

# Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

## Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Knicks 132, Wizards 101

**Q. Brian, what did you see at the start of tonight's game, and what did you think got it off to that start?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Didn't play to our standard. We've been playing good basketball here for a long time, and we didn't have the necessary execution on our defensive end, and then offensively, too. To a team that's coming in here, playing one of the better teams in the NBA, if you don't have your best stuff, which we did not have, that can happen. It's not who we've been. It's not who we're going to be. But that was not who we were. We were not happy with our performance. We did not hold to our standard tonight.

**Q. With that being said, a night where you have a low turnover game, as well, to only 13 -- I know it went for 16 points, but is there a lesson that can be learned in, to your point, the standard not being there but still managing in some instances to take care of the ball the way you have wanted them to?**

BRIAN KEEFE: We've been doing okay with that here recently. But it always goes back to our defense. That's always going to be the most important thing for us going forward. Our defense has been pretty good here. We've been one of the league leaders in disruptions for a long time.

We didn't impact the game with the level of force that we've been showing, and that really catapults our offense. It's always going to start with that.

**Q. Aside from the force you want to see and that type of thing, what else can you or did you notice from the defensive standpoint? Was it something with the coverages were off after what you guys had talked about at shootaround, or was it just simply the force was not there and the standard that you have was not there?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, they were able to get into the paint. They were kicking the ball out too easy. Usually those things have been a little bit more harassed here of late. We're closing out to their shooters. You've got to give them some credit; they've been playing very well.

But that's the deal in the NBA. You've got to raise up to what you're going to see, and give them credit, but we didn't have our necessary level tonight. Excited to get back at that in Detroit.

**Q. Obviously this wasn't the result that we wanted or expected, but despite this, I noticed that this margin between the points between Washington and New York from the first quarter to the fourth remained fairly consistent, despite it being a wide margin, obviously. That being said, how much of an emphasis would you want on practicing how well you start off on games, setting the tone early on in the games, because it seems that keeping up with pace, in this particular instance was less of an issue than actually starting off strong from the beginning?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, we've been starting off well. That's an important thing in the NBA for sure. You always come out and establish how you want to play. Our second unit played very well again tonight. I was really happy with those guys.

But you have to come out with that necessary level, and we didn't have that today.

**Q. That's two uncompetitive games against in the last week. I know it's a long season, but what's the alert level on that when you see that?**

BRIAN KEEFE: You know, you don't want it to happen, for sure. You want to measure yourself against the best. We're going to have another opportunity here against Detroit, another better team in our league.

But like I said, we've been playing very good basketball here for a long time. We've established a way we want to play with our ball movement and really our defense has

really been picked up. We still have a long way to go.

That's part of the necessary steps in the NBA. You've got to go through a lot of these things, and we're learning. We still are a young team. How are we going to respond to that? How are we going to play better against teams at the highest level, maybe even when we get into the next one? What can we do better? That's always how we look at these things. We don't want these things to happen. No one is happy in our locker room because we have competitors.

But it's what's your response is going forward, and that's always what we've been about here, and that's not going to change. That attitude has led us to be a pretty consistent basketball team probably since mid-December.

**Q. AJ shot 50 percent from the floor and added four assists. He's been playing with a lot of confidence as of late. Can you speak on his impact on the team?**

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, one thing you can sense with AJ is his ability to get the ball into the paint and make plays for himself and for others. He can just put pressure on the rim. I think somebody asked that question at pregame. He's getting better with that.

We talked about this is a season of opportunity, and we're learning our guys. We want to get him out there to see him in this real live action against really good teams, and I thought he did well tonight.

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