

1/24/2014: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

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Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery held a teleconference with the local media on Friday prior to the 10th-ranked Hawkeyes' game on Jan. 25 against Northwestern at Welsh-Ryan Arena in Evanston, Ill.

Below is the complete transcript from the interview:

On how issues getting home from Michigan could affect preparation for Saturday's game:

"I really don't think it will have any impact at all. I mean, you know, it was unfortunate that we couldn't get out after the game. But we just went back to the hotel, went to sleep, got up and had breakfast and flew home in the morning. We practiced yesterday. We'll practice today and then head down [to Evanston, Ill.] this evening."

On whether Northwestern's defensive improvement is just them playing better or doing something different:

"Well, I think what they've done is they've committed themselves to shutting people down and playing together and rebounding and limiting your opportunities and in terms of offense, they're a little more patient, I think, than they were."

"But you know, I think they're doing what they need to do to be in position, you know, to win. I mean, they've won three out of their last four. One was on the road at Indiana, a very

tough place to win. I thought they played extremely well against Michigan State, a game they could have easily won. They just really battled them and I think that's what you're seeing.

"You're seeing a team that's really competing and that's what you would expect from Chris [Collins], is that they're going to kind of play like he did. That's how he played."

On if Aaron White's recent first half struggles is a result of letting the game come to him too much:

"No. You know, the one game he was in foul trouble, so he hardly played in the first half. The other game, they were slumping off him. He was driving, he was feeding the post. You know, for him, I don't say, 'Hey, you turned down two shots. You should shoot the ball.'

"I let him decide when he wants to shoot the ball. He'll shoot it when he's comfortable. He has got the green light. He can shoot it whenever he wants. He can shoot 3s, he can shoot pull-ups, he can drive the ball. You know, I don't tell him, 'Do this, don't do that,' and I think he'll figure it out. I mean, I trust him."

On if the first game against Northwestern was 'a perfect storm' between his team playing well and the Wildcats still feeling things out:

"I think it was a combination of things. You know, we played well. They didn't shoot it well. Uh, I think they're a better shooting team. They've been a better shooting team. Sometimes you go on the road, you have a little bit of an off night. They really didn't shoot it well. I mean, [Tre] Demps, [Drew] Crawford, guys who are really good players, they didn't shoot it great. I mean, [JerShon] Cobb had a good game.

"But I think what you're seeing now is those three guys in particular have been really consistent. [Alex] Olah is playing

well. You kind of see him getting better and better with every game. But you know, they have some other guys that are slowly but surely getting more experience. Guys like [Kale] Abrahamson, [Nathan] Taphorn, [Sanjay] Lumpkin.

"So they're all starting to fit in and then they're getting [Dave] Sobolewski back. He didn't play the last couple of games because of a concussion, but he'll be playing against us."

On how Sobolewski's return to Northwestern's lineup impacts what the Wildcats have done successfully since last playing Iowa:

"Well, I mean, it will be interesting to see how they use him. You know, he was starting. You know, they went with Cobb at the point and Abrahamson in the lineup. They're a little bit bigger. You know, will Chris keep that same starting lineup or will he go back with Sobolewski? I don't know. But either way, he's going to play a lot. It gives them another handler, it gives them another experienced player, you know, it gives them another tough defender, so we'll see."

On if having its current No. 10 ranking puts more of a target on his team's back:

"Well you know, I would think it would get everybody's attention. You know, if we were playing a top 10 team, it would have our attention. I can't imagine it wouldn't. But you know, in the end, you just have to, to me, play the same way. You know, what difference does it make if we're ranked 10th and they're not or they're ranked 10th and we're not? Shouldn't we both play the same way? With an incredible level of intensity and competitiveness and try to win, put a scouting report and game plan together?

"We're going to try to beat you. So it's not like it should surprise us or we should expect anything more or anything less if we're not ranked? I mean, in this league, you better be

ready for everybody."

On how important this game on Saturday is with Iowa coming off a loss to Michigan earlier in the week:

"Well, I think if you look at the teams that have won championships, they're not teams that have typically lost back-to-back. You know, there haven't been losing streaks. You know, they might lose, but they typically bounce back and I think that's what you want do any time you get beat. You learn from it and bounce back. That's what we're going to try to do."

