

# 2/13/2012: 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:**

*"Obviously this week, we did not play well against Northwestern. I think they had a lot to do with that. They shot it well, they executed well. I think that's a team that's playing as well as anybody in our league right now. We have to be better as we prepare for Penn State on Thursday."*

## **On his overall take regarding Big Ten bye weeks:**

*"To be truthful, I'm sort of indifferent. You know, when they come, I tend to look at the positive side of it. You know, 'Hey, we got 2-3 guys banged up. Hey, we can go back and work on some things that maybe we haven't been doing well.' If the games come quick, then the games come quick. You go put the game plan together and hopefully we always have a two-day prep, typically. Occasionally, there's a one-day prep. None of us like one-day preps. But as long as you have a two-day prep and you're playing games, you got to get into that mode and then you just go from there. So I don't pay really any attention to them, to be perfectly honest with you."*

## **On how soon he felt Aaron White could cut it in the Big Ten observing practices:**

*"Very quickly. You know, it's funny. The first couple of*

practices, he was nervous. By the third or fourth practice, he was dominant and then you said, 'O.K., this guy's going to be special.' You know, it's rare that a freshman plays as well at practice, especially at this level, that quickly. I say nervous, he wasn't nervous to where he was making mistakes. He was trying so hard to be perfect that he was imperfect.

"Once he figured out this kind of play, then he was doing all the things that you see him do in games. So you look at his size and his length and his athletic ability, but then you couple that with his skill set and you got a very, very special player. The thing that, as much homework as we may try to do, and you can get a pretty good sense, but you're never really 100 percent sure of how hard of a worker you have until you get him and he's one of the hardest workers I've ever had.

"Not only are we excited about where he is, but I think that bodes well for where he's heading."

**On if he notices White having a chip on his shoulders:**

"You know what, I really don't get that sense at all. To me, I look at a guy that's very confident in his ability and he just prepares for his next opponent and he goes out and plays well. You know, he doesn't get caught up in the trappings of the game."

**On whether he has been able to use the recent time off to get his players refocused at the defensive end of the floor:**

"Well, we've already done that. You know, that's the problem. I mean, we have some issues that we have to address. Sometimes you have to come at them from a different angle. 'O.K., we're struggling defensively. How much of it was, we struggled guarding the Northwestern offense? How much was it that we had a tired personnel? How much of it was that fundamentally, we were ineffective?' You know, you break it all down and then you try to figure out, 'O.K., do we sub sooner? Do we hold more guys accountable?'

*"I mean, we had breakdowns early in that game and I think that's one of the things that would concern any coach. As the game goes on, you're going to get some breakdowns. You know, teams are going to make adjustments, your kids are going to get tired, things of that nature. But the breakdowns we had shouldn't have been occurring as early as they did in that game. That was what was disappointing to me. So we tried to address that and work on that, and hopefully we'll get better."*

**On whether playing the 5 has stunted Zach McCabe's growth or whether it has been of any benefit:**

*"I think most of the time, he's fine. You know occasionally, he's just giving up too much size and I think that's a lot to ask for him. So in that respect, I don't look at it like it's stunting his growth. I look at it as a guy who's willing to accept the challenge of fulfilling a need that his team has, doing the best he can."*

*"You know you're going to get the best every night that Zach McCabe has, so I'm really proud of him. There are times where he's going against guys that are six inches taller. Well, that's just the nature of the beast and hopefully we'll be able to rectify that next year when Adam Woodbury gets here."*

*"In terms of how I've adjusted with it over the years, I've had it both ways. I had a 7-2 center when I was at Greensboro for a couple of years and then I went smaller and quicker at times. You know, I think you just adjust based on that. You might play a little faster, you might play a little quicker if you're smaller. You might play a little more half-court if you're bigger. You might play a little more zone if you're bigger."*

*"Sometimes you have to play man-to-man because you can't just sit in the zone either when they're a lot bigger than you, so it's a matter of constant adjustment. You play the guys you*

*have and you scheme for whoever you're going against based on those factors at that time."*

**On whether McCabe will benefit from the versatility he has had to show early in his career:**

*"Well, I think the thing that's really going to help him is he has now had the opportunity to play multiple minutes at the 3, multiple minutes at the 4, multiple minutes at the 5. So he knows exactly what he has to do at all of those positions. Now in his junior year, when he's going to be at his peak physically, he's also going to be at his peak mentally. To have a versatile player like that who's confident is really going to help our team immensely."*

**On what makes Northwestern a difficult prep and tough to deal with:**

*"Well, any time you're playing a team that has multiple 3-point shooters, that's going to stretch your defense. But they're not just spotting up. They're a running offense. It's all predicated on reads and hard cuts and brush screens and flare screens and flat-flare screens and back picks."*

*"You know, it's going to be a situation where it's going to really take complete concentration from all five players the entire possession, and it's a team you don't want to get behind. If you get behind 10, it's like being down 25. They're going to spread you out and they're going to make shots and they're going to dump it in, they're going to dump it out."*

*"So it's going to really be an opportunity for Indiana to show the kind of defense that they can play. I think they have the length and the depth and the athletes that can do it. The other thing that Indiana has is they're a terrific rebounding team, so the last thing you want to do is give Northwestern second-shot opportunities because now you've got to play defense for a minute, a minute-and-a-half, and that really wears on you after awhile. You know, I think that's a good*

*match-up in a lot of different ways.*

*“Like I said though, the thing about Northwestern, earlier in the year, nobody was talking about [Reggie] Hearn. Now he gets 20 at Illinois, plays well against us, he’s playing extremely well. [Dave] Sobolewski was a freshman. Nobody was sure what he was going to do. He’s probably one of the best freshmen in the league and one of the best point guards in the league. You knew what [John] Shurna was going to do. You knew what [Drew] Crawford was going to do, but they’re really getting quality minutes. They’re only playing six guys and they’re still effective. I think that goes to show you the quality of that offense.”*