

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Coach Brian Keefe

Media Conference



Raptors 134, Wizards 125

Q. How would you assess the defense for you guys tonight, and what do you think are some areas that you guys hope to be better?

BRIAN KEEFE: First off, it wasn't bad. Pretty good to start the game. Fouling kind of kept them in the game, I thought, in the first half. Then the second half, too easy at the rim. They started putting their head down. I thought we guarded pretty well in the first half. Second half, we did not.

Q. They only had nine turnovers; why do you think they were able to protect the ball so well, and what did that do for you guys?

BRIAN KEEFE: That's one of our strengths lately is we've been forcing turnovers at a pretty good rate. Give them some credit; our shell probably wasn't tight enough the second half to make them make second or third passes which can lead to turnovers. A little bit too much direct drives. But give them credit.

Q. Before the game you talked about Will kind of figuring it out and you wanted to put the ball in his hands a little bit more. It seemed like he was your primary tonight. How do you feel he handled the pressure in his reading and reacting versus the last couple of games on that progress?

BRIAN KEEFE: Yeah, pretty good. I saw him, obviously finished down the stretch. But initiated, played pick-and-roll, made good reads. Saw Jamir do the same thing. I was really impressed with Jamir, how he was handling bringing, initiating the offense. Something we wanted to see out of him tonight. I thought pretty impressive against one of the better on-ball defenders in Sheard. Some good stuff there.

Q. Tristan had a couple of really nice passes, and I know since you've had him, you've been impressed

with his passing ability. But just at his sheer size, being able to see the game the way he does, what makes him such a threat as a facilitator?

BRIAN KEEFE: You've got to guard him, first of all, so that takes your big out of the paint, and then he can find cutters, and he's been doing that since we got him. Found cutters tonight versus their switching. He's always had that.

Q. Piggybacking on the question about Jamir, do you see a more expansive offensive role for him rather than the defensive blue guy, kind of playing more like Justin Champagnie?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think this is something you're learning. This is the great stuff at this time of the year. I already saw the secondary ball handling, the play making, the short roles. I think he can really pass. Now you're seeing him initiating offense. So this is what this is about. We're learning about these guys and seeing what he can do under pressure. I was really impressed with what he did tonight.

Q. What has Jamir done to improve as a shooter? How has that occurred?

BRIAN KEEFE: Work. I mean, he's not like anybody else on our team. But we have a bunch of guys who work. They're in the gym constantly. Coming back, shooting at night sometimes. These guys really work at it. We gave him confidence. We told him we wanted him to shoot when he was open, and he's put the time in, but he deserves all the credit.

Q. Has he made any sort of mechanical adjustments?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think it's just getting used to -- I think a lot of guys, it's getting used to the NBA line. It's different. He was hesitating a little bit at the beginning of the year, but now he's not. He lets it fly when he's open, and I think that's just the confidence of the repetition he's putting in.

Q. We see the offensive talent for Tristan and we see



the improvement in terms of blocks, shots contested, sales, that kind of activity. What are the qualities that he needs to improve to become a better defensive rebounder?

BRIAN KEEFE: I think that he's made a big jump this year. Those categories are really impressive. He's in one of the top percentiles in terms of disrupting the games and steals and blocks and deflections. He gets his hands on a lot of balls. Now it's learning how to finish off possessions. That's a normal thing. When you're a big man, you're doing so much helping, then you've got to come back, rebound, multiple efforts type of stuff. But that's a natural growth of any big. You're so much involved in every action, both offensively and defensively. That's just part of his growth.

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