

2/4/2013: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery's teleconference on Monday with the Big Ten media:

McCaffery's opening statement:

"Well, we had an interesting week. We had a good win at home against Penn State, a tough loss on the road against Minnesota. I feel defensively, we're playing about as well as we can play and that, I think, is encouraging. I think we're also getting productivity from a lot of different people. Offensively, not where we need to be to beat the teams the caliber of the teams that we've been playing and hopefully we'll continue to improve in that area."

On whether he has thought about having Devyn Marble come off the bench:

"You know, I wasn't as concerned about him until yesterday. You know, I felt like he was playing pretty well. He has not been ... he was not himself yesterday and I think that needs to be addressed. I don't think taking him out of the starting lineup is the answer. He's one of our guys. He's one of our key guys. He's my leading scorer. You know, he's versatile, he can play a number of different positions. He's an experienced guy. I just think we need to help him through it."

On Aaron White's success against Wisconsin:

"You know, it's funny. I don't know. It could be a match-up

thing, it could be a style of play thing. It could be coincidence. You know, I never really thought about it to be honest with you. To me, I look at him and say, 'Boy, he plays well against pretty much everybody. You know, it's different in terms of what he'll do against one team versus another. But I see a guy, when I look at him, as a guy that's pretty consistent in terms of his performance.'

On the depth his team has with eight players averaging 13-15 minutes per game in Big Ten play:

"Well you know, it has been interesting because clearly it helps us defensively because you've got fresh bodies out there. But you look at yesterday's game for example, you know, my starting lineup gets down 14-2 and my back-ups come in and cut the lead and it has been like that all year long. Game-to-game, you've got different guys.

"Now, you look at that and you could say, 'Boy, that could be problematic for you,' but when you're able to go to the bench and you have [Josh] Oglesby and Eric May and Zach McCabe in particular play the way they played yesterday, along with Anthony Clemmons, I mean those four guys were spectacular. I thought [Gabe] Olaseni was really good in the first half and [Adam] Woodbury didn't play well in the first half, but played great in the second half.

"So it gives me some flexibility to go back to those guys who were starting and get more productivity out of them. It's a great weapon, that weapon being depth. But at the same time, I'd like to see a few of our guys get a little bit more consistent."

On if he sees any common factors in the three close losses Iowa has in Big Ten play:

"Well you know, it has been missed free throws and poor execution in all of those games and what's odd about it is our execution prior to that has been pretty good. You know, I know

you can say, 'Well, we juggled our point guard.' Mike [Gesell] was our point guard, then it was Clemmons and now it's Mike and at some times, it was Marble.

"You know, you can say, 'Well, it's great to have three guys who can play point guard.' At the same time, we're bouncing around and those guys have been and really are good, but not as sharp as we need to be in late-game. You know, the free-throw situation is frustrating because when you play as well as we've played, to be in that position, you ought to be able to close the game out and make your free throws. We just haven't done that. When you're doing both of those things, it's really hard.

"Now at the same time, Austin Hollins hit a great shot. You ought to give that kid credit. He's playing extremely well. I mean, Mike was a little bit late, but he contested that shot. They're down two with 12 seconds to go and this guy's hitting a contested 3, I mean, pretty good play by him and that's what this league is. It's guys on the other team that are doing really good things as well."

On the difficulty in keeping players' confidence up during a stretch like this where the message probably doesn't change:

"Well you know, the goofy thing about yesterday was ... I mean, Aaron White makes the steal that really should have won the game for us. We're up four and throws it ahead to Mike, Mike doesn't make the lay-up, he misses the tip, Clemmons gets the rebound. he misses a lay-up and they throw it down and dunk it. Instead of being up six, it's two and there's less than two minutes to go.

"Those kinds of things are happening to us as well. You know, we just need to get over the hump and get one of them and then I think the rest will fall into place because clearly, we're playing well enough to win."

On his thoughts about why the Big Ten hasn't had a national

champion since 2000:

"You know, it's interesting. My theory would be by virtue of what we go through over the course of the season, I would think that would help us. In theory, that should be beneficial because we're so road-tested. You know, playing in a neutral environment really shouldn't be an issue."

"We're playing against really tough, physical, quality defenses and a lot of times if you play in a conference, for example, that because we're up and down and then all of a sudden, you play a team that's really guarding you in the half-court, you struggle. Our teams that get into the tournament typically have stars. You need stars when you get to the NCAA tournament."

"We made a couple of good runs and I think if we have anybody in the Final Four, if we have anybody in the championship game, you know, I think we'd be looking at it a little bit differently. To the point that you made, I think that it's nothing more than coincidence is the best way I would answer it."

On if he has self-satisfaction in recruiting players like White that don't get heavily recruited by other Big Ten teams:

"I don't take satisfaction in that aspect of it. I take satisfaction in the aspect of I know Aaron White and I know what kind of person he is and I know how hard he works and I get a tremendous amount of satisfaction out of the fact that he is succeeding for him. You know, that other stuff is peripheral stuff that I really don't pay attention to, quite honestly."