

2/14/2011: 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, this week was an interesting week for us. I thought we played fairly well against Wisconsin defensively. Our offense was pretty consistent in terms of different people scoring the ball. Yesterday, we obviously were concerned about Minnesota's size, especially when Tubby [Smith] plays a big lineup. Rebounding was an issue. We got pounded on the glass and then did not shoot the ball well, which typically, we got some good shooters that got good looks at it and didn't make them. So we'll go to work today, and get ready for Northwestern."

On if he anticipated bumps in the road such as Sunday's loss to Minnesota and how he deals with it:

"Well, you know, I think you deal with it as you go. We've stepped back before. We made progress, and then we stepped back, and then we made more progress. You hope you don't ever get into those situations where you just sort of keep going. But the funny thing about yesterday is, you know, I was more concerned that we got pounded on the glass, and maybe that was a function of Melsahn [Basabe] getting in foul trouble. It might have been a little bit better. And [Devon] Archie being out. We could have used another big body, fresh body."

"But you hold a team to 62 [points], you're usually going to

be in the game. You know, I didn't expect to go into a game yesterday and score 45 points, where we couldn't make a shot. We had good players taking good shots. At some level, you're saying, 'Well, it's disappointing,' but at the same time, it's one of those games where you just got to move on."

On if he has optimism big picture-wise for his team with other teams losing players next year:

"You know, maybe not as much as probably some other people. But to me, you just have some teams in this league that just reload. Yeah, it won't be the same next year. There are so many senior talented players in this league. Some teams will come back to the pack a little bit, but those teams have really good players coming in as well.

"I mean, you look at Ohio State, as good as that senior class is, where would they be without those three freshmen? You know, they probably wouldn't be 24-1, or whatever they are. So they're going to get good players. The other teams in the league are going to get good players who are freshmen. We've got two guys coming in that can play. It will be a situation next year where there might be even more of a situation where teams are kind of beating each other up. So I look forward to the challenge."

On whether Northwestern's 3-point shooting the previous meeting was good or more defensive breakdowns:

"A little bit a both. The thing about them is you almost have to get used to playing against them because of how they hit their shots, where they hit their shots from. They do some things differently than everybody else. And they've got good shooters. They're going to shoot 3's, and they're typically going to make 3's, so you got to defend the line. And then they're going to run cutters, and they're going to post up the big fella and he's a good passer. He has got some stuff. In the second half, if you remember, we did a much better job on

the line, and he got away from us.

"So it's a situation where they've got a good team, they've got some veteran guys, they've got some good young players. They got a terrific point guard who can score. So what Billy [Carmody] is going to do is he's going to force us to defend him for 40 minutes and for a good portion of the shot clock with hard cuts and good screening action and spread you out with good shooters. They're a hard team to defend.

"Now on one hand, you say, 'Well, they can't shoot the ball as well as they did the last time that we played them,' but I've seen them do the same thing to other teams. So you just have to be committed to staying after them for the entire shot clock, try not to give them second and third-shot opportunities, defend the line, fight the post, and then sometimes, to be honest with you, difficulties comes at the other end with them.

"You know, he's going to mix the 1-3-1 in there, he's going to switch and be physical defensively and make it hard for you to score. So a lot of times, Northwestern is being blamed for their game being low-scoring or long possessions, but they defend well, so a lot of times, it takes the offense awhile to get good shot opportunities. Hopefully, we'll play better than we did when we played them the last time."

On whether he expects Northwestern to come in with a chip on its shoulder given its current losing streak:

"Well, I will say this. They may have had a couple of losses, and I haven't watched those games yet, but I will tell you this: My knowledge of Bill Carmody is, that team, if they play hard and they execute, they might lose, but I'm not anticipating a team that's going to let down. I'm not anticipating a team that's going to play that much harder. I will say this, when we played them here, I hadn't played against too many teams that played that hard.

"A lot of people look at the patterns and the difficulty of who is going where and the counters. The beauty of that offense is how hard they cut, and how much movement, how they move with a purpose. That doesn't change, and that's why that offense is talked about. A lot of people have tried to emulate it, and the guys that run it the best are the guys that have a direct relation to Pete Carril. Billy, you know, I've coached against other guys and they run it well too now, but Billy's teams have really executed that offense. They've made it very difficult, and he has also added some of his own wrinkles to it, and it's hard to guard."

"So I'm going to anticipate going in there, and the crowds have been excellent, the ones I've seen on television. I know and understand that we're playing a team that, sure, they need a win, they're going to play hard, but they always compete. They always run their stuff. They always defend. They always bang. So from that standpoint, I don't really think it's going to be that much different."

On Basabe's impact on the team already as a freshman:

"Yeah, he has been fabulous. Yesterday, he struggled with foul trouble, and I do think, you know, thinking back to when we played [Minnesota] up there, he was the main reason we were right in the game until the last couple of minutes. He never really got on track yesterday, with regard to his offense. I think that was a function of inexperience against bigger, experienced guys."

"So what you've seen is you've seen him play some absolutely fantastic games against really good players and really good teams when he's in rhythm and he's not in foul trouble, and we're going to him. Then you run into the situation yesterday. He has had a few other games like this where he gets a little bit sideways because of foul trouble, so experienced guys are going to work on him. That's just all part of the growth process."

"But overall, I think you look at his body of work, I mean, very impressive. I'm really proud of him. I'm proud of his professionalism. He comes to work every day. He wants to get better. He's trying to get better. I think in reality, as good as he is, I think what you're going to see is somebody who keeps getting better because his role has expanded from anything he has ever done either in high school or on the AAU circuit. So I think he's enjoying that, and I'm looking forward to coaching him."