

11/26/2012: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery held a teleconference with the local media on Monday prior to the Hawkeyes' game on Nov. 27 against Virginia Tech at Cassell Coliseum in Blacksburg, Va.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

On what he sees when scouting Virginia Tech:

"I have been real impressed with Virginia Tech. Terrific shooting team. They have a number of different guys that can make shots. Erick Green is as good as any guard that I've watched on film in a long time. He really understands how to play. He can make shots, makes plays.

"He really understands the pace of the game, when to push it, when not to and makes plays defensively. He really has control and command of the game, so obviously he's a big key defensively for us and obviously, he has got some help. They've got some size and they've got athletic ability and I really like their team."

On what he stressed to Mike Gesell following the Cancun Challenge:

"Well you know, I didn't really say anything specific to him other than what I normally would do. We break the film down and we make teaching points to everybody. I don't treat him any differently than anybody else. I thought he was good.

"Obviously, he played great against Western Kentucky. He didn't play as well, because he got in foul trouble, against Wichita State. I think that affected him, but he has got a really good mind set. He has practiced well and competed hard."

On if he's comfortable with the shot selection he has received the past few games:

"Yeah, our shot selection's fine. You know, I'd like to make more shots. But we're taking good shots."

On what he took away from Pat Ingram's play against Wichita State after reviewing the film:

"He's getting better. He really is. I mean, he's practicing better. It started probably about 10 days before that game. The difficult thing was he was the fifth guy and you're trying to get minutes for everybody and I just felt like he had made up the ground that he needed to to deserve a shot."

"I put him in, he played well. He made a few mistakes, but the thing about him is he was able to recover with his athletic ability. So I think he's at a different confidence level now and I would expect him to play Tuesday night."

On how Erick Green's game and Jarell Eddie's games complement each other for Virginia Tech:

"Well obviously, Green and Eddie are terrific players. I mean, they're multi-dimensional, starting with the fact that they both make shots. I mean, that's a good place to start. But they're both good athletes, they're both long. They can both handle the ball, they make plays for each other, for their teammates."

"You know, they really create a lot of problems for any team that's trying to scheme how to guard them because obviously, they're the two guys, but they've got other people who could

play as well."

On having Sherman Dillard as an assistant coach and what he adds to the staff:

"In regards to Sherman, we're just thrilled to have him on the staff. I've known him for a long time and was interested because he was working for Nike at the time. He had gotten out of coaching and was excited I had the opportunity to talk to him about a position here. He has done an unbelievable job recruiting, coaching, in the community. He is just a great representative of the University of Iowa."

On what he learned about his team after losing to Wichita State in Cancun:

"Well, we needed to play better at the end of the game. We weren't horrible, but we didn't do the things we needed to do at crunch time. But we were close. I thought we competed hard defensively, which is a big step for us from where we were last year. But we got to close the game out. They closed the game out, we didn't, and that's really what it came down to."

On how playing a team like Wichita State better prepares his team for future non-conference opponents such as Virginia Tech, Iowa State, UNI, etc.:

"Well you know, I think it's important. There are a couple of ways you can go about scheduling and that's kind of what we've done. We've tried to challenge ourselves in a tournament setting and then of course we have the Big Ten/ACC Challenge. Then we've got the in-state games, then we've got the Big Ten schedule, then we've got other games mingled."

"You know, if you look at the landscape of college basketball right now, you look at Gardner-Webb loses at the buzzer to Illinois and we were down 20 to them. Bryant beats Boston College. Every time you pick up the paper, I mean, Cal Poly beats UCLA. So you're challenged every time you take the

floor.

"But Wichita State, physically, is a Big Ten team. They are a physical team with big, strong front-court guys, big, strong wings, powerful guards that really get after the ball and this is no substitute for playing those kinds of games as you get ready for the ACC/Big Ten Challenge and Big Ten play."

On the pace he's comfortable at with his team given Virginia Tech wanting to play up-tempo:

"We like to play fast as well. So I think you're talking about both teams in this situation who like to push it, attack, not afraid to shoot it quick."

On how he feels about his 3-point defense entering Tuesday's game:

"Well, it better be good against this team. It's better than it was last year. Last year, it was not good at all. As a matter of fact, it was one of our greatest weaknesses. It has been better this year and again, this is a team that will want to challenge that particular aspect of our defense in a big way."

On what he wants to see out of his team with this being its first true road game:

"Anytime you're on the road, you want to see a team that's focused on the game plan and, you know, defends and competes and does what we want to do, at least on offense in terms of shot selection and pushing the ball and making good decisions, and just kind of plays our game and doesn't get caught up in the environment at all."

On what he wants out of Zach McCabe in order for him to play more consistently:

"I think with defense, he's fine. You know, he got in foul trouble in the one game. That hurt him. I kind of took him out

of the game, quite frankly. I think in the other games, he has been O.K. I mean, obviously, in some games he shoots it better than others and he's more of a factor. But when you look back on it, I think Zach has been fine."

On how his team has looked in practice since returning from Cancun:

"They've been good. I mean, we had to take two days off that week. We came back on Friday and they spent the day in Cancun on Thursday. We did not practice Friday. We went hard on Saturday and hard on Sunday. I thought they responded well."

On the differences preparing for a first true road game versus preparing for a game on a neutral court:

"It's no different."

On the importance going forward of getting that first win since 2005 in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge:

"You know, I don't look at history there. I look at it as it's a challenge for our team. We're a very young team, it's a challenge for our young guys and we're just trying to get better and play well."