

# 1/29/2013: Iowa men's basketball notebook



Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming game against Penn State during his press conference held Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2013, at Carver-Hawkeye Arena in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – As of Tuesday afternoon, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery hasn't committed to making any changes to his current starting lineup. But he has given the idea some thought and at least one change could be coming sooner than later.

The most likely change to occur, if one is to happen, would be junior forward Melsahn Basabe being inserted into the starting five in place of freshman center Adam Woodbury. In seven Big Ten games, Basabe has shot a league-high 64.7 percent from the floor (22-of-34 shooting) and he also leads Iowa in rebounding.

On his radio call-in show Monday evening, McCaffery said Basabe "has earned the right to start." During his press conference at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Tuesday, McCaffery continued heaping praise on his 6-7 forward for his production as Iowa's sixth man all season long. He also made clear he wasn't disappointed in the energy level Woodbury gave during the Hawkeyes' 65-62 overtime loss at Purdue on Jan. 27.

"A lot of times when you look at this, it's not as simple as it may appear," McCaffery said. "Obviously, [Basabe] is playing well, so the logical conclusion is we'll just put him in the starting lineup."

"It may be the right thing for the team. It may not be because he's playing the best basketball of the last two years coming off the bench."

The Glen Cove, N.Y., native has played a combined 58 minutes off the bench for the Hawkeyes in their last two contests against Ohio State and Purdue (27 against the Buckeyes, 31 against the Boilermakers). Two parts of Basabe's development this season have been consistency and being between 225-228 pounds, which both he and McCaffery said has proven to be the most ideal weight for him to play at.

As far as Basabe's concerned, he said whether he starts in Iowa's next game against Penn State or any other game going forward doesn't matter to him. He started every game during his freshman season and remained a starter as a sophomore up until being benched prior to Iowa's game at Indiana last year.

"All I want to do is just do what the coaches need me to do, help the team win and just play. It doesn't matter how I'm doing it," Basabe said. "As long as I come in the game, I'm just playing with a lot of energy and being effective, so I just care about being on the court and I don't care how I get that."

Meanwhile, the 7-1 Woodbury has started every game this season

at center for Iowa. In Big Ten play, the Sioux City native has averaged three points and five rebounds playing 15 minutes per game. Basabe said what Woodbury has lacked in terms of scoring he makes up for with the way he passes the ball and plays defense.

"I think Adam just needs to work hard," Basabe said. "Everybody want results so fast nowadays. He's still only a freshman. He's a 7-foot kid and he was in high school last year, so there's nothing wrong with him learning.

"If I was him, I wouldn't be disappointed. I don't know how the outside people feel, but I told him, 'Keep your confidence, be patient and keep working because the work will pay off.'"

### **Oglesby's shooting struggles continue**

In the eyes of those within the basketball program, the current shooting woes of sophomore guard Josh Oglesby are a complete enigma.

According to McCaffery and others who have echoed him in recent days like assistant Kirk Speraw and junior guard Devyn Marble, Oglesby is a lights-out 3-point shooter during practice. But aside from a 14-point performance against Northwestern earlier this month, Oglesby has struggled mightily shooting. In seven Big Ten games, he has compiled just 24 points on 25 percent shooting, which includes shooting 6-of-26 from behind the 3-point line.

The Cedar Rapids native believes a big part of his frustration shooting the ball has to do with approach, trying to be a perfectionist with his shot during actual games.

"When I'm wide open in a game, I try to aim it and get my shot perfect," Oglesby said. "But Coach Speraw said in practice, I'm just letting it fly and in games, I'm trying to aim it, which I agree with. I just got to keep working on my shot and

hopefully things will come around.”

Despite his shooting struggles, the green light is still there for Oglesby, something teammates like Marble make an effort of reminding him on a daily basis.

“Shooting is just as much about confidence as it is technique and all that stuff,” Marble said. “I think with him, he just needs to stop thinking about anything else and just shoot the ball.”

As for the rest of Oglesby’s game, McCaffery remains encouraged by what he has seen.

“When it’s all said and done, I want him to be a basketball player,” McCaffery said. “He’s really good at feeding the post. He can pass it extremely well. Against the zone, he probably hurts the other team more with his passing than he does with his shooting. He’s phenomenal. We’ll just stick with him.”

### **Gesell driven on and off the court**

If Iowa did have a bright spot in its loss to Purdue over the weekend, it was the performance given by Mike Gesell. The freshman guard led the Hawkeyes in scoring with 18 points. Playing all but one minute during the second half and all five minutes of overtime, Gesell tallied 15 of those 18 points and was the player who ignited Iowa’s second-half rally when trailing by 11 with eight minutes remaining.

Perhaps just as impressive as Gesell’s recent on-the-court production is his drive away from the hardwood. He completed his first semester of college with solid As in all but one class – a class he finished with an A-minus in.

Gesell said he was disappointed about that A-minus, but has since revised his academic goal to not getting any Bs. The aspect of not being fearful of mistakes is something he has

also managed to bring over to the hardwood, especially as he gets more comfortable with both the physicality of the Big Ten and the length of the games played.

"I don't make excuses for myself. I would say I set higher expectations for myself than anyone would have for me," Gesell said. "I got to keep staying aggressive and not be hesitant because that's when you start making mistakes."

McCaffery has continued to stress the aggressiveness to Gesell, and to this point, is pleased with what he has in him as both a student and an athlete.

"You're not always going to get a 4.0, let's be frank," McCaffery said. "But the guys you don't worry about ... if they're supposed to be in class, they're in class. If they're supposed to be in the weight room, they're in the weight room. If they're not supposed to be anywhere specifically, then they're probably in the practice gym getting a thousand [shots] up.

"Those are the kind of guys you win with and that's what he is."

## **Prepping for Penn State**

After losing two straight road games last week, Iowa sits at 2-5 in Big Ten play entering its Thursday evening contest against Penn State at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. The Nittany Lions come in with issues of their own between being the conference's only winless team at 0-8 and the absence of senior guard Tim Frazier.

Frazier, who led the Big Ten in scoring last season, suffered a season-ending Achilles injury last November during one of Penn State's games in the Puerto Rico Tip-Off. But even without Frazier, the Nittany Lions have a pair of guys in D.J. Newbill and Jermaine Marshall who are both top 10 in scoring among conference players.

McCaffery sees a team that takes on the identity of its head coach, Patrick Chambers.

“He’s incredibly positive and they are going to work and they are going to battle,” McCaffery said. “They are going to battle you as long and as hard as anybody else in college basketball. That’s who he is and what I think he has been trying to do with that program.”

As for Iowa, the missed opportunities against teams like Purdue, Michigan State and Indiana have led to doubt about whether the Hawkeyes could still reach the NCAA tournament come March. McCaffery said his approach to each game hasn’t changed and Marble said neither he nor any of his teammates feel the pressure of winning in order to remain in the hunt for a tourney bid.

“I don’t feel that way. At the end of the day, you still got people who don’t expect us to do anything anyways,” Marble said. “Shots just aren’t falling right now, but if we continue to keep playing defense and rebounding, we’ll always be there at the end. We just got to make sure we get that closer mentality.

“That’s just something we’ve got to get used to doing and when shots start to fall, then we’ll be playing even better.”

Thursday’s game is scheduled for 7 p.m. Central and will be televised nationally on ESPNU. UI students with a student ID handy will be allowed into Carver-Hawkeye Arena free of charge.