

12/12/2011: 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:

McCaffery's opening statement:

"I think even though we lost two games this past week, I thought there were some real positives for our team. I thought in particular the play of Devyn Marble and the play of Melsahn Basabe, I think both of those young men are critical to our overall development. I think in our losses and in our wins, we've played well. But we have not been a consistent basketball team. That's probably why we're 5-5. But I do think there are some positives, and we're just trying to get better."

On what this week brings for him and for his players, and whether he foresees any lineup changes:

"I don't see us making any lineup changes. But at the same time, we're going to get after it this week pretty good. We had a pretty tough stretch. I don't think it's that much different than anybody else. You're playing in some type of tournament, which we did, and you're playing a lot of games and you're squeezing them in at the end of November, beginning of December, and then we have to take a week off for finals like everybody else."

"So we had a lot of one- and two-day preps, and I think that wore on us a little bit physically. Of course at the tough

times, you back off. We backed off a little bit to go with game-prep and keeping our key guys healthy as much as we could. Of course Bryce [Cartwright] has not been healthy. You know, [Andrew] Brommer was unhealthy for a little while. Then we've got some of our other guys that have been banged up. Fortunately, we have some other guys that aren't banged up.

"You know, you try to get people healthy. You try to go back and polish things up now that you have more time. When you don't have a game for a week, you can really spend time in practice working on the things that we think we haven't done well, and try to make them better, and try to work on individual players and try to make them better. We also work on conditioning.

"At the same time, realistically, this is finals week, so you might have two or three players that need extra time. In some ways, while we will practice pretty much every day – although we're off today – I have to look at this as practices are essentially optional if in fact our players need to see a tutor or go to a review session, or they might have one or two exams on that day. It might just be that time, and I'll give it to them and that's how it should be.

"We'll do some recruiting. I was out Saturday night. I'm going out tomorrow, actually Wednesday, and probably squeeze one more in. My assistants are all out. So that's kind of how we do it."

On Brommer's health and whether he's close to 100 percent:

"You know what, I think he appears to be physically where he needs to be. I think all of that time off clearly affected his conditioning. I think you're seeing him come around from a conditioning standpoint. A lot of his mistakes and a lot of his fouling I think comes as a result of being fatigued. So if he gets in better shape, and he was in great shape before he got hurt the first time, but when he got hurt the second time

then he got hit in the head, all of that together with the conditioning I think really has impacted his ability to be as good as he's capable of being, and he has been good. I'm very pleased with him. But I think you'll see him continue to get better."

On the impact different types of basketballs can have when playing on the road and whether he prepares his team for that:

"We do. We pretty much have every brand of basketball imaginable on hand, and then we'll incorporate usually two of those balls into the practice, so if we're doing something live, we're using the ball. If we're doing shooting drills, we don't have 12 of them, so we'll get the guys who take the most shots to use those basketballs and to shoot those free throws. But I think it's just one of those things that you have to deal with. I try not to make anything out of it.

"When we go on the road, so many things happen. You might have mechanical problems with the flight. You might have weather problems. Your keys might not be ready. The food might not be ready. You know, your practice time might not be the best for you in terms of matching it up with your pregame meal. What you try to do is just develop a complete tolerance to when we go on the road, we can deal with anything that happens and just go play the game, and if something happens, you just plow through it. You don't think about it too much. And that would be one of those things.

"I mean, it's a basketball. It's the same weight. It's the same size. It dribbles. Unless it's lopsided, just dribble it, pass it, shoot it. Don't worry about it. But that said, the first part of your question, yeah we will shoot an Adidas ball, a Rock ball, a Wilson, a Baden, whatever. We're a Nike team. A lot of teams are Nike. You're seeing more and more Nike on other teams and they'll always use Nike. So we'll have some of those on hand."

On whether he'd like to see all of college basketball use one type of basketball:

"No, I wouldn't. I don't think it matters that much, Number One, and Number Two, there are a lot of different companies that make basketballs that if you did that, it would significantly affect their company's ability to make money. It's a free market, and the fact that there are different basketballs is fine. Like I said, I don't see that there's that much difference in any of them, to be honest with you."