game. We talked about already, those are great challenges. We never use that as an excuse. That's the game on the schedule. Time moves up, great, let's go play. So we're excited about that.

Q. Is the team's defense where you would like it to be overall at this point in the season?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I can see it really growing in the last three games for sure. Obviously we made a move here about a week and a half ago, and I think it took us a couple games to get adjusted, and that's normal. But I really like how we're playing defensively. The defense kept us in the game, and that's what you have to do when things aren't always going your way, and we talked about that in the time-outs. The guys kept guarding, and that gives you a chance to win every night, and that's the most important thing for us going forward.

Q. You talk a lot about the process, whether it's in game or in practice, and I know shots weren't necessarily falling the way you guys wanted them to, but were you getting the looks from the passing and the kicking out that you wanted? I look at the assists, and it seems like it's a low assist number for you guys from what you're used to seeing, but that also coincides with shots falling, but were the guys making the right passes that you've wanted them to be making that you've been working on recently?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, for sure. Our scoring passes, which is something we look at, was at where we wanted, was in the right -- we had a lot of catch-and-shoot threes, which we're trying to get a little better at. I think we had 24 in the first half. So those things matter to us. Sometimes they just go in.

But to me, the key is we kept defending, and that's great growth for our young team who's learning how to establish themselves in the league. They didn't shoot the ball well, either, early in the game. You're going to have games like that. Can you keep doing the right thing, can you keep trusting your teammates, can you keep communicating on defense. I thought we did that tonight, and I was really pleased with that.

Q. We're a bit more than halfway through the season. What do you think of Alex's season, especially between his first season and this season? How did he improve?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I think you're seeing a lot of growth from him, obviously. His ability to put pressure on the rim offensively has grown, and then you see what he does defensively protecting the rim. You saw the passing tonight. Obviously he just does a little bit of everything. He's just continuing to grow. We're not going to put a ceiling on him. We've still got another 39, 40 games left. He's going to continue to grow because of the work he's put in over the summer and the work he's continuing to do every day. We've been very pleased with his development.

Q. How is Bilal, and when might we see him back?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, he's just day-to-day right now. He's doing a little bit more on the court and stuff. So just day-to-day.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about how those multiple injuries have an impact on the way he's evolving as a player and what you were expecting out of him this season compared to what will depend basically?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I thought he had a great stretch before this little stretch here. The defense was as good as anybody in the lead according to our metrics in disrupting the game, guarding the best players on the other team, him attacking downhill, getting to the free-throw line. I think his development is on the right course. He'll be back soon.

Q. How do you think Alex did against Valanciunas on both ends?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, I thought he did pretty good. He got a couple shots that I thought they didn't give him credit for a couple blocks, fronted the post, took away his easy catches. I thought he battled him well.

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