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An Interview With:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. Last year, the freshman class was one of the most productive in school history, how do they have to elevate their game to take your program to the next level?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I think that obviously they are a very important piece this year. I think, just talking about Basabe, established himself last year as one of the premiere players in our league, I think that you have to take that next step, now that he recognizes that he's somebody that we are going to go to, and I think he will better understand how to stay out of foul trouble, which will keep him on the floor longer.

But he's a player that I think is capable of averaging a double-double, which would be a big jump and he's got to go from seven to ten rebounds a game.

As far as Marble is concerned, you know, I think last year, perhaps played the backup point, was prohibiting his ability to become the best wing player he can be, but I do think in the long run, he will be tremendous, I really do. He handles the ball, and run our offense and thinking that way, it's helpful to him.

I think he had a tremendous summer, he's gained weight, he's really -- one of the interesting things is that you look at our team now, the sophomores, they are still the two youngest players on our team, Basabe and Marble, and that shows you how much they can continue to mature. Melsahn is up to 234 from where he was last year. He was about 211 or 212.

McCabe, I think he's up to 239, so there is a guy who we said we wanted him to get stronger and his body fat is down but his weight is up; so that means it's a good weight. We obviously saw him play both positions last year, that doesn't

mean he won't play the three, but he's pretty much, you know, a four, post him up a little bit more. We'll expect him to get on the glass a little bit more and so far he's done all of those things that we have asked him to do. So those three guys are really, really important to what we are doing. But there's so many other pieces there that I think give us reasons for optimism.

Q. Player weights - - so it depends on the players themselves?

COACH McCAFFERY: Depends on the players, what we expect them to do and what we need them to do.

Q. From last year to now, how much improvement can this program take?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think we have improved a lot. And it's understandable. Now you're in year two of our philosophy.

One of the first things I did was surround myself with a great staff, and we were able to teach and communicate what we wanted to do. We talked about playing up-tempo. We talked about changing defense. A lot of those things take time to teach. Particularly with a young team.

And I think you look now, and say, well, we are a little bit more mature, and granted, those three guys we were just talking about, they are only sophomores and they got a ton of playing time last year. Bryce Cartwright last year was a first-year player. So now you have Cartwright, the senior, they know what we are doing, and the sophomore group knows what we are doing. We feel like we brought Brommer and Devon Archie along and nobody expected anything from those guys last year at this time; we did, and they both really performed well.

The key for those guys is to be a little more consistent this year. You add in Eric May, who I thought had a phenomenal spring, summer and fall, and I mean, he really has looked good --

physically, and I think his game, everything together, he really looks good to me.

You add in the freshmen who give us some versatility and give our team some things it looks, particularly in the area of shooting. Josh can make shots from the perimeter and is another post presence. So there's a lot of pieces now, and I think one of the things that I've said before is that you look at it collectively, what you have is a team that's got a little more size, a little more depth, and you need that if you're going to play up-tempo and you're going to play defense, and we are more experienced.

Q. Will you play at the speed you would ultimately like to play at this year?

COACH McCAFFERY: We will. We played faster last year. We didn't play as fast as I want to play. I would like to go a little bit faster and I think press a little bit more, and again, now we have a few more bodies and we have got some length, not only at the post but on the wing. We have got some experienced guards.

And we are still at the point where we were last year in terms of Marble being our backup 1 right now. We don't have a ton of depth there. We have to be careful with Bryce I think. He wants to play 37, 38 minutes a game but what does that do to us defensively in terms of him being able to pressure the basketball?

We'll try to start him as much as we can, and I think Josh figures in there in a big way.

Q. What has the new practice facility added and are the guys using it like you thought they would?

COACH McCAFFERY: They have. You know, not only do we have the new facility. We have two new shooting guns in there that will chart how many shots you take, how many you make, where you're making them, where you're taking them from, those kinds of things. So we can actually look and see, okay, who has been in here the most. I've said this before, Aaron White, the first few weeks he was here -- he had already taken 8,000 shots. A lot of shots.

