

# 11/14/2012: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery held a teleconference with the local media on Wednesday prior to the Hawkeyes' game on Nov. 15 against Howard at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. The lone topic of the teleconference was West Des Moines Valley High School senior Peter Jok, who signed his letter of intent with Iowa on Wednesday.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

**On how he kept line of communications open with Jok as he recovered from injury and how everything came about in recruiting him:**

*"You know, it was just ongoing. When I first got here, he was one of the first people I reached out to and we were fortunate enough to get him on campus and again, have the relationship with him that way. We had up to some football games and basketball games and then we would go see him play in various tournaments. Then we'd go up and see him at school, see him at both high schools he attended.*

*"I remember watching him in a game when he was clearing struggling with his knee as a sophomore. He wasn't himself and he struggled though, with the kind of injury he had, he had surgery and needed to do some other type of rehabilitation, a different kind of surgery. He decided to have it. Then his rehabilitation didn't go the way he had hoped.*

*"You know, it was at that point where he wasn't playing much.*

A lot of people lost track of him a little bit, weren't sure what he was going to be doing. We just kept talking to him and kept going to see him. I remember going to see him and he didn't play well, but I had seen him play two years prior to that so I knew how good he was. Then as he started getting healthy again, you saw the real Peter Jok.

"You're evaluating a lot of different things when you're recruiting. Athletic ability is one of them and that went away from him for a period of time when he was recovering from his injury. But I'm a basketball coach and I need to recruit good basketball players. He can pass it, he can handle it, he can really shoot it. He understands how to play in the pick-and-roll. He can play fast, he can play in the half-court, he can post up, he can rebound. I mean, he has really got a complete skill set and as we have seen his athletic ability come back in the last six months, now you're talking about somebody that I think has a chance to be really special."

**On banking the scholarship for this year and when he specifically zeroed in on Jok:**

"Well, it was as the summer went on. We watched him in a couple of different situations and you could see very clearly that not only was he back physically, he had his swagger back. I think that went away for a little while. You know, he was so dominant and then he couldn't make the kind of moves that he wanted to make and he was frustrated and I've been really impressed with how mature he handled the situation.

"So we just kept watching him because we believed in him and he played really well this summer, I thought. Then we went up and watched him when school started again. Every time either myself or Coach [Kirk] Speraw or Coach [Andrew] Francis, Coach [Sherman] Dillard, any of us saw him, he was better than the last time we saw him.

"We knew what he was dealing with with regards to his injury,

*in fairness to the program and the institution and without question, he has done everything that he needs to do. His surgery is behind him and we are absolutely ecstatic that he's going to be joining the Hawkeye family."*

**On if Jok having played AAU ball with Mike Gesell and Adam Woodbury played a role and if AAU familiarity in general plays a role in his recruiting style:**

*"Well, I think when we first started going after Mike and Adam, and of course we were recruiting [North Carolina guard] Marcus [Paige] on that team and we looked at other guys on that team. We were recruiting [Ball State center] Mading Thok for a while. We felt like we needed to analyze thoroughly and decide who do we really want to offer, who do we want to have on our team, and we were thrilled to get Adam and Mike.*

*"As you go to the next class, it's nice that they've played together, it's nice that they have familiarity with one another. They really enjoy each other's company. They liked playing together. That's a positive. But in regards to making a decision, especially in a year where we only had one scholarship, it's a lot more than that. That might be one component of it, but he had to pass the test in our mind as this is a bonafide Big Ten player that can help us win a championship.*

*"In fairness to him, if we had felt anything other than that, then we shouldn't recruit him. We should let him go somewhere else. And I think throughout the process, he appreciated that. He knew what we were doing and he just kept plugging away. You know, the relationship was strong between us and he and his family. We're just happy with the way it ended."*

**On how much of a logjam might exist at the 3 and 4 spots with Jok's addition next year:**

*"I don't think there's ever a logjam. I mean, every school has got 13 scholarships. Every school has 13 guys that are*

*expected to play and that's what we have. So I don't view it as a logjam and particularly in Peter's case, he can play four positions. So I'm not worried about him."*

**On if he could end up having a role similar to the one currently played by Devyn Marble:**

*"Well, his game is a little bit different than Dev. I think it would be great if they played together at times. They can play one behind the other. The thing about Peter is, because he's a really good 3-point shooter, maybe not as much off the dribble as Dev is. I mean, Dev's really good at getting to the rim, although Peter's very good.*

*"Peter's a really, really good passer and can play the point, as can Dev. So you put those two guys out there and you have two guys that are 6-6 that can pretty much do everything. So I can see him as the guy who ultimately replaces Dev obviously and hopefully they'll play together for a little bit."*

**On the importance of having successfully been able to recruit marquee players from the state in each of his recruiting classes thus far at Iowa:**

*"Well, I think it's imperative that we thoroughly analyze the state and make decisions. The unfortunate thing is there are a lot of good players in the state, some of whom we can't take. There are other players out there that would've been really good players for us, there's no question about it. So we try to make the best assessment and make the best decisions. I think it's important.*

*"If you look at our team now, with Josh [Oglesby] and Jarrod [Uthoff], Eric May and Zach [McCabe]. I mean, you go right on down the line with Peter, with Adam and even though Mike's from Nebraska, he was on the Iowa AAU team. And then we have Iowa walk-ons. So there's clearly an Iowa presence and there should be on our team.*

*"But at the same time, like I've said before, it's important that we continue to assess the best we can and make decisions based on those guys that we think are going to be big-time Big Ten players."*

**On what went into doing "due diligence" with regards to Jok's knee injury:**

*"Well, I think we had a really thorough and open dialogue with Peter and his family. It starts there. But he came down, he brought all of his information down – X-rays, MRIs – and we had our doctors review it and there was no hesitation whatsoever, which is what we expected because before they looked at that stuff, there was phone conversation. So we were fairly certain what they were going to see, but we wanted to be that much more thorough."*

*"He had the same surgery that Tim McCormick, who played in the NBA and played at Michigan, had. Timmy was great. He had talked at an NBA player's camp about it and said it's a long process. It's longer than an ACL, so you start thinking, 'Well, an ACL's about the worst thing you can go through,' but this is just different. Probably not worse in the general scheme of things, but a longer rehabilitation process and I think that was what was frustrating for him because when you're a high-school person and all of a sudden, your career is disrupted for 15-18 months, that's a long time."*

*"We were able to just gather all of that information and have an open dialogue. When you go, I remember the last time I saw him, he ran a guy down from the back and hit a shot above the square and landed funny, then popped right back up and ran down the floor like nothing happened. It was good to see him go through that experience."*

**On if he felt Jok was where he wanted him to be following a recent open gym:**

*"We definitely felt like he was right where we wanted him to*

be. We were there before that, to be honest with you. We had gone up the previous week and sat down with him. We set up the visit and I think what they were trying to figure out was exactly, 'Where are you?' We had been recruiting him and we offered him when he was freshman. But I think there was some wonder with, 'Hey, is everything still a go?' And then we of course said, 'Yeah.'

"I think there seems to be some feeling that when we went up that night that that was some type of official confirmation. We had gotten to that point long before that. He had a visit scheduled and he came. At that point, he had made it official that he was coming. But I think when we only had one scholarship, we knew there was a lot of concern. 'Hey, do they really want him? What are they going to do with that one scholarship?' Especially when Jarrod came because he took the other one (we had two).

"But we loved this kid from Day One. Anytime you only have one, there's always going to be a little bit more trepidation on who you offer, but we just kept coming back to Peter Jok on this one."