

# 1/21/2011: Iowa men's basketball notebook



Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming match-up this weekend against Indiana during his press conference on Friday, Jan. 21, 2011, at Carver-Hawkeye Arena in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – With 18 conference games on the docket, little time is available to dwell on any losses.

As the Iowa Hawkeyes (7-11) find themselves as the only winless team in Big Ten play at 0-6, there is very little time being spent thinking about the 70-48 debacle they endured on Jan. 19 in Columbus, Ohio, against No. 1 Ohio State. Instead, it is used on preparation for Iowa's game against Indiana (10-9, 1-5) on Jan. 23 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

"We just want to win, bad," junior guard Bryce Cartwright said. "We're trying to do anything to muster up a win, and we got to prepare hard."

With the Hoosiers coming in barely above .500 after losing to No. 18 Wisconsin on Thursday, 69-60, the opportunity is there for the Hawkeyes to end their current six-game slide and secure their first Big Ten win of the year.

"It's something we definitely need right now," junior guard Matt Gatens said. "Indiana is no slouch. They played Wisconsin real tough last night. I watched that game. They're going to be coming in here ready, and we have to ready as well."

During his press conference at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Friday, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said he doesn't let the losses mount on him, and hasn't gotten the impression they have on anybody within the program.

"We just keep plugging forward," McCaffery said. "As long as I feel like our guys are coming with a great attitude every day, working hard, trying to get better, trying to listen to what we ask them to, trying to follow the game plan, then I feel like we are making progress."

### **Getting production from guard play**

It hasn't been a secret that Iowa lacks depth at the point, especially with sophomore Cully Payne being injured for the majority of the season.

Through 18 games, Cartwright is Iowa's second leading scorer, averaging 10.9 points per contest. As a result, opposing teams are starting to place more attention on Cartwright. Part of it stems from opponents already keying in Gatens and sophomore Eric May to begin with. Another factor is that behind Cartwright at the point is freshman guard Roy Devyn Marble, who McCaffery has always envisioned as more of a natural 2-guard.

"They are going to press up on Bryce knowing that our back-up is a two," McCaffery said. "Not only are you trying to get to our back-up, you're trying to wear Bryce down so he can't make

plays at the end of the game or the end of the shot clock.”

Cartwright said he has noticed different looks from opponents as a result of his ability to not only make plays for his teammates, but also make plays for himself.

“People are chopping more, trying to get me in foul trouble and stuff like that,” Cartwright said. “I have noticed it, so I’m taking it into account, too.”

As for Marble, McCaffery did make the comment during his press conference on Friday that he initially thought the 6-5 guard didn’t play well against the Buckeyes, only to turn on the tape and notice things he didn’t think about when leaving Value City Arena.

“He didn’t have as many points as he gets a lot of times, but I thought Marble was pretty good,” McCaffery said. “That left-handed press he made on the break to Basabe, we don’t have anybody else that could make that pass, so that shows me he has got a lot to his game.”

### **Brommer gaining confidence**

Junior forward Andrew Brommer had the best performance of any Hawkeye two nights ago when Iowa lost to Ohio State, coming away with a team-high 12 points and six rebounds while playing 30 minutes coming off the bench.

This performance not only came against the top-ranked team, but more specifically, Brommer showcased these talents going toe-to-toe with Ohio State freshman Jared Sullinger, who McCaffery believes would be the No. 1 pick in the NBA Draft if Sullinger decided to go pro after this season.

Not only did McCaffery take note of Brommer’s performance, but his teammates did as well.

“Right down to the final buzzer, he was out there working his butt off and blocking shots and getting buckets,” Gatens said.

"It's something we need from him. I think having a game like that maybe could show him in his own eyes what his true potential is."

This wasn't the first time this season Brommer stepped up for Iowa, either. As McCaffery talked about dealing with Brommer and getting him to be a more confident player, he mentioned the 6-9 forward's outing on Dec. 10 against Iowa State where he was 6-of-7 from the floor shooting and then contrasted that to games where McCaffery said "he comes in and misses a lay-up, and then he's ready to kill himself."

He also cited a play late in the game against Ohio State where Brommer came up with a block McCaffery described as "unbelievable."

"Little by little, I think he's starting to believe in himself," McCaffery said.

Brommer has two goals in place for himself right now – being more confident, and being more assertive. He said working on these areas of his game have been easier now than during the early stages of his career.

"It has kind of come a little more natural to me," Brommer said. "I'm just trying to be more confident in myself and in my abilities. I'm only limited to what I think I can't do."

### **Fran, the teacher**

As the Hawkeyes continue growing threw the gauntlet that is its Big Ten schedule, McCaffery has placed an emphasis on himself as a coach making sure he continues providing as many teaching tools as he can to the players.

McCaffery was asked during his press conference about consistency and said his No. 1 priority was to not stop teaching.

"If one of our guys has a bad game, we break the film down and

we show it to them," he said. "This is what you did, and this is what you could have done, and this is maybe what you didn't see.

"You don't stop teaching and you don't make it about anything more than that. Questioning their manhood, and screaming and yelling doesn't really turn anything into a positive then."

Along these lines, McCaffery also made clear he has no intentions of changing the starting lineup, even though players such as May and senior center Jarryd Cole have struggled in recent outings.

The constant working with and encouraging of players and making sure they understand everything going on is something the players have picked up and appreciate.

"They're very supportive of me," Brommer said. "Whatever I do, they pull me aside, give me teaching points, tell me that I can do it, and our very confident in what I can do."

### **Scheduling notes**

When the Big Ten's conference schedule was initially established last August, few could have pictured the situation that has arose with this weekend's Iowa-Indiana basketball game.

The Hawkeyes and Hoosiers are scheduled to tip off at 2 p.m. Central. Meanwhile, the NFC Championship Game between the Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers (who have arguably the two biggest NFL fan bases in Eastern Iowa) is scheduled to start from Soldier Field in Chicago at the exact same time.

Prior to McCaffery's press conference, a reason was given as to why the Iowa-Indiana game hasn't been and won't be moved. The Big Ten has a scheduling policy in place for conference basketball game mandating that teams have a minimum of two days between games, with the lone exception being later in the

season when "wild card" games are set in stone (more on this in a bit).

With Indiana's game on Thursday at Wisconsin, moving the Jan. 23 contest at Carver-Hawkeye Arena would have violated this policy set forth by the conference, and thus was never an option.

As for the "wild card" games, one of those has been established for Iowa. The Hawkeyes' home contest next month against Michigan will be on Feb. 19, which is two days following Iowa's contest at Northwestern. Tip-off for that Iowa-Michigan game has been set that afternoon for 3:30 p.m. Central, and it will be aired nationally on the Big Ten Network.

The only two Iowa games with dates and times still to be determined are the final weekend of February, when the Hawkeyes play at Illinois, and the first weekend of March, when Iowa plays its regular season finale at home against Purdue.