

2/6/2012: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery's teleconference on Monday with the Big Ten media:

McCaffery's opening statement:

"Well, I think this week was a good week for us. We get a comeback victory against a really good Minnesota team that was playing very well and then to play as well as we did on Saturday against Penn State and put two back-to-back I think is a good step for us. I think Aaron White in particular, being co-Freshman of the Week, has really taken his game to another level, and it's really fun to watch him continue to get better and better every game."

On whether Matt Gatens has been the one consistent element this season for the Hawkeyes:

"Well, I think that's true because the thing about him, and there have been games where he has been off, but he shot the ball and he typically scores relatively consistently because he's always going to make his free throws. But the thing that makes him special is his consistency of effort and his consistency at the defensive end of the floor. So what you're going to get is you're going to get a very good performance from him even if he shoots, you know, 6-for-15, or even less than that because you're going to get his ability to stop the other team's best perimeter player and he's going to get on the glass, he's going to get to the free-throw line, and set

an example for our younger guys on how you have to compete."

On whether Gatens' consistency surprises him since McCaffery's a Phillie fan and Gatens a Cub fan:

"I'll tell you what – I have respect for any Cub fan."

On if he has gotten the impression that Northwestern's John Shurna is playing with urgency and like a senior:

"You know, from the minute I got here, he has been phenomenally impressive. I mean, you talk about consistency and the thing about him is he plays at such a great energy level. Everybody focuses on stopping him, yet he always seems to be open, and if he's open, he puts it in the hole. But I think this year, he has played with a confidence level of a guy who expects to be a first-team all-league player, a guy who wants to play when he's done at Northwestern, and I think that has really helped that team. You look at them right now, they're a team that I think is making a run to get in the NCAA Tournament legitimately. They've got some real quality wins. They had a great non-conference part of their schedule, and I think right now, probably playing as well as they've been playing all year long."

On what he thinks about first when preparing for Northwestern? (Princeton offense, 1-3-1, Shurna, etc.)

"Well, I don't think it's one. I think it's all of that. But you know, it's not just Shurna. I think [Drew] Crawford's playing well. I think [Dave] Sobolewski is playing as well as any freshman point guard in the country and that's so important with what they lost. [Michael] Thompson was such a big part of their team last year. Anything short of the contributions they're getting now at point, and they would not be where they are regardless of how [Reggie] Hearn and Crawford are playing, you know, and certainly [Alex] Marcotullio, [Davide] Curletti. I mean, those guys are playing really good basketball, but they need that guy handling the

ball. You know, I've played and coached against the Princeton style for so many years, I mean, you've got to have somebody who's solid with the ball, and not only is he that, but he can score. I think he gives them another weapon as you're trying to figure out how to defend their offense."

On Aaron White's contributions last week and the effort he has provided:

"Well, his line Saturday – 17 points, nine rebounds, he had four assists, three blocks, two steals – he's a guy that impacts the game in so many different ways with his length and with his feel for how to play. He's shooting the ball pretty well right now from the perimeter. When you have a 6-9 guy who is making 3s, who can also put it on the deck and go dunk it and make a play for somebody else, that's a guy that other teams are going to have to game-plan against, and it's great to have that, especially with a freshman."

On whether he's surprised by what he sees from White in transition or if that was something he saw in him early on:

"Well, I think the impressive thing is how he has developed his stamina to be able to continue to do it, because if you're going to do that, you're only going to get it once or twice if you're lucky because teams are going to run back. So what you have to do is you have to run all the time. When I was at Notre Dame, we had Pat Garrity, who did that. He just ran hard all the time and Aaron has got that same kind of speed and length. Earlier in the year he was doing it, but he wasn't doing it as consistently. Now I'm playing him more, so he's getting his body ready to play 32-35 minutes a game and that's what I need him to do."

On if White's performance against Penn State was as complete as he has seen as a coach:

"And you know what, he was stealing the ball, he was defending. You wonder sometimes, 'Can he guard the smaller

guy? Can he guard the bigger guy?' But he's able to do that because he figures out, 'If he's smaller, I can take advantage with my length,' and he's much stronger than he looks and he takes advantage of that inside because he can really jump. So he's a terrific weapon to have on offense, but he can, he has got the ability to affect the game at the defensive end of the floor as well."