

December 7, 2012



An Interview With:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. Talk about your freshmen, the way they performed.

COACH McCAFFERY: Obviously Woody (Adam Woodbury) got it going early and established right away that we have a low post presence that the teams we play are going to have to deal with. And we also were able to out-rebound a team that may very well end up leading the nation in rebounding.

I think obviously (Anthony) Clemons was spectacular. He has got an amazing ability to remain under control, to think the game, know what we want. Very rare for a player that young.

I was particularly proud of Mike Gesell. He did not play well in the first half. He was missing shots he normally makes. He was fumbling and stumbling with the ball a little bit, and I challenged him at halftime and the way he responded in the second half, the way he made his free throws down the stretch, just couldn't be more proud of those three guys.

Q. What about Aaron White, seems like this team feeds off what he does.

COACH McCAFFERY: You know what he does, he does a lot of things to help your team win. He rebound, he steals it, he deflects. He drives the ball to the basket. He can play facing and he can play inside. He seems to know when we need him to do something special. He's always been able to do that.

You know, he's a guy that never gets nervous. He never gets sideways in the moment. He just keeps making plays. The only thing I have to do with him is to make sure I keep him rested. I sometimes, because of what you said, I tend to

leave him out there, and that's typically the only time he breaks down is when he's exhausted.

Q. Talk about those three in the second half with Josh (Oglesby) --

COACH McCAFFERY: I went after him at halftime like I've never gone after him before, because I think the world of him, and I know what he's capable of. I really challenged him.

He was going to go one way or the other in the second half. It wasn't going to be anywhere in between, and I think he showed us what he's capable of and the kind of person he is.

Q. One of those plays out of the time-out, one of those three-pointers (Josh) Oglesby made, was it just to get him back in and try to get that shot?

COACH McCAFFERY: The thing about it is we go to him all the time. When he's on the floor, I'm constantly thinking about going to him. I've got my point guard or whoever is pushing the ball on the break, looking for him. We are always looking for him, and he has the green light no matter what.

Even if we say, okay, we are going to run clock and we are going to shoot it late in the possession and we are going to keep the ball in defense, we're going to screen, and move and cut. He has the green light, and he knows that, and he knows that's the kind of confidence I have in him. I don't think he'll ever play without the kind of confidence I need him to unless he knows I have that kind of confidence in him.

Q. If Anthony (Clemons) keeps playing like that, people are going to ask how you got him out of Lansing, Mich. How did you get him out of Lansing, Mich.?

COACH McCAFFERY: It's interesting, it wasn't that hard. He wasn't very heavily recruited. And you know, you've been around a while,

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recruiting is not an exact science by any means.

He was on a team that had multiple stars. So I think what you needed to do and what we were able to do is watch his team play enough to assess how complete his game was.

You know, I didn't offer him, myself, after the first two or three times I watched him. It was like the fifth or sixth time where I came to appreciate all of the things he does to help your team win games.

Q. Talking about defensive pressure, did the play --

COACH McCAFFERY: They did, but it's not something that I find surprising. You know, when we recruited that group, we had sort of this expectation for them. Doesn't mean they are going to play this way every night.

But I knew they were capable of playing this way. They sort of expect that from themselves. You know, there's a reason why they are right in the starting lineup.

Q. Is this the best game your team has played?

COACH McCAFFERY: Oh, no question. No question. It's the best game we've played, yeah.

Q. (Inaudible).

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought (Devyn) Marble got into place a little bit and got him a little bit sideways early.

I think when you look at talented offensive players like (Will) Clyburn or anybody that they have, if you can get them a little bit off their game early, I think it will help you at the end. (Tyrus) McGee on the other hand, he kind of got going and he was on fire. Like Clyburn, he never seemed to get on track.

Q. This was a game that may have went the other way, giving up the big lead before halftime but then came right back out strong. What does it say about the team and where it's headed?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I think what we did was we executed much better at critical points in the game than we have so far this season. Our losses against Virginia Tech and Wichita State, we didn't do that; no disrespect to them. I think we fought in both games, but we didn't execute. And tonight, we executed.

Q. How excited are you with the freshmen, a foundation for what you're doing.

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I'm ecstatic. The other thing is, I went to (Melsahn) Basabe at half-time and was really upset with him with the turnover he made on the in-bounds pass, and he comes right back and gives us a huge second half.

So yeah, I'm thrilled with the freshmen, but they got a lot of help: (Josh) Oglesby, Basabe, (Zach) McCabe, Aaron White, (Devyn) Marble.

Usually at this time we are talking about Marble. I thought he was terrific tonight. He played a phenomenal defensive game. He didn't shoot as well as he normally does, but that's okay, he played great.

Q. Your rebounding was spread out, how big of an emphasis was that?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, it was a huge emphasis because they shoot so many threes. They shot 28. I mean, there's been games when they have shot 30, so where are the rebounds coming? They are coming all over. They are coming long most of the time. So if our guards don't rebound, they are going to get it back.

So I thought that was obviously a key, and we showed it to them, we explained it to them and we went through it again, and they executed it.

Q. Your defense top to bottom, you were playing good team defense.

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, it has to be. Rarely do you play a team that is this athletic that has this many three-point shooters. So what teams like that do is they have you all spread out, and they are able to go off the dribble. They can throw it in or they can drive-and-kick and shoot throws.

So they challenge your defense pretty much across the board. So if you are not locked in and focused, all five, they are going to score, and we held them to 34 percent the second half.

The biggest thing I think we did there was we kept fresh bodies out there. There were times when I didn't really want to take (Aaron) White or (Devyn) Marble out or (Mike) Gesell, so I just kept rotating them because that was the only way we were going to get home.

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