

December 6, 2012



An interview with:

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How do you see the point guard match up?

COACH McCAFFERY: He's played really well, Korie Lucious. I've been really impressed with him, shooting it well. Knew he had great speed, could create. Had great speed and quickness and could create. It is going to be clearly an experience situation against a guy that has been around.

I look at it this way. It's a great challenge for him.

Q. Do they know each other?

COACH McCAFFERY: I am sure he does. Played against each other.

Q. How different of a team is this Iowa State team than teams you have gone up against in the past?

COACH McCAFFERY: This team has a lot of weapons. You know, it's rare that you find a team with this kind of athletic power that shoots it that well. You just don't see that combination a lot. So they defend and they rebound and they've got quick guys who can drive it. But then they spread you out and make threes.

You have a team that's leading the country in rebounding, makes 13 threes. It's averaging right at 10 threes a game. Obviously when you think about your ability to defend a team with that many weapons, it's very challenging.

Q. You talk about rebounding. You've been out-rebounded in your two losses. Do you think that's an important area?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think anybody that plays them all year long, it's going to be maybe the most critical factor as you approach the game. There's a lot of things you're going to try to break down in preparation to play a team of that caliber.

But if you think about the number of opportunities to get the ball and score, it's certainly a major consideration against them because they tend to limit you to one and get more than one. It makes it hard to win if you're playing with those kinds of odds.

It's only logical to look at it and say, We got to rebound.

Q. You were second in recruiting Georges Niang.

COACH McCAFFERY: He's a terrific player. He really is. He's one of those guys, you look at his stats, they're really good, especially for a freshman. I think he's one of those players that is even more valuable than his statistics. His numbers will go up. He's averaging about 21 minutes a game. Those numbers will go up over the course of his career.

He's very efficient. He can pass it, post up, feed the post. He's shooting the ball better outside, but he's not taking a ton of threes. He can shoot 41%. He was really more of a low-post scorer.

He's got a variety of moves, very crafty. He's got a body.

Q. As a coach, are you curious about how Anthony Clemmons will handle this? Will this be a big test in your mind?

COACH McCAFFERY: No question. That's what the process is. You've seen a lot of basketball. That's what we have to look forward to.

How does he respond? If he does well, great. If he doesn't do well, what do you learn? If he does well, you still got to keep working. You don't want to get too ahead of yourself one way or the other. It's something you have to go through.

If you think about it, our two losses, we had Armistead and Green. One is a senior, one is a fifth-year senior, two of the better point guards we'll face all year. As you know, our league and pretty much every team has one. It's a great indicator, I think, for where we're headed with him.

Q. You've been around both point guards awhile now. Do they handle these situations differently? Are they even-keeled?

COACH McCAFFERY: They don't seem to get too nervous, no. They still make freshmen mistakes at times, but I think the critical thing for both of them is it doesn't seem to wear on them, it doesn't seem to lead to further breakdowns, which happens a lot with freshmen.

I think that's a combination of two things: they're kind of mature personalities, both of them, and they also have a real good understanding of how to play. So they just seem to be able to get to the next play.

I thought Anthony was a little bit jittery in his first start, the first five minutes or so. Pretty much after that he's been really good.

Q. (Question regarding Will Clyburn.)

COACH McCAFFERY: You look at his rebounding numbers, they're phenomenal. He's got great length. He's got great pace in his game. He can spot up, be a three-point shooter, he can be a slasher in transition, he can score in their sets at halfcourt. They post him up. He can play with ball screens. He's got the kind of game, you look at it, you say, There's a guy that's probably going to play in the NBA. He's got that kind of game.

Q. How pleased are you with your defense so far?

COACH McCAFFERY: I would say I feel a lot better about it than we did last year. I feel like we've had great improvement in that area. I don't know if 'pleased' is the right word. We still have a long way to go. And I think in this game, they'll challenge our defense big-time because of how they stretch the floor, different weapons they have.

They have so many seniors, five seniors, that just play. A guy comes off the bench, he might be the best sixth man in the country. Very few guys come off the bench and affect the game at

both ends of the floor. They usually do it one or the other. He does both. That's a great weapon to have.

