

1/24/2011: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery's teleconference on Monday with the Big Ten media:

Opening statement:

"I thought yesterday's win was important for us for a variety of different reasons, not the least of which was we had so many different players score. We have had our scoring droughts, and didn't have any yesterday. We put up 91 [points] with four guys in doubles and four players with one and-one baskets. To see Eric May and [Roy Devyn] Marble do what they did and come back as strong as they did is something that I think bodes well for us as we move forward."

On trying to rebuild in the Big Ten when there are six strong teams at the top:

"You can't get consumed with that. What you have to do is focus on your own team and try to get better. Try to develop your young players, and obviously aspire to be one of the better teams in the league and compete with those teams, which we've done, and which we haven't done. We've done both. We played Ohio State tough, and then didn't play them so well. We played well at Minnesota, but didn't play well at Purdue. So what you try to do is make sure you don't get consumed by it, but you learn from it. You know, why did we play well at Minnesota? Why didn't we play well at Purdue? What were some of the things that we could do better? So you're looking at

the big picture, the collective part, but you're also looking at each individual part and trying to develop personnel, especially our freshmen and sophomores."

On how helpful the renovations to Carver-Hawkeye Arena are with rebuilding:

"I think it has been great to be able to sell it. It will be even better when we can show it to people. When they actually see it, they can walk into the facility, see the strength and conditioning facility, its size, and the new locker room, and how incredible it's going to be, and the office complex, and the practice facility, being able to get in there anytime they want. You know, we can talk about that, or we can show them pictures. That's 'Step One.'

"But to ultimately be able to say, 'Look at the culmination of the interest level of this program, that they were able to right on the heels of the flood where we had \$750 million worth of damage to the institution, went out and raised \$50 million to help raise our program.' I think that says a lot about the Hawkeye Nation and the people that care about this program."

On his past coaching battles with Penn State's Ed DeChellis in the Southern Conference:

"Well, the interesting thing was in the SoCon, it's a league that is broken down into divisions. So, you play each team in your division twice and each team in the other division once. So your battles are more likely going to be with those teams in your division, and East Tennessee State was in [UNC-Greensboro's] division. We were in the North, so we usually played each other home-and-home every year. Each of those years that we went head-to-head, both of us were picked near the top and had just some hellacious games.

"I can remember a couple of times winning, of course in 2001, we went to the NCAA Tournament. But his last year, they went

to the NCAA Tournament, and they beat us twice. That was our worst team, and we lost on a tip-in at the buzzer in overtime on ESPN, and we lost basically by two when we had the last shot. It went in-and-out. That's how close both teams were. We lost some, and we won some. But every game was right down to the end.

"I thought he did a tremendous job recruiting. When he left there, he left the program in such great shape the following year, Murry Bartow took over and they went 15-1 in the league with the players that Ed had recruited. So he had done a really great job of recruiting to that program."

On whether coaching against DeChellis again is testimony to the business they're in coaching:

"Well, it's interesting because when I first met him, we were competing against each other in recruiting. He was the assistant at Penn State, and I was the assistant at Notre Dame, and we often times went after the same kind of players. We had some mutual friends, became friendly, and would see each other a lot, and became real good friends especially in the league. We spent time in the conference meetings together, and a lot of us became friendly, things of that nature.

"He's just somebody that I have a lot of respect for as a coach, but I think more importantly, how he goes about doing it. You know, he does it the right way and cares about his kids, and really works at it. He has got a terrific staff, a lot of guys that I know and have respect for. I used to play ball against Kurt Kanaskie when I was in high school, and then we played against each other in college. He was at LaSalle, I was at Penn. A lot of connections there."

On Ohio State's ability to go on runs and shut out opponents during runs:

"Well, I think the thing that's impressive is they have the three guys on the perimeter that really can score in a big way

– [Jon] Diebler, [David] Lighty, and [William] Buford. But rarely do you find three talented players like that offensively that really commit themselves to defending. So now, not only are they really good offensive players, but they understand that they've got to go shut people down, and that's what equates to winning.

"With the team that starts, you got the shot blocker back there, so they can gamble a little bit more if they want to, and [Jared] Sullinger is in there. He's such a fabulous rebounder. Now when they put [Aaron] Craft in, he presses up on the ball, so now they're equally good defensively, even without the shot blocker. [Craft] goes up and pressures the ball, then the others can pressure and wing, and Sullinger kind of cleans up the paint. They have the unique ability to, if you play up and down, they can play that way. But if they have to get into a grind-it game in the 50s, they have the defensive ability to beat you that way, and I think that's why they're undefeated."

On what he expects from JaJuan Johnson and Jared Sullinger on Tuesday (Purdue plays at Ohio State):

"Well, you know, it's interesting. I have really been impressed with Johnson's development. I started watching him last year. I remember seeing him against St. Joe's, we were preparing for St. Joe's, and Purdue had beaten St. Joe's I guess down in the Virgin Islands or some place like that, one of those tournaments. And then of course, we end up playing them, and I thought he was tremendous. Then when this season started, I thought he was really good and obviously a focal point of what Matt [Painter] is trying to do. But it seems to me that in recent weeks, he has almost taken his game to another level, and I didn't think that was possible.

"He's kind of like Kevin Durant now. He's making every shot – fade-aways, face-up. He's just becoming an incredibly dominant player. Sullinger is a little bit different in the sense that

he has got all those seniors that score and are double-figure scorers. Of course, JaJuan has got E'Twaun [Moore], but you know, [Ryne] Smith has been playing well and [John] Hart has been out, so a lot more has fallen on JaJuan, I think, in terms of having to carry the load offensively. I think you saw that in particular in the West Virginia game.

"Whereas Sullinger just kind of gets his workman-like 17 points, and he knows he's going to get double-teamed, and almost enjoys picking you apart. 'Go ahead and double, we'll carve you up.' We had better success with them when we didn't double. They've got so many weapons that we're going to live with him. Of course, he goes for 24 and we lose by five. But when we started doubling, we lost by 20.

"Both of them have, I think, really, really incredible court demeanor. Just quiet confidence. They don't get caught up in the moment. They don't lose their composure at all. I think that's why they're both going to be tremendous NBA players."