

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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## Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



**Q. When you're going into a tournament like this, do you kind of assign different assistants to scout a couple of the teams or teams they have already scouted before?**

COACH McCAFFERY: They will just stay with the teams they had going into the year.

**Q. As far as practice goes, do you just not worry about it until after you know the results?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, we'll sort of prepare for both. If we think we need to work on a particular press offense or we want to play a particular defense, we'll just spend some time on it and figure it out for both teams.

**Q. How much time do you spend on Minnesota or Illinois, do you did I individual your usual time?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I'll did I individual my time and my assistants, who had Minnesota will take Minnesota and whoever had Illinois will take Illinois and whoever had Purdue will take Purdue.

**Q. How much prep is needed? How familiar are you with the opponents?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Very familiar. We only played both of these teams once, so that's a little bit different. It's been awhile since we played Illinois. We played Minnesota after that. Minnesota's team obviously is different with the three suspensions and Joey King breaking his foot.

But I think there will be some subtle differences. They played seven games since we played Illinois, so kind of studied that and see what you need to be doing.

**Q. Looking from a broader perspective, coming out of the last few weeks, Mike Gesell, is it fair to say he's been as important to this program as any player you've had since you've been here?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I would say that. For the very simple reason, he's had the ball most of the time. That's a major responsibility when you try to build a program, the guy who has it is very important.

Now, we were lucky to get Bryce Cartwright when I first got here and he did terrific for us for two years, and we

also had Marble and the same thing with Mike, and we also had Clemmons. So those four guys were probably equally important. But Mike's been doing it for four years and won a lot of games with him and his leadership. Yeah, he's crucial.

**Q. Mike is closing in on the season assist record, too. What makes him so good in that capacity?**

COACH McCAFFERY: He's constantly in attack mode and he's got great vision. He wants to give the ball up. He's a willing passer and he can score, so you've got to play it straight. He just wants to win. The other night, he only had six points, but he had 11 assists, one turnover. We're a lot better when he does that.

**Q. Illinois seems to be playing well, they took Wisconsin, down to the wire --**

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, any team that has Malcolm Hill, Kendrick Nunn, Jalen Coleman-Lands; I think Morgan is playing extremely well; Lewis, I have been impressed with him.

So they have got some really solid shot makers. They have size coming off the bench. They have obviously more depth right now than Minnesota has. Minnesota puts a good team out there. They just don't have the depth they used to have.

**Q. Coming up on the final Big Ten Tournament for the seniors, talk about their contributions that they made over the past four years together?**

COACH McCAFFERY: They came in as starters and have started the whole time they are here. They are kind of exactly what I thought they would be. They are winning players with great character, hard workers, great teammates, in terms of how they prepare, how they work in the summer, how they work in the weight room, how they work in the off-season and how they communicate with the younger guys. They both are really good that way, and it's so important when you're trying to build a program and you're trying to build a team that has some depth.

**Q. When you have a tournament with this many good teams and there's several teams have the capability of winning it, what are some of the elements that you think are essential to winning games when you have teams that are equally balanced?**

COACH McCAFFERY: You've got to take care of the ball. You have to come down and get good shots. You've have to rebound.

And then you can't let the key guys that you're locking in on go crazy on you. So take care of the ball, rebound, defense, share the ball and then hopefully we can execute offensively. You never know how that part of it is going to go: We're going to make shots, we're going to miss shots, whether get to the foul line or not. The other stuff you have a little bit more control over I think.

**Q. Can you talk about the use of your bench in consecutive games?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I would say the answer is probably no but it's always a function of what's the score. If you're thinking, we've got to get to Sunday, we probably are going to win this game, we don't have it under control yet, maybe left some guys, because any time you're in a lose, you're out, you're just trying to win that game, because tomorrow doesn't matter if you lose.

**Q. What would you consider a successful trip?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Winning the championship.

**Q. It's been a long time since you had to play back-to-back games without days off. As a coach, how do you prepare for that or do you not even think ahead?**

COACH McCAFFERY: No, I think you do. You just have to be careful leading up to it how hard you go. We're going to practice -- practiced yesterday, practice today, practice tomorrow. But we're not going to go crazy in terms of two-hour practices with a lot of up-and-down. We try to keep their legs fresh.

**Q. It looks like three teams from the State of Iowa will go back to the tournament again, what's your take on that?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I don't think anybody's surprised about that. They are all really good teams. To me it's what I kind of expected. We haven't played Northern Iowa this year, but I've been impressed with that team all year long. You could see early some of the wins they had. They had a little stumble, like a lot of teams do. They just kept coming.

They have three fifth-year seniors. That's a good place to start. I think Iowa State is very talented. We know that. They have got a terrific point guard, an All-American player. So it's great. I guess it's great for the State of Iowa but certainly nothing to shock anybody.