Q. Does McGee get overlooked?

COACH McCAFFERY: You look at his numbers. He has as good of numbers as anybody. He gets a lot of things done. Seems like everybody is talking about other people, but he's a guy that tends to be able to get things done when they need it, in crunch time. He has that ability, and that's special.

Q. How much of an importance do you place on a game like this, considering it is an in-state rivalry?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I don't really look too much at the rivalry aspect. I look at it as it's a tremendous opportunity to play a really good team. I mean, this is a team that will be ranked. If they're not ranked yet, they're going to be ranked.

Fred does a terrific job. They run a lot of good stuff. They've got a very experienced team. They're physically built like Big Ten teams. Be one of the best teams in the Big 12, no question.

It's a tremendous challenge, especially for our young players. It will be a great barometer. If we play well, that will be terrific. But if not, then we learn and we move forward.

But we've got more teams like this coming on our schedule. So it's a great test for us now.

Q. What does getting a win tomorrow night do for the team as they go into conference play?

COACH McCAFFERY: It would give us a tremendous amount of confidence if we won. What I'm trying to do right now is finalize the game plan, what I think we need to do, then go out and play well, get consistent performances out of a number of different people.

We've been better in that area this year without question. We've got a lot of different individuals coming through for us. We're going to need all of them tomorrow night.

Q. When you were a senior, if you were playing against a freshman, do you approach it any differently psychologically?

COACH McCAFFERY: No. I never did. I always looked at it like this: I respected everybody

that lined up across from me. You know, that's kind of how we try to do it. You want to respect your opponent. You don't fear anybody. That's kind of how you have to go about it.

I'm going to work as hard as I can. I'm going to be consistent with the game plan. We're going to fight you. We're going to compete.

If you get me, you get me. We go on to the next game, break this one down, try to get better, go on to the next game, try to improve.

In terms of that particular aspect, I never looked at it that way and I doubt he is.

Q. Can a young guy almost have too much respect for a guy? How dangerous is that for a younger player to do that?

COACH McCAFFERY: He can. But I don't think he will. I mean, he's going to respect what he knows. He's seen Lucious play well. He's seen him play well in the Final Four. This is a guy who has been around. He's watching him on film.

You watch him play, he's playing really well. He has your respect right off the bat. I think that's enough. I don't think you want to give anybody too much respect, but understand what are the things that he does to help his team win, okay? What does Anthony have to do to help our team win? That's what he's got to stay focused on.

Q. The comparisons between the programs are obvious. What do you hear around the state about Iowa/Iowa State?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I'll be honest with you, I don't hear a lot on the I-Club circuit certainly. It's not something we talk about. I mean, the only stuff I would hear would be the stuff that I read that you guys write. Other than that, really not too much.

Q. Do you prepare the freshmen any differently for their first big rivalry game? Do you address it at all with them?

COACH McCAFFERY: No. No. I don't typically get into those aspects of a competition. That's just not my style. What I try to do is focus on what do we have to do individually, what do we have to do collectively, what are the four or five things that are going to be absolutely critical that we do to win this game.

We study our opponent. Every game plan is different. We just played two nights ago, but it will be a completely different game plan, be a completely different game plan next week. It's important they lock into that.

That's what I want them thinking about, not thinking about any of the extraneous stuff, the trappings, rivalries, crowds, anything like that. You just got to stay focused on the task at hand.

Anything short of that, we won't play well.

Q. With five freshmen, their first finals coming up next week, how do you approach things after tomorrow night with that group?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I think in terms of how we approach it after the game, it will always be a function of how well the game went or how well it didn't go, okay? But anytime you have finals week, it's absolutely critical that our focus be on finals.

We get the final exam schedules, we figure out if and when we're going to practice. The players know they have the option, if they have a study group, an extra tutoring session, something like that, they have the ability to miss practice.

We try to schedule it so that it doesn't conflict with anybody's exam schedule. But, as you know, if you have exams back to back, maybe three in a row, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, you're going to need some time.

So what we'll do is we'll get our film sessions in, adjust, plan accordingly. We do have a week to get ready for the game.

Thank you.

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