

2/18/2013: 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:

"Very proud of our team this week. Two wins – one very difficult victory on the road and one at home where we came back from being down 15, so again, I credit our team's depth. Very instrumental in both of our wins."

On the freshmen classes in the Big Ten as a whole:

"Well, I think what it says about the league is that a lot of good players want to come and play and they're not afraid of competition. Because if you look at our team, for example, our freshmen are very critical to our team's success, no more so than our upperclassmen, but equally so. You know, we have two in the starting lineup. At one point, we had three."

"But it doesn't really matter. You know, those guys are contributing. They came here expecting to contribute. They hoped that they would start and it didn't really matter if they did or didn't. They just came here to compete in the best league in the country and I think what you're seeing is continued, improved recruiting because of the notoriety our league has gotten, the number of teams we get in, the Big Ten Network, the number of games we have on ESPN, CBS, and ultimately, that's what the kids want."

"So what you're seeing is, I think, incredible quality for the league and guys that are ready to produce. You know, as I said, it has made an unbelievable impact on our team."

On if he discusses with his team what has to happen to make the NCAA tournament at this point in the season:

"You know, it's an interesting question because I think a lot of coaches, you know, they go about it differently and that's probably what you're trying to get at. You don't want to pretend like it's not out there, it's not there. If you turn the TV on, it's what everybody's talking about, so we address it."

"But what I try to do is simplify it because I'm just a firm believer that you can't look one, two, three, four, five, six games down the road. You have to look at one game and win that game. We are literally in control of our own destiny. I mean, that's so cliché, but if we take care of business and beat the teams on our schedule, then we'll have enough wins and we'll be able to get in."

"If at the regular season we don't have enough of a résumé or we're not assured, then we have another opportunity in the Big Ten Tournament to either win it or win enough games to get in. But I think if you get consumed with that, then you lose sight in the short run of the task at hand, which for us is to beat Nebraska."

On whether he feels his team is playing its best basketball right now:

"You know, we've been pretty consistent. I mean, I think it's easy to look at the fact that we had some gut-wrenching losses. But you know, those losses were to really good teams and three of the four of them were on the road. So we grew up in those games."

"We obviously played well enough. I mean, we came back at

Purdue, we came back at Minnesota. You know, we had a lead against Wisconsin and we also came back in that game. You know, a lesser talented team, a lesser team in terms of toughness, would've folded in that situation and lost by double digits, so I think we've come a long way.

"Right now, I think we're as deep as a lot of teams that you're going to look at, not only in our conference, but across the country. I mean, we're literally playing 10 guys a lot of minutes and then you look at the stats game-by-game and recognize that it's always different people. Fortunately for us, [Devyn] Marble has been on fire the last three games and that has made a great impact and if he's playing like that, we're a much different team."

On if there's discussion about moving Iowa's game at Nebraska this week in light of a pending snow storm hitting the two states:

"Well, there could be. But I haven't heard anything about it."

On the statuses of Kyle Meyer and Zach McCabe:

"Kyle has got a pretty good sprain. He's obviously redshirting, so we need him for practice and stuff, but it's not going to impact the games, so we'll shut him down for two weeks and Zach's fine."

On what Mike Gesell has meant to the team as a true freshman:

"Well, he has had a tremendous impact, which is what I thought he would. You know, it has been an interesting year for him because, you know, he was our starting point guard, then I moved him to the off-guard, then I moved him back to the point. While I think that's not an easy thing to do for a freshman, he has done it incredibly well and I think what it did, it made him more aggressive as a point guard in terms of scoring by moving him to the 2."

"He wasn't shooting enough, quite frankly, early in the season. He was playing great point guard, but I moved him to the 2 because I needed some pop over there. I moved Marble to the 3 and now I've got two wing scorers. But when Mike came back to the point, he was shooting the ball well and he's shooting the ball well again."

"If you look at his turnover numbers from yesterday in particular, I don't think he had any, so he's really, really coming into his own at that position and he's still scoring and we need that."

On his impressions of Nebraska thus far this season:

"I've been really impressed with them. You know, I think Tim [Miles] has done a terrific job of putting that team together. His experienced guys are producing, you know, his young guys are playing well. He can go a couple of different ways."

"I think [Darryl] Talley has really impressed me. I've always been a [Brandon] Ubel fan. You know, [Ray] Gallegos is a guy, as we saw against Minnesota, capable of going for 30 [points] every time he takes the floor. So they've got some weapons and they've got some other guys that have accepted their roles. That's why I think they're playing well."