On if Northwestern is doing anything differently on the perimeter to limit shots:

"I don't think so. I really don't. I don't think they're doing any differently that I've seen. I mean, they're D-ing up. There's no question about that. But you know, I thought they were competing defensively when we played them the last time. You know, we were hitting some transition 3s. Our transition game was really good because we got stops. You know, if you get stops, you're going to get opportunities. So you know, we've got to defend them the way they've been defending everybody else."

On if Saturday's game is dangerous mentally for his team with No. 3 Michigan State looming on the horizon:

"I don't think so. No. Not at all. It's the next game on our schedule and we're playing them all the same way. I think especially in light of the fact that they've won three out of their last four, I mean, Northwestern has got everybody in this league's attention."

On if there has been an emphasis on Adam Woodbury attacking the offensive end like he did against Michigan:

"It has not been. He has got the ability to do that. He has

got the green light to do that. You know, the Minnesota game was a different kind of game. They were pressing full court. Uh, we went with some smaller guys, you know, and Michigan, there wasn't an official center in the lineup, so it was a better match-up for him and I thought he was absolutely terrific."

On if he has re-emphasized to his reserves about playing with a reckless abandon again after looking "gun-shy" against Michigan:

"Yeah, because you know, it has never been anything I've had to emphasize at all. They just kind of played that way and I was a little bit surprised that we were tentative at times. I don't want them to be tentative and I have total confidence in them.

"You look at that group with [Jarrod] Uthoff and [Zach] McCabe and [Gabe] Olaseni on the front line and then you know, [Anthony] Clemmons and [Josh] Oglesby whether they're in there or not together and the same thing for Peter Jok. I have total confidence in those guys and I want them to shoot the ball. I want them to work the offense and to run transition and do the things they've typically done.

"We were a little bit ... I don't know. The offense seemed to move really slow. The ball wasn't moving out of people's hands. We weren't screening and cutting the way we should. We weren't running the way we should, whether it was on a make or a miss. That has to change and I'm sure it will."

On if he learned anything from Chris Collins' father Doug when he coached him at Penn:

"You know, it's interesting because when I grew up, I was in eighth grade when he was the first pick of the [NBA] draft. He got drafted by the 76ers. Obviously, I was a Sixers fan living in Philadelphia. So he was like my favorite player. I watched him and used to go to games and he would be playing with Dr. J

and all that. You know, so you look at him as a great player, somebody that you kind of idolize. I mean, that was my first knowledge of him, and then he wanted to transition into coaching after his injury.

"When he came the first time, his knowledge of how to play the game was just really different, you know, when it came to so many different things. How to get open. You know, he was one of the best I guess I ever saw at moving without the ball. He was always open and he would teach us how he did that. He could also play with the ball obviously and he would talk to us about that, how to play off of screens and how to play pick-and-rolls and all that kind of stuff was incredibly scientific with him, so we really ... obviously he had incredible credibility when he opened his mouth because we all watched him play as an all-pro. But you know, we really listened to him and valued his input.

"He was also one of the toughest guys I could remember as a competitor and so we listened to him in terms of his competitive instincts and the things that he did. So we became really close and then of course he went on with Coach [Bob] Weinbauer, who was our head coach, out to Arizona State when Coach took that job. That ended up being my senior year. Doug decided he didn't really like the college stuff as much as he wanted to be in the NBA, which he obviously ended up in and was successful there."

On the strides Demps has made for Northwestern and the types of challenges he presents:

"Well you know, I was impressed with him last year. I was impressed with him earlier in the year. I mean, this guy is an attack guy and when you have players like that, it's one thing to be an attack guy. It's another to be an attack guy with some skill. He can make 3s, he can make a pull up, he can go drive left, drive right. He's going to go. He's quick. He has got a great first step. I mean, he's tough.

"You know, it's interesting that despite the fact he's their third-leading scorer, Chris continues to bring him off the bench. It seems like it works for them, it works for him and he's a guy that can clearly be the difference between whether his team wins or loses and we've got to be aware of that."

On if it makes him feel ancient coaching against Chris Collins for the first time since he was suspended when Iowa last played Northwestern:

"No. I mean, I've known Chris for years. I mean, obviously I knew him when he was little. Doug would bring him around and I tried to recruit him when I was at Notre Dame and he of course went to Duke. So I got to know him then and we would see each other on the road and sit together and watch games or whatever and talk and things of that nature. So, no. I have tremendous respect for him."

On the overall health of his team:

"Everybody's fine."