

February 4, 2014



Ohio State – 76
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Postgame Interview With:

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY

Q. The three-point shooting, most of those shots did you agree with?

COACH McCAFFERY: Most of them I did. I thought there were a couple that were a little deep, maybe a little rushed, but some of that comes with Ohio State is very quick and they close out hard and things of that nature. Maybe we could have shot-fake-and-drove a couple. But we had good shooters shooting open threes. I wasn't upset with any of them, no.

Q. Was tonight more of Ohio State's defense or just a cold night shooting?

COACH McCAFFERY: A little of both. I don't think you would say it's one or the other. You know, they were quick and aggressive, they were switching a lot. But we got good looks, we got the ball inside, we got 15 offensive rebounds, so I think our effort was good there. Our execution on our set plays was good. Our execution in motion was not.

We were looking for different combinations. We had a couple that worked, a couple that didn't. But I thought the guys fought hard.

Q. 45 points the second half you gave up.

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think if you want to look at where we lost the game, we lost the game with defense in the second half. I don't think there's any question. You're right. Because we were running pretty well, it's much easier to run on misses and get your confidence going and things of that nature, and it was various people scoring.

They were aggressive, Scott was aggressive, Smith was aggressive, Craft was aggressive, Ross was aggressive, and they're all good players.

Q. They're known to really terrorize the perimeter on the guards. They got 10 steals tonight. Did they do anything surprising on defense to disrupt it?

COACH McCAFFERY: It depends on how you define that.

Q. After a handful of very close losses, how are you feeling about the Big Ten tournament?

COACH McCAFFERY: I feel like we have as good a chance as anybody.

Q. They were driving your man-to-man tonight, like you said, very aggressive. Was there a reason you didn't --

COACH McCAFFERY: We played a fair amount of zone in the second half just to try to slow them down. But in the zone they were really open, and we did not have the same effectiveness I didn't think in terms of slides and communication that we had up there, and even there we had some breakdowns. But I also think up there they were a little more tentative than they were tonight. They weren't tentative at all against the zone. They were attacking it, they had guys raising up and shooting. They were running set plays. Even when they didn't score against the zone, they were shooting wide-open threes. We weren't defending at all. So you're looking at it saying if I stay in this they're going to keep getting good shots. Let's put some pressure on the ball and get our defense over. It's easy to look now and say we should have played more zone because the man didn't work, but I really thought the man would be better.

Q. Did they do anything different on Marble than they did in Columbus?

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COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, they put Craft on Marble.

Q. How big was the dunk with two seconds on the shot --

COACH McCAFFERY: It was a big play. We cut it to four. I thought Woody could really disrupt the pass. We put him on the ball, and we didn't want anything at the rim obviously, but I think when you're in that situation, guys don't want to give up everything, and they started running picks. We thought they would run a back pick for Thompson, ran a back pick for Williams, and we chased it, so that was unfortunate.

Q. Smith came out and had a really strong start to the second half.

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, any time they win he plays well. He's sort of the X factor guy. You look at the Illinois game, they won by seven, he hits four threes. He's a terrific player. He's been a terrific player. He was in a slump very similar to the one Marble was in last year, and it affected their team, and now you can see he's playing with confidence because he's always going to defend, he's always going to play hard. He's a gamer. His three ball was off for a little bit. His numbers were way down. If you look at overall versus in conference. But he's had a couple good games now, and that could be a big difference for that team moving forward.

Q. There was a stretch in the first half where Olaseni had three, four buckets, give you guys a boost. He was in double digits again. What do you see from him especially the last few games?

COACH McCAFFERY: He's playing with more confidence. Obviously you know he's going to play with great energy. He's got as good a motor as anybody, but he's playing through his mistakes and he feels comfortable out there and he's affecting the game at both ends. Obviously we're thrilled with his development. The good thing is we know he's going to keep working hard.

Q. How much of the free throws is a mental block do you think?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, some of it. You know, again, it's a couple guys missing one here, one there, a couple guys missing two. I expected Zach to make both of those. He's usually automatic. At least he got the big rebound on

Mike's miss. We made them Saturday, we didn't make them tonight.

Q. Another tough one with Michigan coming here on Saturday --

COACH McCAFFERY: Very good team. Obviously we lost to them up there. You know, last week sat here not feeling good about how the game went, and I felt like we needed to regroup and get the team ready to play on Saturday, and we did that. I thought our guys were really professional in their approach. I was very proud of them, told them that.

You know, we played hard tonight. We didn't play well. We never really got in sync. We got behind. We weren't in sync defensively. We made more mistakes than we normally make. We just have to learn from it and get ready for Saturday. Obviously the No. 1 team in our league right now.

Q. Will this week be similar to last week in terms of how you handle your guys?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah. You know, tomorrow is an off day by rule. They probably need it. And then what we'll do is we'll start getting ready on Thursday for Michigan. Obviously we just played them not that long ago, so they know personnel, and we'll kind of bring them up on what they've been doing and we'll have the film broken down, so we'll try to get better watching those clips and get ready for Michigan.

Q. Is there anything big picture the team really needs to turn around, like last week you brought up toughness, or is it just the Big Ten grind, you win a game, you lose a game?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think you just have to be respectful of your opponent. I think we tend to focus sometimes on what we didn't do, what we should have done, what I didn't do, what they didn't do. But you have to be respectful of who this team is. They were ranked third a minute ago in the country. I mean, they came into the season expecting to win a national championship. They were in the final eight last year, have a lot of people back. They have a lot of upperclassmen. We don't want to get carried away here. We lost to a real good team and didn't feel like we played our best. Give them credit for having a lot to do with that, and be ready to go.

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