

12/21/2011: 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 Dec. 22 against Boise State at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

On the recent play from Aaron White and what has made him effective the last few games:

"Well, I think the thing with him is he does a lot of things well. I mean, he has obviously scored, but he has rebounded, he has facilitated, he has handled the ball. You know, he's not a mistake-maker. And I think what you're seeing is a guy who has got talent, who is becoming more and more comfortable with what we need him to do, what our team needs him to do. Because I think he's just going to keep getting better."

On his overall assessment of Eric May's play against Central Arkansas on Monday:

"I thought he had a great game. You know, he made some 3s. I thought he competed. He was active the entire game. His consistency of effort I think is really the key for him. I mean, there's going to be times when he is scoring at a higher clip than others, but you're never going to lack for effort. He's going to be able to guard a really good player, he's going to attack the rim, he's going to make the difference in the game, and I think he's at a point now where he's going to keep getting better as well."

On telling players right away to flush Monday's win and immediately place emphasis on Thursday's game against Boise State:

"Well, what I really wanted I think was a reflection on how good I thought they were. There was no disrespect to Central Arkansas. We did what we had to do in that game. But I don't think our guys fully knew or understood that we were going to playing a team that was 9-3, that has really good players and is playing together, and really has been one of the most impressive teams that I've watched on film. So I just felt like to get their attention, I needed to say that, and based on how we practiced [Tuesday], I think they understand that this is a team that, you know, is one of the best teams on our schedule right now."

On if he's closer to having a set rotation and determining how minutes will be divided among players:

"Yeah. But of course, it's always going to be a function of foul trouble and injury, and hopefully we can stay injury-free. You know, we've kind of got our guys back that were banged up. That has been good. But I don't think you'll see a lot of deviation. If you look at the minutes played right now, I mean, the only one right now in the 30s is Matt Gatens. [Andrew] Brommer's minutes are depleted because of his injury status earlier. I mean, everybody else is essentially between 17 and 24. They might go up and down a little bit, but that will be a function of who is playing well at that particular time."

On if there was anything strategic about scheduling Boise State or if it was merely scheduled for the sake of having a game:

"Well, I think when you schedule teams in the non-conference, you're going to schedule certain teams that you think you can beat. Then you're going to schedule certain teams that you

think are going to challenge you differently. I don't think that there was any doubt in our minds that we felt Boise was in that category, that they were a team that everybody has heard of. It's a team, you know, they've got athletes, they've got pieces, they've had success. They weren't as good last year as they were a couple of years ago. They were in the tournament.

"They are a team that they can sign good players. They can sign foreign players, which they have. They can sign junior college players. And they've got a coach that knows what he's doing. So we knew that we were going to get tested with this game, and the fact that it's here I think makes a lot of sense because of what we have coming right after it."

On if he believes the entire team now has the same expectations for Devyn Marble that he now has of him after the last 4 games:

"I do think they expect what you're talking about out of him. He's not a guy that at this point is doing a lot of talking. But I do think people respect him on the team because he competes, and he prepares, and he works hard. You know, he doesn't take possessions off in practice and he doesn't take possessions off in games. I mean, he really competes and if he makes a mistake, he plays through it. I think that's probably the best quality that he has.

"While he is incredibly talented, he can do a number of things, he doesn't rattle when things aren't going well for us. He doesn't rattle when things aren't going well for himself. He comes back and tries to impact the game in a positive way, and I think what that does is positively rub off onto everyone else, so in that sense, I think people on the team are able to rally behind him. But he hasn't gotten himself to the point yet where he's doing a lot of talking in the locker room or calling meetings or anything like that. He's not to that point yet, but I think there's a definite

confidence on behalf of the other players that know that he can run our club."

On what he sees in Boise State that could lead to challenges Thursday:

"Well right away, you can tell that they have talent. O.K., so they have size, they have speed, they have shooters. They kind of remind me of some of the teams on our schedule already. They've got seven 3-point shooters, but they've got drivers and they've got some size in the post. They've got low-post scoring options. You know, they're kind of have two of everything, and those kind of teams are hard to prepare for because the guy that backs up the starter might actually be the guy that hurts you the most in that game. So that is part of it.

"The other part of it is they execute their stuff really well offensively. I mean, they really do. They move the ball, their spacing is excellent. You know, they have action that's not easy to guard, there's misdirection, there's handoffs, there's all kinds of stuff. Counters, and that really challenges your defense, and for us, a team that has really struggled in that area, they will challenge us in a big way."

On whether Boise State having played two opponents Iowa has also played this season can be of benefit in terms of preparation:

"You know what, it's not that big of a deal. You know, it's really not. I mean, they played Northern Illinois at home, they played Drake at home. Drake was one of those games, they made 14 3s, and Drake got off to a bad start and they did what we did against Creighton. They started quick-shooting the ball, and it was over.

