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An Interview With:

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY

Q. When you put this game together, was it with Peter in mind?

COACH McCAFFERY: Jerry Strom scheduled the game. I think he had that in mind. It would have been of great interest to me for Pete, but it wasn't anything I did deliberately, no.

Q. He found out from his brother and then called you.

COACH McCAFFERY: I didn't talk to him about it. It wasn't my idea. You know, we looked to put a schedule together. It's obviously a very complicated process. They were looking for a game, we were looking for a game. You look at time and then you look at why it makes sense to play the game, and then it sort of comes together. It's got to make sense for them, it's got to make sense for us.

But certainly that component of it makes it an interesting game for both teams.

Q. Peter's brother said that it was a way for Coach Allen to get him to play one game closer to home, but (inaudible) part of the equation, so you never talked to Coach Allen about it?

COACH McCAFFERY: No, I did not.

Q. I know you've coached against Penn before. Is it an odd feeling or is it just another game at this point?

COACH McCAFFERY: The first time it was. Yes, the first time I coached against them was very strange because I wasn't that old. What was I, 27, something like that, so I'd only been out of school five years or so. I was coaching against Tom Schneider, who was my boss at Lehigh, who

was my assistant coach at Penn. So he left Lehigh to go back to Penn, so I was coaching against my former mentor at my alma mater. So that was a little bit different.

But as time goes by, it's not quite the same. Obviously there's still feelings there, not only because I went there, because I grew up going to that building as a youngster and went every Saturday night for quite some time with my father and my brother and my mother. My dad worked there for many years at the Palestra.

So there's obviously very strong ties to that institution. Steve Bilsky, the athletic director there, he was one of my coaches when I was playing. I thought he was going to go into coaching. He ended up going into administration, has been very successful. But he was a very good coach.

For me it's a little bit different, but not quite the same as the first time.

Q. I know your dad worked at the Palestra.

COACH McCAFFERY: Right, he did a couple different jobs, but in the latter part of his career there, he had security on that side of the building, so his job was to get the officials from the court to the locker room. So he got to know all those guys, yeah.

Q. Would you like to schedule a game at the Palestra sometime?

COACH McCAFFERY: It's a possibility. It's a little more complicated than -- let's do something that I want to do. It's what's best for Iowa. That's how we're going to schedule.

Q. Have you had any conversations with Peter about emotions or anything like that?

COACH McCAFFERY: Not yet, but I will. What I've tried to do is gauge how he's approached -- he's had really good practices, and he just keeps getting better.

Q. Did your nickname “White Magic” come with you to Penn or did it stay at Wake Forest?

COACH McCAFFERY: No, that stayed with me. I got that name in high school and it went all the way through my career. Some of my buddies from back then, that’s still how they address me. But it wasn’t that big a deal to be honest with you. You know, I think it has more of an appeal if you’re the best player on the team or something like that. I wasn’t the best player on the team. We had better players. I was a pretty good player on a really good team and was thrilled to be a part of it.

Q. That had to be tough to be sitting out on a Final Four team, missing a Final Four?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yes, it was. It was different because we knew we were going to be good, but I don’t think anybody ever thinks they’re going to get to the Final Four. It’s not something you plan on. But we were a very experienced team, and had an incredible mental toughness, that team had.

It was great for me to be a part of it and just be in that atmosphere every day and watch the journey. We were fairly certain we were going to go to the NCAA Tournament, and then of course the first weekend we have to play North Carolina in Raleigh, and that was an amazing game. I was there. I went down. And then we had to go back the following week to Greensboro to get to the Final Four, and looked at the field and felt like, hey, we’ve got a shot here. It was Syracuse, St. John’s, Rutgers and Penn. Carolina and Duke were supposed to be there. That’s why it was in Greensboro. They lost on what they still refer to as Black Sunday. Duke lost to St. John’s and North Carolina lost to Penn.

Q. The team you’re facing, they played really well at Penn State.

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, they played Penn State at home. They have shown a tremendous amount of resilience in the first three games. They were down 15 against Temple in the second half, came back and took the lead. They were down 10 on the road at Monmouth, came back and won, and they were down 26 in the second half against Penn State and came back. I forget what they cut it to, but they erased about 18 or 20 points, maybe more. So they’ve shown that they can score and they have composure to come back.