So you look at Matt Gatens, Matt is now coming in four or five times a week on his own, in addition to the time that we require him to be here. So it's a phenomenal facility; it makes it really convenient for these guys to work into their own schedule, when they can come in and get shots done, and got a lot of shots in a relatively short period of time. Obviously coupled with the lifting

program, they have a lifting room right down stairs. Everything that is right here. I think that's one of the things that is so good for all of us, our office, strength and conditioning facility, practice facility, where we play our games, everything is here.

Q. Towards the end last year, you talked about 60 percent of your system in place -- obviously move that up a little bit and start at that level?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, it's really interesting, because you know, while tomorrow was officially the first day of practice, we get two hours a week on the court, after September 15. And we have utilized that time as a group and we have done some skill development when I have been on the road recruiting and when I come back and we get everybody together. We'll actually work out today for two hours and then tomorrow, we are on the 20 hours a week, one mandatory day off.

I think when you look at that, I feel like we made progress. You look at the first day where we are talking about some of our pressing and some of our man-to-man defense, we are already way ahead. It's all new to the freshmen but that's how it typically is, only new to them. When it's new to everybody, there's going to be a larger learning curve. And now, it's not there.

So we can -- as I said, we can do more. There were some things that I was thinking about doing last year. We just didn't bother with it. We just stayed with what we had in, and we tried to become better at what we had in. And we did that. And we ran the motion. We were better at the end than we were in the beginning.

In the beginning, we were running around, running into each other and screening and angles and cuts and things of that nature; our transition game was much better. Our press was pretty good but not where it needed to be. Now add another press or two, start doing a little more trapping, things of that nature. A little more changing, mix in some more zone, because you can run out of the zone.

So there's a lot of things that we'll talk about as a staff as we can do and we'll just see how we pick things up little by little.

Q. Sounds like you've made up your mind that you will use the freshmen. No plans to redshirt anyone like Gabe?

COACH McCAFFERY: If I was going to redshirt him, that decision would be made pretty much right before we play our first game. It wouldn't be made today. I want to see what he does over the next three weeks but we have an opportunity there to do that, because of the fact that we have two senior posts, but I just feel like we are going to need all of those bodies to play the way we want them to.

I feel like we need all of those bodies and what he's shown me so far is that he's ready to play. They were recruited to play and shown that they were belong, they are going to be in there.

Q. Eric May - - can you talk about the progress he has made, maybe he struggled a little last year. Where do you see him taking his game, how he contributed?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, he had an interesting year. He was really good early and got injured right before the Ohio State game and wasn't really the same after that in terms of I think how he felt about himself. He had a couple of bad games and he struggled with his confidence.

I think what I'm seeing somebody is more confident in himself. He's in phenomenal shape physically. He's 221 and he can run for days and he's jumping well and he's defending. He's making shots. He made shots last year but he's doing a few more things off the dribble which we need him to do at the wing position, but we need him to be a lock-down defender.

I do need him to rebound a little bit better as a three and I realize that's difficult, because we are asking him to be a run-out three, but then also rebound. And that takes, you know, a lot of concentration and determination to fire at the glass and take off and then beat everybody down the floor but he's capable of doing that.

Q. Having gone through a Big Ten season, is there anything you learned that you didn't know already?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think that's a good question. I know so much more now. I had a pretty good idea, primarily because we had played Big Ten teams in the NCAA Tournament in my last two years at Siena; so getting ready for Ohio State and Purdue I watched a lot of tape, a lot of Big Ten games and was very familiar with Iowa's tradition and past history.

I'm familiar with the league and was familiar in recent years how the league has played and we know what the reputation is, it's a physical

halfcourt league. And so I'm coming in and trying to say, we are going to make it a full-court game, attack, try to score in the 80s if we can, and it's sometimes harder to do because of how the other teams are playing against us. If they are holding the ball, then you play with Wisconsin they are going to squeeze the clock a little and it's hard to score 80 when they are running the shot clock down.