"So, it's interesting to watch and I think it gets the attention of our players because they respect Drake so much. They say, 'Wait a minute. This team beat Drake by 40.' I mean,

that in itself is going to get our attention. But I look at other things. I mean, we'll watch 10 games. We'll go into, 'What did they do against LSU on the road? What did they do against Drake at home?' Those are the kinds of things we're looking at and we put it all together."

On what Boise State's leading scorer, Anthony Drmic, brings to the table:

"He does everything. I mean, he can dribble, pass and shoot. He can rebound. He's a 3-point shooter. He's a driver. He's tough. He can pass. He's smart, skilled. I mean, he's a guy that, he's a handful. I mean, you've got to pay attention. 'Where is he?' You've got to pick him up early. You've got to stay with him. They're going to run stuff for him. If he scores, they'll come back to him. He's that good."

On whether a strong end to non-conference play can lead to early momentum entering Big Ten play next week:

"Well, I think absolutely. But for us, we need to figure out how to win. We need to figure out how to overcome stretches if we're not playing well, and overcome stretches where the other team is playing well, and we've got to do that against good teams. We've got a good team coming here. At some point, they're going to play well. We have to get after it defensively. We have to get after the 3-point shooters. We can't give them 14 3s. You know, we can't give them 10 3s. I mean, this is a team that is capable of making that many."

"We've got to get after their good players. We've got to defend the post. What Boise brings in here tomorrow night is what's coming 18 more times after that – quality players at every position, and a winning attitude. They're 9-3, and we have to develop a winning attitude. We've won more than we've lost. We feel like we could have won more than we've won. All right, so we didn't. What do we have to do to correct that? What do we have to do to beat good teams? Well, you focus in

practice and you get effort, and we've got individuals that are stepping up, and then collectively, we've been better. Well, this is another test."

On how close he feels his team is to developing that winning attitude he described:

"Well, we're certainly a lot closer. You know, I do think as well as Marble has played, and he has been spectacular, we need [Bryce] Cartwright, too. We need both of those guys, you know, I do think for us to have the kind of team that we can have. What you're seeing is you're seeing an improved [Melsahn] Basabe, but you're seeing an Aaron White that is playing great. We need both of those guys. Zach McCabe is playing well, but Andrew Brommer is playing well and he's the healthiest he has been. I think that's important for us as well.

"So you know, I think when you look across the board, I mean we're kind of getting what I thought we would get out of Eric and Matt as experienced guys that are athletic and can play the wing position. So we're slowly putting the pieces together that will help us endure a season in a very rugged conference with great teams and great coaches."

On whether Cartwright will return to the starting lineup or if Marble has maybe done enough to stay as a starter:

"Right now, [Marble]'s in there. You know, I don't think beyond the immediate when it comes to that. I mean, he may be out, we may put Bryce back in there. I think it will be a function of how our team, how Bryce does, and how Dev continues to perform. What you're seeing with Dev in particular, obviously we saw last year what he's doing now, but he has taken that step. He's much more consistent, and I think what you're seeing is a much more mature player.

"It's good for us, it's good for him, and the good thing is Bryce Cartwright has started to come into his own. His assist

numbers have been great. I think he'll score more as he gets more and more comfortable. But he's feeling a lot better."

On if Cartwright's eight assists off the bench Monday night is a sign of him being close to coming back:

"Yeah. You know, I thought he was really good. Now, he's struggling offensively and I think that's affecting him. He knows he can score. He wants to score. We want him to score. I mean, he averaged 10 points a game last year. You know, the interesting thing now is he's averaging six, so it's not like he went from 10 to zero. You're one or two baskets here or there, and I think that will come. The more that that comes, the better we're going to be and the better it will be for him.

"But for him, it was a matter of how he was not right. He just wasn't. He wasn't right with his head. He wasn't right with his hamstring. He's just one of those guys, when he's banged up like that, he's not the same. It's understandable when you're the point guard. You have so much to think about. When you're trying to battle through headaches, that's not a good thing."

On whether he knows if Boise State wanted a home-and-home including a return trip by Iowa to Boise or this game's a one-time deal:

"I don't know the answer to that. I don't remember that being part of the discussion."

On how much contact he has with Roy Marble when it comes to Devyn Marble:

"I know that he's around to help Devyn with all of those things that you just described. But in regard to our relationship, it's a very good one. But my relationship with him is respectful as our all-time leading scorer and somebody that I want to be around this program. There's no conversation

with regard to anything specific because I think he understands what my job is, and what he is is he's a father to his son. He can give him advice, and I respect what he tells him. If I ever thought it was an issue, I would step in. But I have total confidence in what he is telling his son, and he and I never talk about it."