

12/9/2013: 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, I think it has been a good run so far for us. We've played well. It has been a tough stretch this last week or so with three games in 50 hours and then come back for the [Big Ten/ACC] Challenge and then a crosstown rivalry game with Drake and then Monday night, tonight, we've got Fairleigh Dickinson and then a cross-state rival, Iowa State, on Friday. So it's a tough stretch in our schedule. So far, I think we've handled it well. Depth has been a key factor and we're looking forward to tonight's game."

On what bench players like Jarrod Uthoff and Gabe Olaseni have meant to the rotation:

"Well, they both have been really consistent. I think that's a key factor. They're putting up numbers. You know, Gabe is scoring the ball better than he ever has. He's so much more confident offensively. He's blocking shots, he's running the floor, has really been impressive."

"Jarrod is kind of doing what we thought he would do – scoring and rebounding. He's leading us in rebounding, shooting about 90 percent from the line and shooting the 3-ball really well. He gives us an incredibly valuable weapon coming off the bench."

On the current health of the team:

"You know, everybody's good. You know, Josh [Oglesby] is getting closer. But other than Josh, everybody is good."

On whether he anticipates Oglesby being ready for the start of Big Ten play:

"I mean, I'd be surprised if he wasn't ready for Pine Bluff. Uh, you know, an outside shot for Friday night. But that might be pushing it."

On the new fouling rules and if he has noticed significant changes offensively:

"Well, there has definitely been a change. Uh, you know, there's more people driving to the bucket, especially in transition. I like the fact that there are fewer charge calls being made. I think that is a great move by the NCAA. The freedom of movement is I think much more difficult for the officials. I think they're doing a terrific job under the circumstances, because that's a dramatic ... they're both dramatic changes."

"But you know, we just have to be careful with a touch foul being called when the guy has the ball and there's a guy getting mugged off the ball and nothing gets called. I think the way it has been so far, I think the officials have done a very good job of both."

On the contributions from Peter Jok so far this season:

"Well you know, what you're seeing with Peter is a guy who's continuing to get better and you could see his confidence improving. He's very talented and we have a very high expectation for him. He has a high expectation for himself."

"The unique part of his experience is he's really our only freshman. Everybody else has experience. This is Jarrod Uthoff's first year, but he has been in college for two years."

So everything is new for Peter and he has handled that well. He has always been an offensive player. He has worked on his defense and has been solid.

"You know, he's cutting down on his mistakes and he can score. He can score quickly and he can score in bunches and he gives our team an incredibly valuable weapon when we put him in the game and we're thrilled with his development."

On what his senior class has meant to the team:

"All three have been special. I mean, of course, Dev [Marble] and Zach [McCabe] made the all-tournament team in Atlantis. Zach is playing the best basketball of his career and he's in the best shape of his career. You know, Melsahn [Basabe] on Saturday was spectacular. He has been very consistent as well. You know, Marble has put us on his back in a few situations where we have been in a little trouble in games. The Xavier game, the Villanova game, the Notre Dame game. I mean, he has been really good.

"But you know, I expect that from him. He's a leader. He is multi-dimensional in terms of the things that he can do. I've had him at the point, I've had him at the 2, I've had him at the 3. He just blends in either position and is a very intelligent player. So those three guys have been through a lot together and they're very hungry this year."