

2/24/2014: Fran McCaffery teleconference transcript (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery's teleconference on Monday with the Big Ten media:

McCaffery's opening statement:

"You know, an interesting week obviously with the cancelation. A tough game Saturday with a really good Wisconsin team. A hard-fought game. Now we have to chance to prepare for a really busy week with three games and I appreciate Purdue's willingness to work with us and I think everybody handled a really difficult situation very well."

On if he thinks there's any credence to Devyn Marble saying he likes road games because the team comes out more focused:

"I would much prefer to play at home. That's how I look at it. You know, I wouldn't agree with that. I would think you'd have to be focused whether you're playing at home, on the road or a neutral site and just focus on the next game. So that's a little bit confusing to me."

On preparing to play numerous quick guards over a 3-day span from Minnesota and Indiana:

"You know what, they're difficult to defend no matter when you play them. I don't know if there's an advantage or disadvantage, you know, because, you know, they're different. You know, Andre Hollins is different than [DeAndre] Mathieu, who is different from Yogi [Ferrell]. They're all quick and

they're all really good, but they're different. So your focus is going to change regardless, I think."

On whether social media had been discussed with the team after what happened with Zach McCabe on Twitter following last Saturday's Wisconsin game:

"I did. You know, I think it was a healthy discussion, one that I think made sense for everybody. You know, I think it's the world we live in and it can be very unfortunate at times. You know, it's not a world I live in and it's not a world I grew up in, so sometimes stuff has to be brought to my attention before I see it.

"You know, first and foremost, I'm going to support Zach and you know, I think many times I've said what I feel about him. I love everything he brings to this program and support him 100 percent. I think it can be very upsetting when you're getting attacked and I think you can have the impression that, you know, the entire fan base is attacking you and that is not the case and I think the good thing that has come out of this is how much support he has gotten in return from so many different people.

"You know, I think people are going to be upset after a loss and they're going to blame. Normally, they would blame the coach and that's what I would prefer that they do. Just blame me. When we win, let's cheer on the players and be happy for them and they were the reason. So it's a learning process that he has to go through and our players have to go through. I think my overall impressions of social media are negative for the very reason that we just experienced. But it's not something that we can dwell on.

"I think what we have to do, and what I've done is I told all the players to shut down their Twitter accounts until the season's over. So they're not going to be on Twitter, they're not going to be tweeting, they're not going to be getting

tweets and I think that's probably the smartest thing to do, is focus on these last few games and then the Big Ten Tournament and then go from there and when the season's over, they can open them back up."

On how the team will spend the week preparing for three games like it has to now:

"Well obviously, after the Wisconsin game, we just get ready for Minnesota. We have a two-day prep and we'll go up there and play them. You know, we'll fly right over to Bloomington right after the game. It will be a one-day prep, but we had already prepped for the game, so it's not like we're starting from scratch.

"They have knowledge. You know, we've played them before. They know the players. We haven't played them this year, so it's clearly different team. But they know a lot of the players and they've watched them on television because it's late in the season and we've watched a ton of tape on them already. So you know, we'll just refresh our minds on Indiana and what they do and we'll get ready to play that game, then come home and we'll have our two-day prep for Purdue.

"So yeah, it's a busy week. But I'm not so sure that this time of the year, the players wouldn't rather play games anyway. You know, I think they're tired of practicing by the time we get to the end of February and I think they would really welcome the opportunity to just prepare for the game and go play a game."

On what the team's experience was like last week upon first learning the Indiana game would be postponed:

"Well you know, we were back at the hotel getting ready to go to pregame meal when I got the phone call. I spoke to Fred [Glass]. He was really good. I thought he handled it extremely well. I think very professional. Apologetic, but at the same time, we both said, 'Safety first.' You know, God forbid that

happened later and somebody would've gotten hurt. That would've been awful. Thankfully, that didn't happen and we just said, 'Hey, you know, we'll figure it out, we'll come up with a date and play the game.'

"It was a unique set of circumstances. I've been doing this a long time and never gotten a phone call four hours before the game, 'The game has been canceled.' Normally if there's a postponement, it's weather-related. But again, it's something that happened. It's something that we dealt with professionally and everybody pitched in, you know, including Purdue and we'll make the best of it."

On how his players have gone from having expectations to delivering on some of them:

"I think it's a combination of things. I think first of all, you know, there could be expectations about your program, but you have to have that expectation for yourself and I think, you know, to a man, they felt like we have substantially better personnel than we've had in years past, in terms of numbers. We have more weapons, we have more size, we have more length. We have experienced backcourt players, which is critical in this league."

"You know, I think the way we finished last year, we have a little bit more confidence in our ability to win and you know, we were lucky we had an opportunity to go overseas this summer, practice and go play six games overseas and did that and I think that helped our confidence. It helped us get this particular team together, even though we had a lot of guys back and you know, then we were very respectful of the schedule we put together and approached that professionally."

"You know, we've got a lot of things accomplished so far, but you know, we've got a lot more work to do in what is without question, the most competitive league in the country."