

# 11/16/2011: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery held a teleconference with the local media on Wednesday prior to the Hawkeyes' game on Nov. 17 against Northern Illinois at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

**On how Eric May's game benefits from shooting performances like the one he had Monday against North Carolina A&T:**

*"Well, especially in a game like that, it was really, really important. But you know you're going to get a good night from [Matt] Gatens and [Bryce] Cartwright's going to distribute, so now you put two guys on both wings that are making shots and attacking the rim, I mean, it just changes everything. It makes it easier for Melsahn [Basabe], it makes it easier for any of our post guys. It gives Bryce more space to operate. I just think Eric May is playing extremely well right now."*

**On how scouting is done for Northern Illinois and if any film from last year's games against Michigan State might be used:**

*"We won't look at Michigan State. What we'll do is we'll look at our Michigan State scouting report. Then what we'll do is we'll watch what we have this year on [Northern Illinois]. We'll watch last year's tape in regard to personnel. But yeah, that's how we'll prepare. [Mark Montgomery] may go ahead and do a lot of the same things Tom [Izzo] did, I suppose. That's what I would do. If I had worked for Tom, I think I would do that. But he may have some of his own ideas."*

### **On the offensive execution after two games:**

*"It also helps that we'll be able to continue to do that. I think we have good players. I think we have guys that know how to score. But I think the thing that has been most impressive is we're sharing the ball, a very unselfish team. If you're going to be a scoring team, you have to have the scorers' mentality, but you have to have the ability to understand, you, know, get the ball up. I think our guys are really trying to get the ball inside to Melsahn, recognizing that he's going to be a force for us. We got to make sure when he's running the floor, he gets the ball. Our quick offense has been really good. We're getting the ball in, getting it down the floor. Our wings are running. I think [Devyn] Marble has done a really good job at the point and at the wing. I've been really pleased with him. Hopefully, this trend will continue."*

### **On Andrew Brommer's status and whether he'll be able to play Thursday against Northern Illinois:**

*"You know, I honestly don't have any more of an update than I did when I spoke to you last. I would say doubtful, but not out of the question. That would legitimately be a game-time decision for him. I just think the good news is it's not as bad as it was before. The bad news is it's the third time he has had it hurt in the last six-seven months. We're going to be a little bit careful on this one. He'll be cleared when he's cleared. But we need him, and the last thing we want to do is rush him."*

*"Quite honestly, we were pretty slow moving with him before. He looked like he was ready to go four or five days before he did. But we were very methodical, going in hard without defense, and then seeing how that held up, and then going hard with defense and then seeing how that held up. He kept passing one test after another, and that's when we put him in the game, and I thought he was good. He played well. It was just a freak injury again. Hopefully when he comes back this time, it*

*won't happen again."*

**On how much of a step Iowa took from its first to second game:**

*"I think we established in Game One how we wanted to play. We played that way again in Game Two, but then we had to back off it a little bit. We had to play a little bit more in control in the second half against a team that was not going to slow it down in any way, shape or form. What we needed was good, solid play from a lot of people, which we got. We got that in both games, I think that's key. We were able to overcome a couple of guys that are really good players not necessarily having great games, and still win. I think that's important."*

*"Every game is a learning experience. When you play a game like North Carolina A&T, with the way they trap and press and turn it into sort of organized mayhem, it requires you to have to consistently make plays and consistently get up and down the floor. I thought some guys did a really good job of that, and we had uncharacteristic turnovers that we have to get better at."*

**On the early struggles with transition defense:**

*"Well, I think it's a little bit of that, that it's a little bit new. But I think it's also a function of, I think, we think we have more shot-blockers than we actually have. When you're back, or you're recovering back, you've got to get big and protect the basket. If you have shot-blockers, it's great. But we haven't blocked that many shots this year. I don't have the stats in front of me, but it's not all that many. So when those guys are back there, they have to stop the ball while others are sprinting to take the next test, and that's what we have to work on. I think once we've got that figured out, our press will be a lot better."*

**On whether he sees May being more assertive and his numbers taking a drastic jump this season:**

*"I absolutely expect that. Exactly that, yes."*

**On the players appearing more confident this season:**

*"I think that's true. I felt that was going to be the case. I think we have to see if that remains the case over time, in particular when we get into some games that are on the road against ranked opponents, things of that nature. But I do feel legitimately we feel more comfortable with what's expected from the coaching staff and what each of our guys expects from themselves, and we are playing with more confidence. But we should."*

