

# 2/7/2011: 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:**

*"Well, I think overall, it was a good week for us. We had three games. We lost on the road, but I thought the improved play of Bryce Cartwright in that game was indicative for us on what was to come. I didn't know for sure that we'd go ahead and win the next two against Michigan State at home and Indiana on the road, but as well as some of our other guys have been playing, I think the key to our team right now is the point guard play of Bryce Cartwright, in terms of making sure that everybody has gotten involved. He has gotten Eric May going. He takes care of [Matt] Gatens. He gets the ball to [Melsahn] Basabe. He runs our offense in a very efficient way."*

## **On more of the improved play from Cartwright that he was speaking of:**

*"The thing about him is he has always had the ability to make plays for himself. He breaks plays off and makes good things happen. He scores at the end of the shot clock. He has hit four buckets at the end of the half this season, so he's kind of a fearless scoring point guard. What he had a tendency to do earlier in the year was leave his feet to make passes, and overcommit himself on penetration. Not to the point where he*

*was horrible, he was still very good. But in order for him to take that next step to be, you know, as good as he's playing right now, he had to start making a few better decisions for our team and for his teammates. And that's what he has done.*

*"When you look at nine assists, no turn[over]s at Michigan, I think it was eight and four against Michigan State, and again, he had real good numbers against Indiana. He stays on the floor. He doesn't over-penetrate. He throws the ball ahead on the break. He is phenomenally creative, and when you have a guy that can make those kinds of passes and who can also score, then you have got a very potent weapon."*

**On what he wants to see from his team during the last month of the season:**

*"For us with this last month, what we have been trying to do all season long is just continue to get better, both collectively and individually, and I think we're doing that. We're sharing the basketball, we're pushing the ball on the break, and we're able to win games with some of our key guys not playing well. I think that's the key.*

*"Basabe has four points and three rebounds, we beat Michigan State. Gatens makes two baskets, and we beat Indiana on the road. I don't know if we could have done that a month-and-a-half ago because we have a lot of other players stepping up. Jarryd Cole goes for 13 [points] and nine [rebounds] against Michigan State. We have four guys in double figures. On Saturday against Indiana, we were getting productivity off the bench from Andrew [Brommer] and Devon [Archie] and [Devyn] Marble and [Zach] McCabe. So our team is coming together in terms of everybody understanding their roles, and that's what we need to continue to do."*

**On what he thinks of the Big Ten in its current state for men's basketball:**

*"With regard to the league itself, I think it's everything I*

thought it would be. I said when I was hired that I have a tremendous appreciation for the Big Ten, just watching it over the years and studying the coaches. This year in particular, when you look at the talent level, particularly veteran talent, every team has some veteran talent, and that's why so many teams... I don't know if we have six in, I don't think we do, but at one time, we had six in the top 25. We start knocking each other off, and the next thing you know, there's a couple of us out, but still have some premier teams in this league.

"With regard to how many you're going to get in, I don't think you can say that if you're in the Big Ten or the Big East today, I know how many I think deserve to be in, probably in the 7 range, at least. But it all depends on how everyone fares. We just keep banging heads with each other, and that's what this conference is, and at some level, it will knock somebody out. But that's what makes this league special, and that's why I love it."

**On whether he and Wisconsin coach Bo Ryan had crossed paths in Pennsylvania:**

"Well Chester, as you know, has a storied basketball tradition. I mean, since the days he was playing, it is one of the perennial powers in the state of Pennsylvania, and just really a phenomenally-rabid fan base. If you beat Chester, it's a statement game. I have to say that I never played against Chester.

"Back when I was playing at high school in the '70s, it was a real separation between the Philadelphia schools and the schools that played in the PIAA. At that time, Philadelphia schools were not eligible for the state championship because they would not subscribe to the state rules. We kind of did our own thing – the Philadelphia Catholic League and the Philadelphia Public League. Everyone else was in the PIAA, and that's one of the main reasons why Chester has established the

*tradition that they do, because they've made such great state runs year in and year out, and it was unfortunate that the city schools didn't get to do that.*

*"But Bo and I have known each other a long time. As a matter of fact, my wife was MVP of his summer basketball camp three years in a row when he was at Platteville, so she has actually known him as long as I have."*

**On how he prepares to coach against a team like Wisconsin on Wednesday:**

*"Well, the thing about them that makes them great is just how efficient they are in everything that they do. You know, they don't turn it over, they don't take bad shots, they don't miss a lot of shots. They have good shooters taking good shots. The epitome of the team that they always say will never beat themselves. You got to beat them. When you have to do that night in and night out, it's not easy. That's why the record is what it is.*

*"But they have some really good players. They have got some upper-classmen that are really good and maybe, arguably, the best point guard in college basketball. So when you've got a great point guard and you've got shooters, and you've got long-armed wing guys that can defend and rebound, and you don't turn it over, that's a hard team to beat."*

**On the contributions from freshmen players in the Big Ten this season:**

*"You know, it's interesting because for us, it was our only hope to be competitive. We had to get play out of our young kids. You know, you look at Ohio State, and it's a different story. What their young kids have done is help them be No. 1. If those guys aren't doing what they're doing, they're still a good team, they're still an NCAA Tournament team, but they're not ranked No. 1 with the distinct thought that they're going to win the national championship.*

*"You look at [Michigan guard Tim] Hardaway, I mean, he just keeps getting better. You go team by team, there are so many freshmen that are contributing, and then there are some teams like ourselves and Indiana where we're relying more on youth than some of the more established programs in terms of veterans. I think there's always going to be, you know, quality talent coming into this league because people want to play in the Big Ten."*