**Q. You don't talk a lot about the depth -- what Jarrod, Mike and I think what bare, on the All-**

**American Academics --**

COACH McCAFFERY: I've coached one Academic All-American the year before Pat Garrity when I was at Notre Dame. So proud of him, and to see what Jarrod has done -- it's one thing to be a first-team All-American. But to be the Academic All-American of the year, and for our school that had both the men and the women Academic All-American is pretty impressive and says a lot about our commitment to academics and about those two individuals.

And Mike, again, it's the second year in a row he's been on the All-American team. He was second team this year and he was third last year. He's just under a 4.0 so I'm not surprised about that. But what it does tell you is it's easy to see why they are having success on the court because they just take care of their business and they are here for all the right reasons, putting the time in and I'm just happy to see them be recognized in that way.

**Q. There have been several teams in recent years, kind of with your pedigree or your success level, that stumbled sometimes during February, I think Michigan a few years ago finished like 6-6 down the stretch and came through it stronger, kind of fought through the adversity and had a really good run in the NCAA Tournament. Are there any positives at all that you or your team can take away or anything you can learn from what kind of transpired over the last few weeks?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think what you do is look at it and say, okay, we lost some close games. That's always the most frustrating when you lose to Indiana close. Iowa State, Wisconsin games, didn't win them. So what do we have to do at the start of the game, what do we have to do defensively, what do we have to do down the stretch, can we execute better, can we call different sets, do we have to change defenses, are we in the right defense, are the right guys getting shots. That's all you do, try to analyze it. You don't overthink it because sometimes you miss a free throw or two at the wrong time and that's the difference.

So there's nothing really earth-shattering that comes to mind that you say, okay, there's a lot of possessions in a game. If look at this -- from this front end the wrong times is the only reason.

We played well against Indiana. I thought we played really well for a good portion of the game against Iowa State, and I thought battled really hard against Wisconsin. Didn't play as well but we battled. Jarrod got in foul trouble. So you don't over think it.

**Q. The last two years, you've been knocked out on Thursday; anything you can glean from the**

**experience?**

COACH McCAFFERY: We won the first game the previous two years. Last year, we had a -- it was one of those games where we were in pretty good shape and they caught fire. We didn't get a stop when we needed it. The year before, Northwestern really shot it well that game. And guys that normally don't make shots, were making step-back threes. Those are the kind of things that happen sometimes in tournament play.

So we'll execute; we'll be making the shots we need to make.

**Q. It's been 19 years since a Hawkeye player has had such national accolades as Jarrod has gotten this year. How much does that benefit the program?**

COACH McCAFFERY: It benefits it a lot in the sense that we are getting talked about on television a lot more. He has been somebody that no matter whether you're watching ESPN or CBS, any of the stations are talking to him about national Player of the Year race, Big Ten Player of the Year race. He's All-American, he's third team, and it's wonderful. I'm thrilled for him. It's obviously great for the program.

But you have a guy that pays their way to come here, I never forget that. He wanted to be a Hawk. He came here, paid his own way. Shouldn't have had to, but he did. To be an All-American is pretty special, so I'm thrilled for him and for his family. We'll reap some of the benefit of that, there's no question.

**Q. Are you surprised that the tournament --**

COACH McCAFFERY: The problem with that is, I thought Clemmons and Mike legitimately could have been on that. I always look at it like this. I look at the list of who made it and I say to myself: Is there anybody on there that doesn't deserve to be on there. As I'm obviously biased with my guys, and I couldn't say that I would say somebody was mistakenly put on there.

You don't say, this guy should have been second or third, so-and-so should have been on the honorable mention. Every one of those kids can really play.

I would have liked to have seen him get some recognition because I think he deserves it, but I think the people that did get recognized also deserve it.

**Q. Seeing Christian Williams get more minutes the last few games, what have you seen in practice?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Pretty much the same thing that he was doing to kind of earn the opportunity to play. It just took him a little bit longer to learn all the spots. It's

a lot harder than people think. If you only learn in one spot, it's hard not to -- if you learn three spots, plus all the defenses, and he just took it a little bit longer.

And once he got it figured out, he can effect the game in a lot of ways and you're seeing that with his length, with his size at the point, he can handle it, and he can shoot it. He's not a killer shooter but he's a scorer. He can score the ball. He attacks the rim. When he's in attack mode, at both ends, we're a better team.

**Q. How is Brady handling falling out of the rotation and how confident are you that --**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think Brady will be fine. He's been sick, so he wasn't at practice yesterday. But his attitude has been terrific.

**Q. (Question about Dom Uhl)**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think he's getting guarded a little bit differently. They are getting up into him a little bit more and you're seeing him put on the deck, which is a good thing, as long as he gets rid of it at the appropriate time, whether it's to shoot it or pass it.

I still think he's being aggressive and I can still play him at a couple different spots. He's really smart; he knows where to go. I thought he didn't play particularly well when I put him in the other night. When I put him back in, he was much better. I wasn't real happy with him the first go around. He only played two minutes. I expect more from him than we got in those two minutes. I explained that to him and he's much better.