

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Justin Champagnie Media Conference



Pistons 130, Wizards 117

Q. During the game they were talking about your professionalism, so I took a gander at some of the vets you had when you were with Toronto and Boston and I'm curious what you learned from them that has allowed you to kind of have the mindset you do with the situation of some games you'll play, some games you won't, but you remain even keeled throughout?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I would put that a lot to my vets in Toronto, Fred and Pascal. A lot of times as a rookie, I didn't really get to play too much, and when I did play, it was like for five minutes or so. They always used to preach to me you've got to be ready to come in the game, knock down that shot, play defense, go rebound, do your thing off the bat. Nobody is going to wait for you to get started, and if you can't get started fast enough, you're coming back out.

Keeping momentum in a place that when I know when I got out there, no matter what's going on, if I sat for two, three, four quarters, whatever, I'm just ready to go.

Q. The flipside of that is now you're at the ripe age of 24, you and Anthony Gill are the two vets that have been with this team the longest.

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I'm a vet now?

Q. Yeah. As Drew called you, the OG vet. What are those conversations then for guys who are in their rookie season and potentially in the same situation you were once in, getting minutes and then not? I think of a Will Riley, who the first part of the season, spot minutes, now part of the rotation.

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Yeah, I think especially when you're younger, I think the biggest thing that you've got to -- I try to tell them, I try to give them, is rely on your work. Like Will is always in the gym, Jamir is always -- everyone is always in the gym.

As much as you can get in the gym and stay on top of your shape and your game, when you get in there, the confidence will just exude. You'll just go out there and start playing well, and then when you get in the game don't back down from nobody. I know you go out, you play against Cade Cunningham, Jalen Duren. Some rookies get a little bit tensed up and afraid, whatever, but those guys go out there and they're ready to go off the bat, so super proud of them, and I commend them for being able to get that at such a young age.

Q. What did you think about the way that Bub played tonight, especially the way he finished in the fourth?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I think he played amazing. I think when Bub plays with the utmost confidence, he's a hard player to guard, and he goes out there and he shows that.

Yeah, I love seeing him go out there and have fun. He's nuts, but I love the way he played tonight, the way he carried us down the stretch.

Q. You mentioned him being a hard player to guard. What's it like guarding Will Riley in practice?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I would say the toughest part about Will is he's such a wiry player. He's all skin and bones. He'll drive left, before you know it, he'll turn around and he's going right. Really good footwork. Again, like, super confident. He doesn't back down from nobody. So when he goes out there, that's why you see him 20 points, 19 points a game, stuff like that, because he knows he's ready for the challenge and he's not going to back down from it.

Q. How has Bub grown as a player since you first got to know him?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I think Bub has shown learning his spots more, starting to figure out when to shoot, when not to shoot, when to be aggressive, when not to be aggressive, when to move the ball and which passes to make.

I think he's been diligent with his film work. I watch him do film before every game. So yeah, I feel like he's been growing.

You've got to remember Bub is still young. He's like 21 years old. As time goes on, he'll just continue to get better and better and better. Super proud of the growth he's made this year.

Q. What kind of advice have you given him, if any?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: Stay even keeled, especially in your second year. A lot of guys go through that rookie year and a second-year slump. Just trying to tell him stay even keeled when the shots aren't falling and the things aren't going your way, what else can you do out there to make an impact and be the player we need you to be. I think he's done a great job so far this year doing that, and continued (indiscernible). I think he's done a great job doing that this year so far. Looking forward to seeing him continue on.

Q. You spent plenty of time in the G-League, so you earned your contract. Do you have any advice for Will Riley who's trying in the G-League as well right now?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: My advice to Will would be to -- well, one, always work on your game, work on your body. Make sure you come back every year looking different with a different feel for the game. It's tough; Will is a little different, I feel. I feel like Will came in here with that confidence already. You didn't really have to feed it to him or give him confidence. I just try to tell him be confident in your game, make the right shots, make the right plays, and do the right things out there, and everything else will just fall into place.

Q. This isn't related to tonight's game or it's the first time I think I've talked to you since Kadary Richmond made his debut. I know you guys went to middle school together, were friends. You wanted him to reach this level. What was it like seeing him do it and being on his team?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: It was definitely dope. It was like a childhood dream come true. We was on the same middle school team. We always used to play together in the park. Just seeing him get the opportunity to get out there and do his thing was a blessing for him and a blessing for me to watch, to see my childhood friend obviously it made it.

Obviously he went back to the G, but I don't think that's the end of the road for him. I think he's a really good player, and there's a spot for him in this league somewhere, so my

message to him was just keep doing what you're doing, keep going and keep fighting.

Q. Understanding what this is about this year, how much would it help for you all to have your full team play a few games before the end of the season?

JUSTIN CHAMPAGNIE: I think the chemistry rising would definitely help us out going into next year, kind of just get a feel for how everybody plays together. Right now, a little bit injury ridden. But yeah, it would definitely help us out. I think that whether we get them back this year or don't, I think this summer will be big for a lot of us, individually and as a team collectively, just trying to get together with guys and just work together, be around each other, kind of get the feel for how we play and what we can all do, and just build a strong bond off the court so that when we get on the court, it's one collective unit.

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