

Washington Wizards Media Conference

Saturday, January 24, 2026
Washington, DC, USA

Coach Brian Keefe Media Conference



Hornets 119, Wizards 115

BRIAN KEEFE: Loved our resiliency tonight. Loved our fight. We were battling to get some of the things -- we had our largest free throw disparity of the season that we tied tonight. We shot the same amount of shots in the paint that they did, and sometimes you've got to battle through those things. But that wasn't right.

But loved the group of Malaki and Sharife who have not been in the rotation, Anthony Gill, obviously JC and Jamir, I thought that group gave us a great spark at the beginning of the fourth quarter, but we played pretty much right the whole game. I loved our passing, getting in the paint, kicking out for shots, and then we made a great fight down the end. I was really proud of our guys being down short numbers and responding to the challenge.

Q. You mentioned the free throw disparity; I believe only three in that second half you guys attempted. That being said, what does it say about the guys in your locker room that they were able to fight through that and just play through it, whether the whistle was going their way or not?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, we talk about those things, that things aren't always going to go your way sometimes, and our guys stuck with it. Their toughness, their mental toughness really showed tonight, and it showed on our defense on the defensive end. I think they had 21 turnovers; is that correct? Yep, 21 turnovers. Our activity, our ball pressure, that's what allowed us to get back in the game, and then obviously our passing on the offensive end.

Q. Part of that group that you mentioned, they were part of that 16-4 run that you guys were able to cut it to five multiple times. You guys got it very close, especially in the final two minutes. With limited bodies and their availability, what does it say about your staff, as well, to be able to make sure those guys are ready to go, part of that stay-ready group so that when they

are called upon in different situations, they're prepared not only physically but knowing the scouting report, knowing what their role is, and being able to go out and execute?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, it just shows -- I always credit the players first on that stuff, but that's a well-coordinated effort by our coaching staff, our medical and performance teams. Everybody is on the same page with these things, so we have our guys ready to play when the opportunities present themselves.

But the players always deserve the most credit. But the coordination of those things, the organization, the alignment, those things show through in games like tonight when we need people to step up, and our guys always do.

Q. Jamir, third rookie this season to go for five steals off the bench. What did you like about his activity both offensively and defensively today?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, you can just see the impact he comes in as soon as he's in there. The ball pressure steps up, they start getting a little under duress. We start turning people over. It makes it contagious for our team.

We probably don't talk about what a connector he is offensively, also, playing in the short role. We saw the lob to Alex late in the game. Just being able to connect our team on both ends of the floor is really impressive for a young player.

Q. Career night for Tre. It seems like anything he was putting up, when it didn't go in, it was more of a shock than when it did go in. I know it's something you've seen from him even in the draft process, but how does he continue to evolve as a player in real time and do it on a daily basis?

BRIAN KEEFE: It's the work he puts in. This guy has been in our gym, working on his craft. He's just getting used to, accustomed to the NBA, and he's growing every game. I don't know what he finished with assists, I think he had five in the first half. It's not just the scoring. I'm

impressed with the passing. We know he can shoot and make plays for himself. But I've been really impressed with how he's involving his teammates. He draws so much gravity and so much attention, and he keeps getting others involved, which has been terrific.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