I think I have a much better understanding now, obviously, after being through this one year, in terms of how each coach prepares his team to play us. I always knew how difficult it was on the road. I think this has always had the reputation as a great conference. It's just really hard to win on the road. And that's why I think -- I talked about making sure that Carver became that kind of place for everybody that comes in here, and I think we saw that we played much better at home.

Our crowds were phenomenal and attendance is up, again, and I think our fans are excited about how we play, and I think what we have to do is get off to a good start, play well at home, and then show that we have enough toughness to go on the road and take our style and make it successful, which I think we'll be much better able to do now based on what we already know. And then, you know, we'll just have to see how it goes from there.

Q. What do you expect from Bryce this year?

COACH McCAFFERY: What I expect from Bryce this season, obviously you sign a guy in June, and he leads the Big Ten in assists, I think that speaks to who he is and the character that he has.

So I really was impressed with his ability to come in, learn a new system, run the offense, be a double-figure scorer, lead the Big Ten in assists, and be a really good late game, late clock player, end of the shot clock, end of the game. This guy was making shots, making plays all year long, not afraid.

So I don't know that I expect that much more from him at the offensive end. What he has to be able to give me is better effort at the defensive end. I was realistic last year; I played him a ton of minutes and can you really expect him to pressure the ball, extend it, and then have the ball and make the plays at the end of the clock and make sure Melsahn gets the ball and make sure

Matt gets the ball where he wants it.

Ultimately that's what we need. But can I get him to maybe where he's playing 34 minutes a game but he's given us more at the defensive end, making more things happen, a few more steals, a few more long rebounds where he can bust it out as the point guard. Things of that nature.

And I think that now that he has a feel for what I want from him and how we want to play, he knows I'm going to let him go, and he needs to really understand that he's going to be just as good at the defensive end as he was at the offensive end last year.

Q. You knew a lot about Matt coming in, you saw him develop over his junior year, are your expectations different of Matt now than it was when you first got here and what did you learn about him as a player over the last year and a half?

COACH McCAFFERY: The thing I learned about him as a player is that once I held him accountable for what I expected from him, he responded.

We knew he could go for a big number any given night, he's been a double-figure scorer from the minute he got here. Good shooter. But he needed to understand that in this league, anywhere in college basketball, the guy lines up across from him, he can play, no matter whether it's in the Big Ten or not. And I need you to go shut that guy down. And that's what he did last year. And I don't know what he did before; I wasn't here, but it didn't seem like he was focused on that end of the floor when I first got here.

When I tell you had he put his mind to it and became a defensive stopper and we started putting him on guys like Hardaway and people like that, that shows me the kind of character that he has and the toughness that he has. But now that he's got himself in such incredible shape and he's able to play both ends of the floor -- go back to the previous question, now we have him doing that, and if Bryce does the same thing, you have two senior guards that are playing both ends of the floor, both are double figure scorers, both are not mistake guys, and they start playing some lock down defense, well, now that's going to really impact our ability to win games and in particular win games on the road.

Q. Matt grew up watching successful Iowa teams. How hungry is he to bring Iowa back to that level?

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COACH McCAFFERY: All I can tell you is in terms of what he seems to expect from himself, I think is reflected in his work ethic and how his preparation has gone and when last season ended. I don't know that anybody has put more time in personally than he has. I think he's in great shape and coming in and gets shots up, and he did a great summer in the primetime league and goes overseas and does really well there. I'm excited about him. I'm excited to have him and I am excited to see him have the kind of year that he wants.

Q. With Basabe - - how do you take the experience of the World Championship Trials and training camp and not making it, how did that play into his development this year?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think it was a great opportunity for him to go out there and tryout for that team. To be thought of in that way, I think is important to somebody that 12 months before, never thought that that opportunity would present itself.

