

# 3/25/2013: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery held a teleconference with the local media on Monday prior to the Hawkeyes' NIT quarterfinal game on March 27 against Virginia at John Paul Jones Arena in Charlottesville, Va.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

**On whether his best lineup right now is with Devyn Marble playing point guard:**

*"Well, that's what we're going to go with. You know, I'd say it probably is, you know, until Mike [Gesell] gets to be 100 percent."*

**On if he feels Marble has emerged as his go-to guy and if it's re-assuring to know Marble will be around another season:**

*"Well you know, I don't know if he has emerged as my go-to. He has been my go-to guy all year and I think, you know, the fact that we know he's coming back is great. You know, we're thrilled."*

**On what impresses him the most about Virginia when watching the Cavaliers on tape:**

*"Well, there are a lot of things. I mean, I've been impressed with their personnel. You know, they've got, I think, pieces that fit. You know, obviously [Joe] Harris is a tremendous player and presents a lot of difficulty for anybody that's*

*trying to figure them out. But [Akil] Mitchell has been very impressive. Phenomenally impressive on the glass and he can score. I mean, their point guard play has been tremendous, I think. [Justin] Anderson, I like.*

*"There are a lot of pieces that have impressed me. They defend. They execute offensively. The spacing is good, they move the ball. You look at their assist-turnover numbers, it was 100 over. That tells me that you have got guys that know how to play, that are unselfish and can move the ball. You know, a lot of times you have a really good point guard. But they have a lot of different people that can make plays for their teammates. You know, I think all of those things combined is why they are so good."*

**On if he looks at playing on the road as an opportunity for his team to show maturity:**

*"Yeah, I think so. I mean, I think we have ... you know, we've played well on the road, but we haven't gotten as many wins as we would've liked. This is a great opportunity and obviously a very important game."*

**On whether there are any teams Iowa has played this season that Virginia resembles or if Virginia's different from everyone else:**

*"Nobody sticks out. You know, I just kind of look at them as a team that ... obviously, we play in a phenomenal conference and I think that's obvious when you look at how our teams are doing. But so do they, so I look at them as one of the elite programs in college basketball."*

**On the significance of this current Iowa team being able to win Wednesday and earn the trip to Madison Square Garden next week:**

*"Well, it would be great. I mean, it'd be a tremendous step for the program and give us another opportunity to play two*

*more games in arguably the greatest venue in all of sport. So you know, for our maturity, for our growth, for our young guys, it would be a tremendous feeling."*

**On how Marble playing the point changes what he wants to do offensively since Gesell isn't currently 100 percent:**

*"Well, it's interesting. I think you're right. He clearly enjoys having it. He's making plays, he's not turning the ball over. He's very unselfish, yet he's scoring a lot more, you know, and it seems to have had a comforting effect. Everybody around him feels good with him with the ball. Mike can go and just score and make some plays for us at that position."*

*"Eric May, you look at his numbers and you know, maybe two years ago, you wouldn't have thought of him as a 2-guard and he's playing a terrific 2-guard, guarding people, finding people. His assist-turnover numbers are terrific. And it gives us a big team with [Aaron] White at the 3 and him at the 1 and Eric at the 2. We have a big team and it gives us that aspect as well."*

**On whether McCaffery has any connections to Virginia head coach Tony Bennett or Virginia AD Craig Littlepage:**

*"Well, Craig Littlepage gave me my first job, so he's one of my favorite people in our profession. He has been terrific to me my entire career. He's one of the great gentlemen that I've ever met. I watched him play when he was in college and he was a good player, too. He was a very good player, and I learned a lot from him. I only worked for him for one year, but like I said, you know, he gave me my first job and I'll always be thankful for that."*

*"I only know Tony from seeing him on the road. I know that I've coached against him, but I have tremendous respect for him. I remember his playing days. He was a great player. I remember his dad's teams, the teams he played on, and have watched him in this business and he has had tremendous*

*success. Clearly has a plan and has been very effective and it's a great challenge for us."*

**On what Marble only having two turnovers in the last two games says about him as a point guard:**

*"You know, I think it says a lot. I mean, he just keeps getting better. I mean, we sort of put him there his freshman year not knowing how he was going to perform and he was pretty good. You could kind of see that, you know, it wasn't an issue and he was better again last year."*

*"I mean, you feel like we should just move him to the 2-spot. He's big, he can score. And we keep coming back to him. Maybe he's better with the ball. That was the first question we had today. Maybe he's just better with the ball and that might be the case and right now, our team is playing as well as we've played all year with him with the ball."*

