

10/11/2012: Iowa Media Day notebook



Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery talks about the Hawkeyes' upcoming 2012-13 season during a press conference as part of the team's annual Media Day on Oct. 11, 2012, at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. McCaffery is entering his third season as Iowa's head coach.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The theme surrounding the Iowa men's basketball program as it begins its 2012-13 season is "consistency."

The Hawkeyes made enough strides last season where they went from nearly irrelevant before Fran McCaffery's arrival on campus in 2010 to reaching the NIT, where Iowa defeated Dayton in the first round before losing its following game at Oregon. But there wasn't enough consistency in place to ultimately catapult the team into its first NCAA tournament appearance since 2006.

Ask McCaffery about any of his key contributors returning from last year, and among the expectations he has for all of them is to be more consistent. When speaking Thursday at Iowa's Media Day about individual players like Devyn Marble, Aaron White or Melsahn Basabe, the word "consistency" came up in some way, shape or form.

"I think consistency is the key to pretty much anything," McCaffery said. "As far as that's concerned, I'm expecting much more consistent effort per man, much more consistent effort at the defensive end of the floor.

"If we cut down on our turnovers, play a little better defense and fewer second shot opportunities, the shooting percentages are going to go down. Our running opportunities are going to increase and we'll certainly be better off."

The one player McCaffery referred to as "the model of consistency" is junior forward Zach McCabe, who entered the starting lineup five games into last season and never looked back. It's not so much the stats that allowed McCabe to demonstrate consistency regularly (he averaged 7.8 points and 4.6 rebounds per game as a sophomore). It was more so that McCabe knew what his role was at any given moment, no matter what position he was being asked to play.

"It's the type of thing that I always thought I brought to the team that sometimes some other people don't," McCabe said. "Just bringing the same hustle night in and night out, being consistent with shots, being offensive and being defensive.

"That type of consistency can help a team in the long run and having a player like me that can do that gets me excited to help this team out even more."

Should McCaffery get that consistency he's looking for across the board, the Hawkeyes are a team that could reach what they deem a realistic goal this year of being among the Field of 68 playing in the NCAA tournament come March. McCaffery knows

it's an expectation from a portion of the fan base. It's also an expectation the players have placed on themselves.

"I want to get to the NCAA tournament. It's really something I want to do before I leave Iowa," Marble said. "I came here with that goal out of high school saying that I wanted to go.

"I'm this close. I want it bad. I'm going to do whatever it takes to get there."

May still standing

For all the change that has taken place from the moment McCaffery arrived to present day, one of the few constants has been forward Eric May.

The only senior on scholarship, May is also the only holdover remaining from the previous coaching regime. The 2009 recruiting class he was part of featured three other players – two other freshmen besides May that have both transferred to Horizon League schools and the recently departed Devon Archie, who came to Iowa as a junior college transfer.

"I'm glad I can be the constant guy that has been here," May said. "It is crazy to see that. It's almost like a different team, a different school almost. I'm really excited at how things have changed.

"That's why I chose Iowa. I want to be part of turning this program around and that's what we're trying to do."

But while May might appear like he's an outsider on the surface, he's far from one. In fact, he's one of the most important cogs this team possesses. During the pep rally portion of Hawkapalooza last month, McCaffery introduced each player by name. The last player introduced was "Team Captain Eric May."

"It means a lot," May said. "It means the coaches have faith in me. They trust me to make the right decisions to help guide

my team.

“I don’t try to be overly vocal or try to overwhelm guys and all that. But I feel like if something needs to be said, I’ll say it. I’m not going to let something be a problem because I’m afraid to talk.”

While May’s role on the team might be even more limited now given the depth McCaffery has to work with this season, the third-year head coach hasn’t forgotten about the one current player that remains from the group he initially inherited.

“I know that he’s hungry to have a senior year that he’ll be able to remember,” McCaffery said. “I hope that that’s how it works out.”

Freshmen nicknames

The Hawkeyes enter this upcoming season with the most depth McCaffery has had at Iowa, thanks in large part to a freshmen class featuring five players that could all be seeing some playing time right away.

Two in particular – Mike Gesell and Adam Woodbury – are likely to start from the get-go with Gesell at the 1 and Woodbury at the 5. Guards Anthony Clemmons and Patrick Ingram both were brought in for their defensive prowess. Forward Kyle Meyer comes in at 6-10 and adds to the amount of height Iowa possesses in its front court.

With this heralded quintet of freshmen on board this season, sophomore center Gabe Olaseni took it upon himself to come up with nicknames for all of them. Some like Clemmons and Ingram already had well-established nicknames. Then there are those like Woodbury, who Olaseni said he has a bunch of nicknames for.

“With Adam Woodbury, I call him anything from ‘Woodrow Wilson’ to ‘Woody Awards’ to ‘Big Wood,’” Olaseni said. “He has got

multiple nicknames. No one calls him Adam, which is kind of crazy to me.”

Gesell, the only freshman Olaseni couldn't come up with a nickname for, said he gets called “Money Mike” by assistant coach Andrew Francis. Meanwhile, Meyer said he was given the nickname “Franchise” while in high school. “Franchise” has since appeared to follow Meyer to Carver-Hawkeye Arena from his home state of Georgia.

“‘Franchise’ has gone through the coaches and the managers all call me it, so it’s probably going to click eventually,” Meyer said.

Ingram’s commonly referred to as “Nephew,” while all the players call Clemmons, “Sapp,” a nickname he received from his football coach growing up in Lansing, Mich. The “Sapp” is in reference to former Tampa Bay Buccaneers defensive lineman Warren Sapp, who Clemmons said was his favorite football player as a kid.

“I was No. 99. I was a little short, fat, chubby kid that played defensive tackle,” Clemmons said. “I was kind of quick and got to the line a lot, so they just called me ‘Baby Sapp.’ Once I grew, ‘Sapp’ just stuck with me.”

[10/11/2012 – Fran McCaffery press conference transcript \(Source: UI Sports Info.\)](#)

AUDIO:

[Josh Oglesby](#)

[Gabe Olaseni](#)

[Aaron White](#)

[Devyn Marble](#)

[Melsahn Basabe](#)

[Mike Gesell](#)

[Adam Woodbury](#)

[Zach McCabe](#)

[Eric May](#)

[Kyle Meyer](#)

[Patrick Ingram](#)

[Anthony Clemmons](#)

[Darius Stokes](#)

[Kirk Speraw](#)