

1/25/2013: 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 Jan. 27 against Purdue at Mackey Arena in West Lafayette, Ind.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

On how this Purdue team differs from teams past and what kind of growth he has seen:

"Well you know, in terms of style of play, they're not very much different. Obviously, they're very good defensively. They really compete. I've been really impressed with Terone Johnson and D.J. Byrd, in particular, as upperclassmen who have assumed the responsibility as scorers, as leaders. Both sort of have the attack mentality.

"The freshmen, I think, have been tremendous. You know, he has got three of them in his starting lineup and all three are terrific. But he's getting good play from his junior big guys and [Jacob] Lawson. They've got enough depth, enough youth. I've been impressed with Ronnie Johnson in particular as a point guard. Very difficult to go from high school to the point at this level and I think he has done it extremely well.

"I think what you're doing is seeing a team that just continues to improve and expects to be a factor and given some consideration."

On Melsahn Basabe's performance against Ohio State playing 27

minutes off the bench:

"Well, I think the good thing was he was able to maintain his stamina because that had been something that when you watched him, he had played tremendously well in spurts and he would tire because of the way that he plays. I mean, he's a runner, he's a jumper. You know, he's an offensive rebounder. He's a shot blocker.

"It takes tremendous energy to play that way and impact the game that way. So to be able to leave him out there and have him perform consistently at that level was really impressive."

On his team's maturation process in terms of sticking to a scouting report:

"We are. We're still not where we need to be in terms of execution offensively. That was obviously what was upsetting if you go back to the Michigan State game, in particular, the Indiana game, in particular and then of course, Ohio State.

"Now, a lot has to do with the fact that we're playing high-caliber athletes that are really defending. All three of those teams defend, so they're going to make it harder for you to execute offensively. That's why we have to be that much sharper and that much more intense.

"You know, you take into consideration we've got young guards and there are times when Mike [Gesell] is a 2 and times when he's a 1 and making that transition in the middle of a game is critical for him. You know, [Devyn] Marble was out for a little bit, so that didn't help that side of our team. So, we're going to need to have much more intelligent and then better execution offensively to beat Purdue on the road."

On whether teams are scheming to defend Adam Woodbury or if he's hit the "freshman wall":

"Well, I think what Adam has to do, and this is what he's

working on, he has to be able to impact the game in a variety of different ways. That's his strength. He wants to score. We want him to score. But he can't view himself as being a success or failure based purely on how many points he gets.

"You know, he's a runner. He's a rebounder. He's a really good passer. He's not a mistake guy. He has good basketball I.Q. and if he does all of those things and then offensive rebounds, you know, his offense will come around. He'll be much more comfortable out there as he's impacting the game on many different levels and I think that's what he has to continue to work on."

On the importance to make that near-comeback against Ohio State after what happened at Michigan earlier in the Big Ten season:

"Well, I think it was very important and very interesting at the same time because you look at the lineup we had on the floor and it wasn't one anybody predicted. I think it speaks to our versatility in terms of the kind of guys, the players we can play, at any given time.

"Obviously, we have Zach [McCabe] and Eric [May], a junior and a senior who understand where to line up in different sets and different action. Eric hasn't played a lot of 2 and Zach hasn't played a lot of 3, but they do in practice and they know where to go. They compete. They know where to go on the press. You know, Zach was at a different position on the press than he usually is and he was terrific and that just speaks to his competitiveness.

"So I think it was important for our confidence. It was important for [Anthony] Clemmons and Gesell in particular to play well down the stretch. It was great for [Gabe] Olaseni and Basabe. They haven't played a ton together and they were really good together and it just gives us a lot more things to look at as we move forward."

On how you deal with things like 13-of-26 from the free-throw line in the following days:

"We don't really address it. We really don't. We're a good free-throw shooting team. It was one of those nights. Just move on."

On what Olaseni has shown during Big Ten play to give confidence he can play 15 minutes like he did against Ohio State:

"Well, he's just more relaxed. I mean, you can see it and when you're more relaxed, you don't make mistakes. The other thing that would happen to him is if he made one mistake before, it would really bother him and he wouldn't be aggressive. He wouldn't do the good things that he does. So what you're seeing now is a guy who's comfortable in his own skin out there and that's what I want."

On if he's considered starting Basabe in place of Woodbury:

"We always do. I always do. You know, I do in my own mind, yes, and we do as a staff. But we feel comfortable with our starting lineup. We feel comfortable with ... you know, Eric and Melsahn in particular have been phenomenal off the bench. You know, they seem to really do well."

"A lot of times, when I make a change like that, it would be for the very reason you suggested. If I felt like it would help Adam to come off the bench, I might make a change and tell Mel, 'O.K., you're starting,' or something like that. But right now, we'll just stick with what we got."

On if he still sees a physical presence with Purdue when scouting it for Sunday's game:

"They look to be very similar in that regard. They're very similar. If you watch the tape from last year to this year, with that aspect, no difference."

On how tough Purdue's D.J. Byrd is to defend against:

"Well you know, he's a mismatch guy. You know, he's strong and powerful. He goes inside and rebounds, he can finish around the basket. He's a terrific 3-point shooter. The thing that impresses me about him, there's a lot of guys like him in terms of having a complete skill-set and a certain size, but the thing that impresses me about him is how he plays in the last five minutes."

"To me, that's what makes him special, otherwise, I think he'd just be a good player. I just think he's a really good player, but he becomes an elite player because of his mental toughness late and that's a gift. That's what I love about him."

On his thoughts on Purdue's A.J. Hammons:

"I really like him because he has got terrific hands and they use him through lanned-off situations and they throw it up to him and he catches it and he can finish around the basket. He can score and he's somebody that you have to deal with. When he's on the floor, you got to deal with him."

On how Purdue has been different since going to more of a 4-guard starting lineup approach:

"Well, it gives them another 3-point shooter. [Rapeal] Davis is a good 3-point shooter. Terone Johnson is making more 3s than he ever has before. Byrd's a 3-point shooter and then, you know, Ronnie Johnson is a phenomenal driver. Both Johnsons drive it and then Davis and Byrd can drive it, so you really have four guards around one, yet they still slash and get the long rebounds and stick their nose in there. So it stretches the defense out and makes them harder to guard."

On if it's assumed that his team will need to attack Purdue in order to match its effort on the floor:

"I think every team stresses it. I mean, every team does. They

are particularly good at it. You know, it's a mindset that appears to sort of permeate down the entire roster and that's what you want. I think we're substantially better in that area than we've been, but we need to get better."