So I think that can only impact him in a positive way. I remember speaking to him after the first day, he had a great day and he said, I think I should make this team. The next day he didn't play well, and he didn't play well again, and then I think he saw that he needed to be the kind of consistent player that they were working for. They had a few other pieces that were able to do that a little bit better than he was.

And I think the other thing was, I think he figured out, I can't be more than what I am. Sometimes you're trying to make a team, you want to show everybody, I can do everything. No; what you have to do is do what you do well and better what everybody else is doing at that position. And I think that's how he's become who he is. A few years ago, everybody is telling him, you've got to be a three man, you're 6-7, you have to be a three man. Well, he's 6-7, 234, long; wrong, he's a four. He's a post player. That's what he is.

I think we saw last year against some of the best post players in the country he performed pretty well, so next step for him is to be just a little bit more consistent, I think it will be helped by the fact that he knows now how to stay out of foul trouble.

Q. With the three position, is that still kind of up for grabs here in a matter of just how

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both Eric and Devon practice for the next couple of weeks?

COACH McCAFFERY: The three position is up for grabs, absolutely.

Q. How much different will your center position look this year with Jarryd as an undersized guy last year and now more traditional with Devon and Andrew and Gabe.

COACH McCAFFERY: We have got a number of different ways we can go with it, full figure Jarryd Cole's role. Obviously first place you look is Andrew Brommer and Devon Archie. I would like to go in that direction, simply because that leaves Melsahn not having to play center.

However, at times, however in the Big Ten, put your five best players on the floor, so if someone else is playing better than those two guys, then Melsahn plays the four and White is the four. Or White is an undersized five and Melsahn plays the four, something like that. It's a smaller team and you have to decide, can we get by with it.

Michigan got by with that last year; that's how they played. He's big, 250, and I'm not concerned with Melsahn being able to play at that position. I am concerned about him with wrestling with Sullinger's and people like that and picking up two early fouls, or constantly getting -- he's in and out and we need him on the floor. So we have some flexibility, but I don't know that I would say today that this is the direction we are going to go, evident to figure that out over the next couple of weeks.

I think for Andrew, he's really in good shape now, considering the fact that he had knee surgery at the end of the season, his body fat is down, his weight is up and he looks good. Archie, his weight is down and I think that's fine, because his game is a little bit more speed-oriented. So, for them, it was a function of, what did they do as soon as I put them in.

Brommer makes a dunk, Archie blocks a shot, they are better, miss a free throw, fumble it out of bounds, then they were not as good but they are seniors now. They know my system and both had success under me. I've encouraged both of them to believe in themselves and trust their talent. They were getting better at the end of the year and they were going in the right direction, and they both had good summers.

Brommer didn't play in the primetime league, but really worked on his game and is in good shape. So I feel good about those two guys,

I really do. And even if they weren't in the starting position, I know that we are going to get contributions out of both of them. I feel like they will be ready to step up and do what I need them to do and give us quality minutes there.

Because when it's all said and done, whether they are starting or not, first and foremost, we cannot get mistakes out of that position. When you look at Jarryd Cole, he didn't lead the Big Ten in scoring but he was not a mistake guy.

He got on the glass, defended the other team's best post player, he was all over the floor and he was a great locker room guy, he was great on the bench, and always on the positive side of the ledger and that's what we need these two guys to do. It can't be, like you said, you know, the Ohio State game for Brommer where the numbers were better than Sullinger, and the next game he has five turnovers and four fouls. It can't be that.

He knows that. And I think he's worked hard to make sure that that doesn't happen.

Q. Andrew and Devon had flashes last year. What does it take to get them to the next level?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think we'll be better. How much better? I think it will be a function of two different things what we just talked about, our two senior big guys. It's always a function of your key guys staying healthy. But I think we have got to get off to a good start; I said that already. I think that's going to be important.

