

1/30/2012: 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:

"We had a week that was not positive for us, and I'm not happy at all with how we're playing. We've got to get better at the defensive end of the floor. We shuffled the lineup a little bit to see if that would help. I think it helped in some areas, maybe not so much in others. We've got a couple of important days of practice coming up."

On whether any goals are set specifically with regards to defense and how they adapt as the season progresses:

"We don't write anything down. We just teach defense. We put our stuff in, and I think we'll look and see how the games come. I'm not one for charting everything that happens. I mean, I think you can see that we're not playing good defense, and if we were playing good defense, I think you can see that."

On what sort of drill might be done in practice to emphasize defensive effort:

"Well, I don't think there's any one drill that we do. What we'll do is we'll do a number of drills that try to correct the inefficiencies that exist at the present time. Right now, there's really not many drills that are working. I don't think

it's a matter of drills. I don't think it's a matter of fundamentals. It's a matter of desire to stop the guy that's in front of you, and right now, we don't have it."

On what his defensive approach was at Siena and how he's trying to translate that to Iowa:

"You know, we're pretty much doing the same things. You know, nothing has changed. I think over the years, you sort of have a philosophy in your head that ultimately becomes changed or influenced, and you tweak it based on experiences you have with other coaches and other experiences you have along the way. Obviously, my philosophy is we want to go. We want to push the ball. I'm O.K. giving up a certain number of points, as long as our offense is superior.

"Along the way, you develop a sense of, 'We need a stop,' or, 'We need to buckle down. We need to slow it down.' 'We need to make this a half-court game. It's not a full-court game right now.' You know, that's what my influences have been. Coach [John] MacLeod would like to run, but we would dig in defensively at half-court. Digger Phelps was a changing defensive guy. My college coach Bob Weinbauer was a changing defensive guy. So there's a little bit of all of that, along with my own particular philosophy.

"I'll be honest with you, I have never gone through with any team I've been associated with what we're going through right now. I am really working hard to try and get it corrected, and there's a couple of ways to do that. You can obviously work on drills, 1-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-3, 4-on-4, 5-on-5. Ultimately, you have got to put it together. You try different combinations.

"But ultimately, it comes down to a matter of toughness, and we lack that right now. I don't mind saying it. We don't have the toughness that's necessary to defend in this league, and somehow, it's incumbent upon me and my staff to get our guys

to not only be able to execute fundamentally, but to be more physical, be tougher, and do it more consistently.

"At times, we have been tough. At times, we have shown tremendous defensive capability. But for the most part, it has not been consistent basis, and the teams that win are the ones that do it on a consistent basis."

On whether he remains confident that what he brought to the Big Ten will ultimately work in the Big Ten:

"No, nothing has changed my mind. I don't mind being in a 103-89 game. I just don't want to have 89. I don't want to give up 103. Wisconsin's defense, they give up 52 points, but they're scoring 61. That's the style that that particular program is comfortable with. I want to score more, so I'm going to give up more. I'm O.K. with that, but we can't have the stretches where they're scoring 11 possessions in a row, or 21 out of 25 possessions in a row. You know, I don't care what your philosophy is. You can't win playing defense that way."

On what Bryce Cartwright gives the team as a starter that maybe he didn't off the bench:

"I don't know if he gives us anything else. I think what he does... I think it's better for him. He seems to enjoy starting and may be more comfortable starting, but I don't think he gives us anything more than he was."

On if there was more to the performance of Josh Oglesby against Indiana than just making shots:

"Well, I think you're right. I think he did that. I think it's a function of it's taking a little bit of time for him to figure that exact part of the game out. You know, you leave him out there and you let him decide, 'Is this a good shot? Do I shot-fake- drive? Do I move it on?' The one thing he's going to do is he's going to keep moving without the ball, and he's

going to be a threat and teams are going to have to guard him. Sometimes they guard him closer than others, but most of the time, they guard him pretty closely.

"For him, I thought the way he mixed it up [Sunday], he got himself open and made shots, and then when they were on him, he either drove it and made a play, or he drove it and pulled up, and that's the thing about him. He's not a catch-and-shoot, stand-still 3-point shooter. He can shot-fake-drive, he can shot-fake and shoot the mid-range jumper, and that's why I think he's going to be great."

On whether there's anything strategic to playing fast in an otherwise slow Big Ten:

"Well, the hardest thing has been, you know, I've always pressed more. I'd like to press more. And we still press. We still press a fair amount. But you have to be really, really careful in this league strictly because of the talented guards, and more importantly, the talented front-court guys, all of whom can handle the ball. So you really have to, I said I've been reluctant to go to the press on every made basket, every opportunity, because I really think you open up the floor to really talented players. So from that standpoint, I think it has been harder to employ the complete style that I would like to. But that's just a function of where you are.

"In terms of offensively, I think we've been able to do it. It has not always been 100 percent successful, but it's a style of play that our players like. They've become pretty good at it. We can still get better. You know, we're going to push the ball. We're going to attack. We'll go with the quick-up, and see what happens from there. But again, you have to have something behind it. You have to be able to run a set play or run the motion offense effectively, and I think the real trick there is understanding when to go and when not to go. That's the real key, and ultimately, that comes down to your point guard.

"I think we're seeing [Devyn] Marble do a better job of it now than he did last year because he was in his first year doing it. Same thing with Bryce. They're both doing a better job of that. You know, I think Bryce [Sunday], you look at eight points and eight assists, it's a good game. But six [turnovers], so that's where we went a little bit sideways. You know, I'm expecting, if we're going to push it, push it, push it, he might have four, he might have three, but he can't have six. Not on the road at Indiana. So it's a constant work in progress."