Q. Do you like the way your combinations are working right now, your substitution packages?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, it’s worked out really well. I mean, I’m not surprised. We’ve had an opportunity to do this now, we had six games overseas and an exhibition, scrimmage, four games, so we’ve had an ample amount of time to see that develop. I’m not surprised.

Q. Going overseas, does that help next week when you travel again?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think so. We’re kind of used to traveling, but that’s a little bit different. You’ve got to travel somewhere and then play three games in three days. I think our depth will be more of a factor than the fact that we went overseas.

Q. Do you have any update on Oglesby and will there be a point when you think about red shirting him?

COACH McCAFFERY: We would think about red shirting him only if he came back and just was completely ineffective or had a setback. We fully expect him to recover. He’s on pace. But it’s just one of those things, you insert a pin in somebody’s foot, you’re going to have to wait pretty much the full six weeks. But he’s working out diligently in the pool and on the bike and things like that.

Q. Is that injury most difficult for maybe playing defense moving side to side rather than straight forward?

COACH McCAFFERY: I suppose. You know, either way you’re pushing off, and then the other side of it is to jump up and up-and-down, the pounding of it. He stepped on a guy’s foot, and that’s when it popped on him. Now, with a pin, that shouldn’t happen anymore. I think the interesting thing will be what’s his discomfort level. When he comes back will he still feel it, is he tentative, is he hesitant at all, but he should be fine.

Q. You mentioned Penn is able to get back in games and even win some of them. What type of match-up are you sensing from them in terms of what challenges they’re going to come with?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, they present a lot of challenges, not the least of which is they

have size. They have two really good post players, Dougherty and Nelson Henry, really good players. Nelson Henry is 6'11", 265, Dougherty is 6'8", 230. Both of them have a game. They can score in a variety of ways. And then they've got tremendous quickness on the perimeter across the board. Cartwright and Hicks are very good players, but it just doesn't stop with those four guys. They have a lot of depth, and they've got upperclassmen to come in on the bench, and when that happens, typically those guys don't make mistakes.

They all bring something different to the table, so when you start with four really good players, then you add in quality, experienced players who can do a variety of things, now you've got a really good team. I think that's a team that without question will contend for the Ivy League championship. In preseason they were picked second behind Harvard, who's obviously ranked.

Q. Four games in, are you happy with the development of your team overall?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yes, very happy, but I think somewhat guarded. Some of those teams have obviously played really well. Nebraska-Omaha has done really well, UNC Wilmington has done really well since they left Iowa. Maryland Eastern Shore won last night. Abilene Christian played TCU for a seven-point game. Maybe you look and say I'm underestimating what we've accomplished, but I just think we have to prove more.

Q. Obviously you have a chance not only Friday but then your next three games or four games are tough.

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think without question. You look at tomorrow night's game is going to be a very tough game, a very good challenge for our team, and then of course three games in three days against obviously high-profile programs and then fly back late on Saturday and get to play Notre Dame on Tuesday.

But we did that by design.

Q. Is everybody else okay?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, everybody else is fine. Everybody else is good.

Q. You're happy with this move with Marble more off the ball and Mike at point?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yes, I think it's worked well. I think it's worked well for both of them. Whenever you make a move like that, you've got to feel pretty good that it's going to make sense for both guys. You've got to be careful making a move because you think it might help one guy but it's going to hurt the other guy, and then you really haven't accomplished anything. In that case I think it's helped both of them immensely.

Q. I think three different players have started at least 13 games at point in the last year and a half. Is it really that big of a deal who's there today because three weeks from now it could be somebody else?

COACH McCAFFERY: No, I don't think it matters that much because of the depth that we have and the fact that our wings and our 2s and 3s and even our 4s can really handle the ball. I think it's more impactful when your post guys can't handle and your wings turn the ball over. If you've got mistake guys opposite your 1, it puts so much pressure on him that I think you really have to lock in and get that guy ready to do everything. But in our case it doesn't matter as much.

That said, I think often times your better point guards are guards that kind of know, okay, I'm the point guard, I'm going to have the ball, I've got everybody's trust, and you've got to be careful not to jump around too much I think as a coach. I think I'll be sensitive to that as we move forward.

Q. Do you still remember the Penn fight song?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I do. I'm not going to sing it, though.

Q. Has the cost of doing business with these kind of bye games gone up over the years significantly?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think it's gone up, yeah. I don't pay much attention to it to be honest with you. We have parameters given to us by the administration and we follow them.

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