But when you have senior guards, you know, I think your expectations are always going to be a little bit higher. I feel like those two guys have to play like senior Big Ten -- all Big Ten caliber players, and they both can be. I don't necessarily mean first team but they have got to be in contention for all Big Ten honors.

So will we be better? How much better, we'll see. I don't put it in terms of wins or loss. I put it in terms of, does each player get better, are we capable of playing under pressure; can we win some of these tight games we lost last year. We lost a lot of games by five points or less and nobody talks about that. That means we have played well enough to win.

But there's a reason we didn't win. Now we have to win and make three or four plays we didn't make in those games last year, and then all of a sudden, all of those close games turn into wins instead of losses. Now all of a sudden, you're in



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the NCAA Tournament, not only are you improved, you are in the tournament, because you're winning a lot of those close games. We are going to be in some close games.

Q. A lot of times you don't necessarily want to put barriers on your team's progress through some sort of benchmark but do you feel like last year, did you exceed expectations, or was it about where you thought it might be?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think any coach would have hope that we would have done better than we did last year. I was not disappointed in my team at all. I think first thing you want to get is a group of young men that give you effort every night. They brought it to me, every night. That's the first thing you look for because that means your team has character. We had great leadership with Jarryd Cole, and somebody has to step into that role this year, who is going to be the guy in the locker room when it gets a little bit sticky on the road, a couple guys are injured, couple guys are in foul trouble, who steps up and makes a play in those games.

Was I totally disappointed? Absolutely not. Was I totally elated? Absolutely not. I thought we could have done better. Hoped we would do better. But I thought in terms of, we won, we were able to establish a style of play, we were able to establish the fact that we were going to get after people and we were not going to back down.

I think the other thing is we got better as the season went on and I think that was important. We didn't start out the way we had hoped. We had a couple losses early. Matt was hurt. Melsahn was fumbling around the Virgin Islands, and he just -- he just stuck with it and got better and became a phenomenal player for us. Gatens, when he got better was what we thought he would be. He became a better defensive player. Cartwright became a legitimate line, Big Ten point guard in a league full of great talent at that position.

But he gave us a chance every night against Lucas and McCamey and those guys and Jordan Taylor, he went toe-to-toe with those guys so that gives you cause to be optimistic this year because of that. So in a lot of ways I thought we made great progress, and that gives me reason to be excited today.

Q. You used the T-word, tournament. Do you put that out there for the fans and everyone to look for?



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COACH McCAFFERY: I think every team that competes in Division I expects to try to get to the NCAA Tournament at the start of the year. I don't think anybody says, well, that's not a realistic goal right now. We are just hoping to be, whatever. I don't think anybody does that.

So I think you go into the season, and say to yourself, okay, look at Penn State last year. Anybody expect them to get to the NCAA Tournament? They won close games, they won games in the conference tournament, they got better. They lost to Maine right before Christmas, badly, got drilled. You're going to have some bumps in the road. But what you have to be able to do is figure out a way to improve when you stumble. You're not going to be perfect every night. If each individual gives you what he's got and improves, which is what I've seen, then you've got a shot. That's got to be the goal and it's our goal, and it's been our goal. We are going to make some noise when we get in there.

Q. Do you think your non-conference schedule is challenging enough to get the team ready for Big Ten play?

COACH McCAFFERY: We have got some games at home where we can figure out how much different we are going to be this year and I can figure out how I'm going to work my freshmen in and how we are going to replace Jarryd Cole, all of those things but at the same time, we have got ACC/Big Ten challenge, we have got the in-state games that are going to be very difficult.

Iowa State is going to be much better. Northern Iowa is going to be terrific. Both of those games are on the road. Going to have a very good team to contend for that championship. We have games here. Creighton obviously, seemingly the best team in that league at the start of the season, so that's an NCAA Tournament team.

So we have got plenty to keep us tested prior to the Big Ten schedule.

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