

1/31/2011: 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:

"This week, we had two losses on the road. I don't feel like we played particularly well in either one, similar to some of our past games where we played well at times. In both games, I thought we played fairly well in the first half, but did not close out the game the right way, and we just have to keep getting better."

On the development of freshmen players:

"I think in yesterday's game, obviously our two best players, well, two of our three best players I guess you could say, were [Devyn] Marble and [Melsahn] Basabe. Melsahn goes for 25 [points], and I thought Marble was tremendous playing both guard positions. Again, what I think we have to see from those two guys, and they've been fairly consistent, what they're trying to do is become consistent night in and night out."

"You see Melsahn with some absolutely monster games, and some games where he's really not in the mix, and that's all experience-related. He didn't play particularly well against Penn State because I think their seniors were really good that night and made it hard for him. I think Marble has been really consistent the last 3-4 games, and we've needed that."

"I think Jarryd Cole has been a good leader and a good captain, particularly from the work ethic standpoint. I think very few people that I have coached have been as professional in his approach as Jarryd Cole is, and that has been a great example for Melsahn."

"I think Zach McCabe has been struggling lately, he's our other freshman, but has also played well at times. I think he just needs to get one 'bust-out' game, and he'll be fine."

On Basabe's learning curve and if it has been faster than expected:

"You know, when I recruited him to go to Siena, I looked at him as an impact player. I thought he could be a guy that could be 'Rookie of the Year' in the league. I thought he had the ability to keep us at the top of the league, and to be one of the elite teams in the league. He subsequently (we signed him in November) had a good senior year of high school. He was at a really good program playing for a terrific coach in Dave Lubick."

"When I had come to Iowa and inevitably he was putting himself back on the market, we had a lot of work to do because he had no knowledge of Iowa. He only had knowledge of us. He had a lot of interest, primarily from the East schools. So we had to make a decision – what did we think he was capable of doing in the Big Ten? Of course, I had a pretty good knowledge of the Big Ten because I had watched a lot of Big Ten games the previous two years. We played Purdue in the tournament, and we played Ohio State in the tournament the year before, so I had a pretty good feel of what you need. I felt like, without question, he could be a guy that would be a really good player for us, and I thought would do so relatively quickly."

"Now I have to say what has been interesting in watching his development is you watch his game yesterday, and you watch his game against [Jared] Sullinger, and you watch him against

[Trevor] Mbakwe, and he has had some phenomenal games. But he has had some games where he has been a little bit sideways and has shown his inexperience, particularly against experienced veteran Big Ten players. What I have been impressed with is his approach in terms of his professionalism, his work ethic, his concentration. He is really trying to do everything we ask him to do, and quite frankly, we've asked him to do quite a bit for a freshman on a team that right now is not winning that many games. We don't have a lot of support for him in terms of offense.

"We've struggled at times when we've had the ball and relied on him, and quite honestly, he wasn't a scorer in high school to the extent that he is in the Big Ten, which I think is an amazing thing for his development, and I think it speaks to where his potential is."

On whether Michigan did anything different in the last game than it previously showed:

"I tell you what, it's interesting because even though they had lost some games, I remember I didn't think they played particularly well in the Northwestern game. It was similar to our Northwestern game, and they can do that to you, and I don't think they played well at Indiana. But other than that, all the games I've watched, I really like John [Beilein]'s team. I thought they compete. They're not more experienced, but their experienced guys are playing well.

"The hardest thing for us yesterday was containing penetration, and it has been a problem for us all year long. How could you give up 14 3's? Well, it's all off penetration and help recovery. Our close-outs were not as crisp or sharp as they needed to be. But they do such a good job of spacing the floor, they have so many different guys making shots or are capable of making shots. I'm a little disappointed that we let [Tim] Hardaway get free because he's such a good corner 3-point shooter. It seems like he makes every corner 3 that he

shoots. I would've liked to think we would've stayed closer to him.

"I just think that they're really playing together. I think they're executing their offense. He's always going to mix defenses to keep you on wings a little bit, and I think they're going to be real tough to beat at home."