*"You know, we have two senior guards in the starting lineup, we have a junior small forward, we have a sophomore that was on the all-rookie team. We've got some senior big guys that are playing well. When you look at the minutes and the opportunities that Marble and [Zach] McCabe got last year, you're talking about players that were right in the middle of all of it, that played great, played great on the road, at times playing like freshmen. They're not playing like freshmen this year. I think [Josh] Oglesby and [Aaron] White and [Gabe] Olaseni are good players."*

*"So I have the luxury of playing guys in different roles, I have the luxury of not playing them as much because I don't have to play them as much, and so far, I've had the luxury to play guys through their mistakes. My only regret, quite frankly, is I didn't play White and Oglesby more in that game. It got a little crazy and I went with our experience. Sometimes you do that, then you look back and say, 'You know what? Josh deserved to play more.' He really did. He deserved it. He had four assists. He deserved to go back in. But I just stuck with Gatens and May because of the mayhem that was going on."*

**On what he has seen from his three freshmen thus far through two games:**

*"Well obviously, Aaron's opening day performance was as good as any freshman that I've ever had, and I think, you know, a couple of things the other night. When he got in early, he fumbled a pass, then drove into a pack of people and turned it over, and I think that got him a little bit sideways. But in addition to that, the style of play in that game was a little bit different, and he had just got to get used to that."*

*"I think Oglesby, on film, was better than I thought he was at the time. I think he has been solid. He hasn't made shots like he will, and he just has to get himself into the mindset where if he misses two shots, don't hesitate on the third. If he misses his third, don't hesitate on the fourth. You know, he's a team guy and he's doing that right now, and he has got to get out of that habit."*

*"I thought Olaseni was terrific against Chicago State. I thought Monday night's game would've been a little tougher for him with all the chopping and the flicking and doubling. I wanted him to get a chance to look at that. We'll get him in more tomorrow night."*

**On the challenge of playing a team like Creighton this weekend on a neutral court:**

*"Well you know, I think it's good for both teams. I obviously had a chance to watch Creighton. I normally would not have watched them, but I watched the A&T game, so I have a little bit better perspective on them. Obviously, I think everybody knew they were going to be good. They're expected to be good. They have experienced players. But I have to tell you I was really impressed with them. I think Greg [McDermott] is doing a great job with that team."*

*"Their guard play is phenomenal. They don't make mistakes. A very unselfish team, and a team that's going to win a lot of games. They definitely have a real legitimate shot to win that league, although there are other teams in that league. I think*

they have a great complement of size and speed and shooting. When you play the way A&T plays, you're going to be open. Well, that's great, but they still went ahead and made 14 3s. They took advantage of what was there. They ran when it was there, they shot 3s when it was there, they pounded inside when it was there, and I think that's what impresses me.

"They're going to stretch your defense in a number of different ways. [Doug] McDermott and [Gregory] Echenique, that's two really, really good players right there. They both can post up, and obviously Doug can go outside. So it's going to challenge our team in a big way, and I'm not opposed to having that kind of challenge early in the season."

**On the early routine this month of a game every third day and how it can be of benefit towards the players' confidence:**

"I think it's good. We work so hard, starting from the minute we get back there. Obviously in the beginning it's more physical than it is on the court because we only have two hours on the court. But we're doing stuff on the court. Then of course we start practice, and the practices are long. We're watching film of ourselves. You get to the point where we've got to start playing some other people, and then you get into a routine of a couple days prep time, then you play that game, then you go a couple of more days prep time, play that game, and I think that's what the players are doing.

"At some point, it's time to play games. You can always argue, 'We could use another week. We could use another few days.' We're not necessarily sharp in every area, but everybody's in the same boat, so it's not like it's an advantage or disadvantage except for the teams that have more experience and the teams that more young guys. But that's just part of it. So I think our guys are into a routine. They're enjoying it. They've got a game tomorrow night, so we'll prepare for that one today, and then play tomorrow, then get ready for Creighton."

