

12/21/2012: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery held a teleconference with the local media on Friday prior to the Hawkeyes' game on Dec. 22 against Coppin State at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

On Aaron White's current shooting slump and whether it's a blip or he needs to alter something:

"He'll be fine. He has been shooting it well in practice. He has been getting extra shots up religiously. He's real close. I think he'll be fine."

On what has impressed him the most about Devyn Marble's recent play:

"Well, he has played with an incredible level of confidence, you know, in some pretty intense games. You know, he has mixed it pretty extensively with his drive, his pull-up game, his 3-point shot, his back cuts. You know, he finishes around the basket. He gets to the free-throw line and he's defending. His conditioning is tremendous because I'm playing him about 37-38 minutes in those games."

On how encouraged he has been by Gabe Olaseni's play the last two games:

"Very. It's interesting because we've been watching him now in practice for almost a year play that way and it's just

starting to come together for him in games. You see him playing with a completely different level of confidence in himself and what is expected of him, what he expects from himself, knowing where to go, where to be, playing through a mistake, making a play.

"I mean, he ran that kid down in that last game and blocked his shot. I mean, that was one of the most incredible plays I've seen in a long time. You know, the situation didn't need it. We were up by enough points and he was well, well behind everybody else and he just went and made a play because he has the ability to do that.

"He's so explosive athletically and that size, he can be really effective for us because the other thing, he can score. He's not just a run, jump and hammer guy. I mean, he can get the ball in the basket. He can make a baseline jumper and makes his free throws. He can tip balls in for you and he's taking care of the basketball, so I'm thrilled with him."

On whether Olaseni's confidence growing has to do with experience now as opposed to lack of experience prior to college:

"Oh, there's no question. You know, he hadn't played in a ton of games until he came over. He had only been playing about four years before he came over and it's a different game. So he has got to adjust to a new set of rules, a different game, a new culture. He did well at Sunrise and then he came here.

"We're hitting him with extensive scouting reports and game plans and he's conscientious, he's bright. He's trying to process it all and that just takes time. But the only way that you accomplish that task is to put your mind to it and keep working and that's what he has done. He doesn't ... I mean, he'll get down on himself a little bit, but he continues to persevere and that's what makes him special."

On the playing status for Josh Oglesby after missing

Wednesday's game with an injury:

"I think he's going to give it a shot today. He did not practice yesterday. We were just talking about that. I think he has, without a doubt, been cleared to practice. We'll see how he does. It will definitely be a game-time decision as to whether or not he plays."

On if he has looked ahead yet to Big Ten play in terms of preparing scouting reports:

"No. Obviously, I know that we play Indiana and that's as far as I've gone with regard to, you know, looking at the next week or so. I mean obviously, our focus is tomorrow and then we have Christmas and, 'Kids are going home. When are they coming back? When are we going to practice because when is our next game?' That's it. That's as far as we've gone."

On how much time off the players will get for Christmas:

"They're coming back on the 26th."

On if that's good for them to get a break:

"I think so. I mean, I've been doing this a long time and you know, a lot of coaches get freaked out and bring them back on Christmas Day and don't let them go. It's a long season. We start working these kids out around the end of August and so they need a little bit of a break and it comes at a real good time because now we have 18 league games coming up so we can kind of separate and kind of look back on the non-conference portion, see what we did right, what we did wrong, how we can improve and go into what we know is going to be an incredible challenge."

On the nature of Oglesby's injury:

"It's a spasm in his back, near his shoulder, I guess. It was pretty painful. Yesterday, it was much better. But his movement on that side has been limited, so we'll see."

On what he has been pleased with as his team has developed:

"Well, I think two things: No. 1, we're playing defense, and No. 2, we've got more people involved. You know, you can break it down in a million other different ways, but I think those are the two things that have pleased me the most."

On the amount of attention he pays towards his team's RPI right now as opposed to when it gets closer to March:

"I never look at RPI. It doesn't do you any good. It makes absolutely no sense for me to even think about RPI. Except if I want to at some point when I'm looking at long-term scheduling. But even then, you don't know how good a team's going to be that particular year anyway. I mean, you know if you play Kentucky, it's probably going to help your team if you win."

"But for the most part, I've seen teams schedule games thinking they had a great RPI and that particular year, 3-4 teams have down years and it kills your RPI. So you know, the No. 1 component in RPI is wins. If you keep winning, your RPI's going to be in good shape and it's going to go up. If you lose and you lose to a team that doesn't have a high RPI, it's not going to help you. So all I try to do is keep our team winning and then the RPI will take care of itself."

On if he worries about players not getting enough minutes because of depth:

"I worry about that all the time. You know, I just try to look at it and implement a sense of fairness to the best of my ability and I take advice from my staff and I try to be fair in regard to who is really giving me effort and who has been productive both in practice and in games. But you know, there's a number of times where I've said, 'Boy, I wish I would have played him more.'

"For example, in the Iowa State game, I didn't put Gabe in and

he deserved to go in. But we had four post guys playing really well. I just didn't see any minutes for the fifth one in that game and that's what we went with. Fortunately, he has the character to accept that and understand it, come back and be an integral part of our win in the very next game."

On what he took away from Pat Ingram after he played 21 minutes Wednesday:

"I thought he was solid. I mean, he needs to get out there and be able to make a play and make a mistake and just get a feel for what it's like out there. I thought he handled himself really well."

On if he's pleased with the progress being made in Year Three as he looks big picture:

"I am. But the truth of the matter is when you're right in the middle of it, you don't look specifically at that aspect. You know, I don't think about that aspect. That's what those folks are getting paid to do. That's what they look at and that's what they discuss. But we just sort of have tunnel vision on, 'O.K., what do we need to do to get better today so we'll be better tomorrow, so we'll be capable of winning our next game?' Then we watch tape and get ready for the next game."

"It's a long journey and you just keep plugging away. At the same time, you're thinking about recruiting and how that impacts the roster that we have and what components are we missing that we can address in recruiting to help our team continue to get better."

"Eventually, we hope to be one of those teams that's right there all the time. But if you stop and sort of focus on that, then we won't get there because we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing in terms of the nuts of bolts of everything."

On what he thinks of Coppin State:

"I like his team. They're quick. Fang [Mitchell] has been around a long time, so they're going to be focused, they're going to be ready. You know, they run good stuff, they share the ball. They've got a lot of different guys that can make a play, that can make a shot. They've got great team speed and they compete. I think that has been a staple of his teams over the years. They're going to battle you."

On if he went into the season thinking 20 wins could be enough to warrant a spot in the NCAA tournament and if he thinks right now that could be the case for his team:

"No. I don't look at that all because there's so many factors that enter into it. You know, I think it's a waste of time to look at that and think about that right now. I really do. You know, we just have to win the next game and that will be 11. Then the next game, that'll be 12. Twenty might not do it. Nineteen might do it. It might be 22. It all depends."

"There's too many factors that are going to enter into it – who did we beat, who in our league is playing well, who in our league is not playing well, do we win in the conference tournament. All of those factors. If you start getting consumed with that kind of stuff, that's when you go sideways."