

# 1/16/2012: State of the Big Ten, Volume 51 (premium)

*Every Monday, we will be running a weekly series titled "State of the Big Ten," which will be made available to all members of HawkeyeDrive.com. This series of columns will focus on one major headline regarding the conference and go in-depth on the subject at hand.*

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

When Iowa lost to then-No. 6 Michigan State back on Jan. 10, the one moment fresh in the minds of those who witnessed took place during the second half. After a technical foul was called on the Hawkeyes, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery took out displeasure of his team's play on a folding chair, slamming it to the Breslin Center hardwood.

McCaffery said last week he had no regrets, mentioning how he was brought to Iowa to "change the culture." While McCaffery wasn't disciplined in any way for what took place, Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany told *USA Today* via email that future conduct would be examined closely.

In all honesty, this is much ado about nothing. The "Wrath of Fran" (as coined by members of the Iowa media) doesn't come as a surprise to anyone around the program. In fact, when McCaffery was first hired, Iowa basketball's campaign slogan was about getting "mad" again.

What has to be remembered here is two things: 1. No one was harmed. 2. McCaffery's anger was directed at his players, not the officiating. Seeing how the only people that truly know what was said during that timeout would be McCaffery and his players, what grounds could there even be for reprimanding

him?

Those who attempt comparing this to Bob Knight throwing his chair across the court in 1984 have to recognize the difference here. McCaffery simply picked the chair up and slammed it down. That's all he did.

If anything, this brings attention to what he's doing at Iowa. Right now, the program remains in a state where any non-scandal related publicity is good publicity. He obviously got his players' attention because they managed to respond and beat the No. 13 team in the country by 16 points at home over the weekend.

It also, to some degree, makes Iowa relevant in the sport again. Whether the publicity over "Chair-gate" was negative or not, national pundits on shows like "Around the Horn" and "Pardon the Interruption" and what have you were discussing Iowa basketball. That goes along with the part of changing the culture McCaffery alluded to late last week.

There's nothing wrong with a coach showing emotion, at least there shouldn't be. If they're not fully invested in doing whatever it takes to win, there's no reason to pay them the kind of money that some of them make. Now was what McCaffery did in East Lansing last week a tad over the top? Perhaps. But again, it's not like he berated an official or did something that warranted an ejection, fine or suspension.

In the end, McCaffery will grow from this. No one should expect him to change his personality or demeanor, and to be fair to Delany, I don't think that's entirely the case here. He'll probably be more aware and might think twice about slamming objects such as a folding chair when disgusted by his team's play, but the one thing that's clear is players feed off the energy he brings night in and night out. That's what Iowa paid for, and that's what the rest of the Big Ten is getting.