**On the development of his team in terms of unselfishness and given the depth at point guard:**

*"Well you know, any time you have a team like that that gives the ball up as easily as we do, they're a pleasure to coach and it gives you a chance. You know, if you're not turning it over and you're moving it on and you're throwing the ball to open people, you know, everybody's happy. Everybody's comfortable. Everybody appreciates each other and I think that's how your team grows and develops. It gets better. Because if you have issues with one guy shooting too much or one guy being selfish, that's a problem and we don't have that problem."*

**On if he wants to keep Gesell in the 19-20 minute range like he did against Stony Brook or increase his minutes against Virginia:**

*"I would feel comfortable with increasing his minutes if we felt like it was necessary. You know, I think in a perfect*

*world, he would be right around there. But I mean, if we're in a situation where the game went into double overtime or something like that, I wouldn't be opposed to playing him 30 minutes. Or more."*

**On if he sees similarities between his team and Virginia or if both just happen to be doing the same things in different ways:**

*"Well you know, I think there are similarities in the sense that both teams put a focus on defense and help and recover and getting back and things of that nature. You know they ... I mean, they're really solid in their schemes and where their people are positioned on the floor in terms of limiting opportunities to drive. They do some things a little bit differently than we do, but it's just real sound, fundamental defensive basketball."*

**On whether Virginia's Joe Harris reminds him of any players Iowa has gone against this season:**

*"Uh, nobody jumps out. I mean, he reminds me of Matt Harpring, who played about 13 years in the NBA. That's who he reminds me of. He's a powerful scorer who can make plays off the dribble for other people, he can post up, you know, he's an in-and-out guy. He has got great pace to his game. A great pace. I mean, he doesn't rush anything. He has got a real good feel for how to play and he makes plays late."*

**On how similar he thinks the profiles are of Iowa and Virginia in terms of being teams from power conferences that just missed the NCAA Tournament:**

*"You know, it's funny. I mean, I look at Virginia and I look at their conference record and where they finished in that conference. I'm sort of surprised that they weren't in. They come in fifth and you'd think they'd be in. You know, I'm not a guy who looks at numbers as much as something with my two eyeballs."*

*"When I watch Virginia play, that's an NCAA Tournament team. I have watched, not as much maybe as some people because I'm busy getting ready for my own team's games, but I've watched NCAA games. Virginia's a NCAA Tournament team. That's what they are and I think they proved that over the course of the year."*

*"But you know, like you said, it's a changing environment. We thought we had a great case to be in, but you can only deal with what hands you're dealt. You know, they're a 1 seed, we're a 3 seed. We're thrilled to still be playing. The NIT is a phenomenal opportunity. You look at the quality of teams that were not allowed in, it just goes to show you that ... everybody talks about the state of college basketball. What you have is, I think, you've got a little bit more parity."*

*"You've got a lot more really good teams and for every team that was allowed in, there was somebody good that wasn't allowed in and you could make a case either way. So you can't complain about it. You just have to enjoy the opportunity to play in the NIT, keep working hard and try to get in next year and try to get better."*

**On how interchangeable the guard positions are in his lineup and whether Anthony Clemmons' current struggles are a result of him trying too hard:**

*"You know, as far as Anthony's concerned, you know, he's not far. You know, I know he's struggling. He just has to trust his talent and go back to being aggressive. I think he'll do fine."*

*"In terms of your first part, I think you're right in a lot of respects. It really doesn't matter. I mean, there are times when it does, there are times when it doesn't. It depends on what we're running at that particular time and how we want to play in that stretch. But in terms of running our fast break and when we're running our motion offense, it doesn't matter."*

*"When we're running set plays, it's going to matter, but only in the sense that there are an allotment of different plays. But for us, we move our players in set plays anyway. So even if Dev's at point guard, I'm going to play him at other positions to take advantage of him there and I'll do the same for Mike. Clemmons is pretty much going to stay at the 1."*

**On the value that comes from this NIT experience as it relates to Iowa making that next step toward playing in the NCAA Tournament again:**

*"Well, I think it's incredibly valuable. We've had two opportunities to play really good teams at home, sell our building out. Now we've got to go on the road to play a higher seed in a terrific venue, a team that's phenomenal, and it will give us an opportunity to experience that."*

*"We haven't been a great road team. We have to become one. You know, I think if you're looking at why we weren't in, that's probably why we weren't in and you could argue it, but I prefer to address it and try to work at it and get better. So this is a great opportunity for our young guys to go and compete at that level against that quality of a team on the road."*

*"Hopefully, like you said, it would enable us to throughout this experience – extra practices, extra games, extra opportunities – just continue to grow and get better and feel more confident and keep us hungry as we go into this spring and summer, our foreign trip and into next season."*

**On what sticks out to him on film about Virginia's Akil Mitchell:**

*"Well, he's terrific. I mean, he's a terrific rebounder, he's an athlete, he's skilled, he can make plays off the dribble, he can score. I mean, he's a high-level player."*