**On whether his teams are getting open looks that lead to the number of 3s already taken this season:**

*"I don't think that will continue. I don't think that will continue. I think a lot of it was the function of how those games went. North Carolina A&T is going to press and trap to the point where there's going to be open people, and we took open shots. Now what they do is fly at shooters and at times, we took a couple of 3s that were probably, in retrospect, ill-advised, but most of the time we were open and we made a decent amount. Same thing for Chicago State. It was a scramble game because we scrambled it defensively and ran our stuff and took open shots. We got some good shooters, so I'm not opposed to that.*

*"As the season goes on, we may be more of a 3-point shooting team than we were last year, and I said that from the beginning. We have a better shooting team. I want Oglesby to take a ton of 3s. Eric May and Matt Gatens are very good 3-point shooters. Marble can shoot the 3, Aaron White can shoot the 3, Zach McCabe can shoot the 3, and I'm not afraid of Cartwright shooting 3s. So I mean, we've got some players that can do it, and the critical thing is whether it's a 3 or a 2, you shoot when you're open. As long as we're open, we'll shoot them."*

**On what he wants to see besides a win Thursday as far as improvement is concerned:**

*"I think what you want to do is you want to get better collectively every time out. But then you look at each player individually, and you want them to be better. So if a guy didn't play so well, you want him to get back on track and play better. Cartwright, I thought he was really good the night, and obviously he wasn't so good in the opening night. That's part of it. I want Aaron White and Josh to come back and play the kind of games I think they're capable of playing. Same for Gabe.*

*"I thought [Devon] Archie was really good, then I didn't think he was so good. I want him to play better. I think we need more energy out of him. I didn't play him in the second half because he didn't give it to me at the start of the second half, and I told him that. I said, 'Your game is energy. Your game is running the floor, being active, being up toward the ball.' He was unbelievable in the Chicago State game with that, and he was not against A&T. So we have to make sure we consistently keep playing the way we're capable of playing individually, so collectively we're where we need to be."*

**On the challenge a freshman like Oglesby could have developing the mindset to shoot even when shots aren't falling:**

*"You know, I always thought it was hard when the coach was tough on you. With me, I screamed at him Monday night for not shooting two or three times when he should have shot. My stance has always been when I've got a guy that shoots the ball like Josh Oglesby, I'm just going to say, 'Just keep shooting. You've got to have amnesia. Forget the one you've missed and just make the next three. If you miss the next three, then make the next four.'"*

*"I think for him, that's not easy because he has never been that kind of player. I told him after the game, I said, 'Josh, you have to be a great shooter, but I didn't recruit you as a shooter. I recruited you as a player, so go make plays. At some level, he's probably thinking, 'Well, I'll go make plays as opposed to taking this many shots.' But I want him to make plays, and also fire. When he's open, he has got the green light. I don't want him even thinking about it. I don't care if he misses 10 in a row. Shoot the 11th."*

*"Because over the course of time, he's going to have a great shooting percentage. He's that good. But the other thing is he can pass the ball. Like I said, the other night he didn't make shots, but he made plays. So with him, it's just a matter of getting comfortable out there at this level. I'm going to play*



*him. I did him a disservice by not playing him more in the second half, and that won't happen again."*

**On whether the full court press will become a trademark or be more situational depending on the opponent:**

*"You know, I think we're all in, in the sense that we're going to do it pretty much every game. But not to the point where we're Loyola Marymount, and we're going to commit to it on every possession of every chance we get. I'm not there yet. But I feel like we have the team that can do it. I feel like they like playing that way. I feel like it gets our offense going, and we're going to do it a lot."*

**On the atmosphere he expects in Des Moines when Iowa plays Creighton on Sunday:**

*"Oh, I think when we scheduled the game, we knew it would be a great atmosphere. It will be a huge crowd, we're hoping, because our fans travel and their fans travel. So I think it should be a great one."*

**On the biggest areas of improvement he has seen thus far:**

*"Yeah, I just think we're doing more things. We're more consistent. We're not making as many mistakes, and I think, all things we would've expected with a little bit more experience, and a little bit more depth. We have got some guys that are playing really well. But again, the challenge will be as we move throughout the season, can we consistently perform at that level, especially when we get into league play, but also, we've got some really difficult opponents coming up here."*