

2/3/2014: 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:

"We had an interesting week. Obviously, you know, playing a terrific Michigan State team at home. We had a great crowd. An overtime loss. You know, it was important for us, I think at that point to re-group and be ready to go on the road to play against a very talented Illinois team.

"I think with a big lead, then losing it, being able to hold on and come back and win a game like that, I think is a testament to the character on our team and now we've got a big week coming up, you know, with two ranked opponents on Tuesday and Saturday."

On if he noticed anything different about Ohio State in its game against Wisconsin versus recent games:

"I think the interesting thing about that game, considering who they were playing and where they were playing them, you know, you watch the beginning and Wisconsin is playing pretty well, you know, and it looks like Wisconsin is going to win.

"You know, the way that they kept their composure and then kind of kept coming and then played better at crunch time, I think is what most people have come to expect from an Ohio State team or a Thad Matta-coached team. You know, so that's

kind of what we're preparing for. A team that understands how to win close games and is obviously a very tough team that's getting wins on the road."

On whether his players have extra incentive for playing Ohio State on Tuesday considering the stage being like it was for Michigan State last week:

"You know, I think that's possible. I don't know if they really think about it that way. You know, I guess it's logical to think that they would. But you know, our crowds have been intense, pretty much all year. I mean, obviously, we have a number of sellouts coming up now. I suppose they're aware it's ESPN as opposed to BTN or something else."

"But I think the respect factor would come more from who we're playing, what they've done this year, what they've done in the past, reputation and how that affects our season, I think more so than the stage itself."

On whether he runs set plays in the closing seconds of crunch time or simply relies on players to use their instincts:

"Well, a little bit of both. You know, it depends on the circumstances. I typically won't take a timeout if we get the ball back off a miss. When [Siena's Ronald Moore] hit those shots [against Ohio State in 2009], we didn't take a timeout. We just came down and played."

"I typically trust my guys, whether it's Mike [Gesell] or Dev [Marble]. I know Mike's only a sophomore, but I trust him. He has got a lot of experience. Dev's a senior. I trust those guys to make sure we're going to get a good shot. You know, I make a good decision and a lot of times, the best play breaks down and somebody has got to make a play anyway."

"Very rarely do you run a play to perfection in that situation because teams are really locked in, they switch, they don't switch, they trap. They can call timeouts with the likelihood

that they're going to change defenses, they're going to change personnel.

"So I don't always, but sometimes I will call a timeout if I don't like what I'm seeing. O.K., now you're in a situation where you've got to run a side out of bounds play to a set play and then play from there and then of course, time and score comes into it. Are you down one? Are you down two? Are you down three? Is there 14 seconds? Is there four seconds? I mean, all of those things weather into what we do late."

On if he believes things eventually even out with last-second shots:

"Well, the other thing is Mike has made two of them. I mean, you know, that was one of the great things about him. He had an uncanny ability to just play the game without really getting rattled at all. I thought Dev's against Michigan State was down. I mean, there's nothing ... you know, I called the play, we ran the play and he got the ball four feet. He makes that shot 99 times out of 100.

"I would go to him again. I would go to Mike again. I would go to Aaron White. There's a lot of different people I would feel comfortable with. I would go with Josh Oglesby. I mean, we've got various people. I mean, you know, I wouldn't be afraid to go to Melsahn [Basabe] because you have to go with somebody who you feel confident is going to make free throws if they get fouled."

On Gabe Olaseni's performance at Illinois and what he continues to mean for his rotation:

"Well, he just keeps getting better. I mean, you could see his confidence improving game-by-game. I mean, very few big guys have that kind of quickness and that kind of motor. But he's very comfortable out there. He's scoring the ball, he's blocking shots, he's rebounding. You know, he had 15 [points] and 12 [rebounds], but I mean, his offensive rebound late was

essentially the biggest play in the game.

"You know, I don't know that I've been around a more conscientious player in my career. I think that says a lot. I mean, he's always in the gym, he's always trying to watch film, he's always trying to get better, he's always asking questions and you know, you're talking about a guy who was hard to figure out.

"When he got to this country, he had only played for about four years – three years overseas and then one year here before he got to Iowa, so he knew he had to catch up and he knew he had to listen and learn and ask questions and make mistakes and fail and, you know, get better. He maintained his enthusiasm for the game, his love for the game and his work ethic is, you know, unparalleled. So to see a guy like that succeed is a great feeling as a coach."

On what his team did well the first time it played Ohio State that it hopes to carry over into Tuesday's contest with the Buckeyes:

"Well, we didn't make a lot of mistakes. You know, we felt like going into that environment, to have a chance to win, you can't make a ton of mistakes. They do a real good job of taking advantages of those mistakes – turnovers, bad shots, turning the basket. So I think we did a pretty good job of taking care of the ball."