

Washington Wizards Media Conference

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Will Riley

Media Conference



Q. How did your end-of-season goals align with the ones you entered the season with?

WILL RILEY: Going into the season, I wouldn't say I had any really expectations, but I did have a lot of goals. A lot of my goals were based off of off-the-court actions, like how I treat people, how I get in the gym, how I gain weight, that type of stuff. That was a lot of my goals. I feel like I exceeded those. That was good for me.

Q. How you treat people, that is from the school of Anthony Gill?

WILL RILEY: He's a big impact on that, for sure.

Q. Wizards are getting crowded along the wing. How do you deal with that competitive element?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, it's always going to be competitive. These are my brothers at the end of the day. Everyone is just trying to give buy-in for the team. We're all in this together. We're going to keep being that way.

Q. When you're in your prime, what player do you think you could be at your very best?

WILL RILEY: I've never been the type to really compare myself to anybody. I just want to be the best version of myself, which is to be healthy and make an impact on winning.

Q. Speaking of that, what do you think this team needs to do to win more moving forward?

WILL RILEY: I feel like we're trending in the right direction. We're getting different guys, different pieces. We're very young, so we have so much room to improve, so much growth to go through.

I feel like that's going to help us in the long run, for sure.

Q. When I asked some veteran players about you for a story, they all talked about your confidence, how anytime you step on the court, you'll compete with anyone. Where does that belief come from?

WILL RILEY: I feel like my mom. She's a very confident person. She always wants to win. Every time she does something, she always does the best of her potential. She always really has been hard working. With her, I feel like she instilled that into me from a young age. I feel like, yeah, when I get on the court, I have that same mindset.

Q. You were one of the more efficient players in the league on cuts, points per possession. What is your mindset as a cutter? Have you always been good at that or something you got better with more spacing at the NBA level?

WILL RILEY: I feel like I really got to show my cutting ability during college. That helped me really improve that 'cause I played a lot of off the ball on college, especially during the first half of the season, so...

Yeah, I feel like that definitely helped me. Our big man at the time in college, he was a really good passer. He would always find me. Playing with him was helpful.

Obviously playing at this level, we have amazing bigs on this team who are going to find you, and they're really willing to pass the ball.

Q. Now you've had some time to let the season digest. From playing in the G, playing in your first full season in the league, what is something you've taken from both experiences that you're going to apply to your off-season?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, I feel, starting with the G, it instilled a lot of confidence in me. I would say I have a lot of confidence in myself, but that definitely helped getting a feel for what it's like playing, being put in different positions and stuff like that, handling the ball. That definitely helped me.

Towards the end of the season, obviously minutes went up. I got a lot more playing time. Being able to show what I'm able to do in that aspect helped me.

Just looking into this off-season, really grind every day. Obviously probably take a couple days off, then straight back to work.

Q. You have the Summer League. Kyshawn mentioned what helped his growth was playing for Team Canada, playing in any of the FIBA windows that are open. Is that something you would like to do or something that has been asked and you're planning to do?

WILL RILEY: Honestly, the season just ended. Haven't really thought about too much, Team Canada stuff, just yet. Yeah, obviously everybody wants to represent their country. Down the line maybe hopefully play for them. Haven't really put too much thought into it yet, though.

Q. Paul George said a little while ago he sees himself in you. Is he somebody that you looked up to or tried to copy his game at all?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, I mean, he's like one of the guys that I feel like a lot of kids in the basketball space would watch. An amazing player. Super crafty. Yeah, that meant a lot when I saw that. That was pretty cool to see, for sure.

Q. Has anyone, Paul or any similar star, reached out to you for any type of advice for your game?

WILL RILEY: I'm playing with two guys I looked up to growing up, as well. Trae, he's taught me so much, just like the little amount of games he played. The impact he made on me was super insane. Just the amount of attention he brings, the way he's able to handle all the pressure, the whole team scouting him, but he's able to get to the basket every single time. Little things like that that helped me.

A.D. obviously a really big fan of growing up. He's been really good in taking that vet role, holding me accountable, talking me through different reads and ways to look at the game.

Q. What did you learn about Brian Keefe over the last year?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, me and Coach are very like-minded people, I would say. We have the same mindset. We really love to be in the gym. We just love basketball. We have that mindset.

He's a really great coach in the way that he wants me to succeed, wants everybody to succeed. He really genuinely cares for us, not just as basketball players, as people. I feel like that's a very important thing as a coach, to not just look at guys as just basketball players, but actually care about them as people.

Q. Pretty rare quality in any person. How does he show that, that he really cares about the person, that he cares about you?

WILL RILEY: I mean, it could be after a game, before a game, even when we're having meetings about basketball. He'll always ask or lead with, How are you? How are you doing? He doesn't mean by "How are you doing?" in a basketball space, he means how are you doing mentally, how is your family. He always asks that question, How is your family doing?

I just feel like he's really good at that.

Q. Coach Keefe noted towards the end of the season you were very clearly at the top of the scouting report, he said getting extra special attention from opposing defenses. What was that like? How do you feel like you adjusted to it?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, I feel like towards the end of the season I started to get the scouting report towards me. Just being able to deal with that, and I feel like talking to the older guys on the team, they were helping me with that, just making the simple play will help open up my game. Little stuff like that definitely helped.

Q. Last year Bub told a story about how Georges Niang came up to him and had some things to say about how surprised he was with how good he was as a shooter. Did you have any moments like that with veteran players on the opposing team this year, where after the game they gave you some positive feedback?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, I mean, after most games, I try and shake hands with the guys. I've heard a couple things, like, "Just keep going, you have a bright future," from a lot of different guys, I'd say. It's what I dreamed of since I was a kid. Just being able to play against them now has been good.

Q. You mentioned your off-season is going to be a lot of grinding, work. Did any guys give you experience about going into your first off-season? Did they say any recommendations as to how you should go about it, what to work on?

WILL RILEY: Yeah, just talking to them I feel like this is

one of the best times to work on yourself, like, outside of basketball, when it comes to working on your body and stuff like that. It really hard to put on size and muscle during the season. Playing a lot of minutes.

Really locking into that, locking into your diet during this time is really going to help me. I feel like that's my main point of emphasis, is working on my body I'd say.

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