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An interview with:

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY

COACH McCAFFERY: I felt like there were some positives today and there were some negatives. Clearly I think you have to give great respect to South Dakota State and how they executed. It was not unexpected. Studying them, watching them on film, watching them the other night against Eastern Illinois, they've got a savvy team with a terrific point guard. I thought Wolters essentially controlled the game today. We went after him, rotated players on him, tried to disrupt him. Obviously we went after Sargent. I thought Eric did a pretty good job on him for a good portion of the game, then he got away from us a little bit.

We didn't get as much out of our transition game as I would have hoped. We were pushing it. But we didn't have any easy baskets like I would have liked. But we've got to learn and get better. Some of our young players got some experience. We out-rebounded them.

But it's hard to win with 10 assists and 18 turnovers. We only had two players with an assist. Got to get other people feeding the post, driving, kicking, creating opportunities. We've got some work to do. We'll get it taken care of.

Q. You say it's an offense that you can't be afraid to make turnovers. Is this an example of when you go through the roof a little bit?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, you know, in the beginning, the travels, I think that was a little bit of jitters. Cully is not usually going to make those. Neither is Bryce. That got us a little bit sideways at the start of the game.

I thought we fought back. I think we were up five or six. Then of course the end of the half

when we go from up six, we had opportunities to get it to 10 or 12, and we got it to the rim twice, once with Jarryd, once with Bryce. Could have extended the lead. Instead, we miss Sargent on a transition, run right by him, he hits a three. We had him kind of buttoned up to that point. That's the kind of thing that gets a guy like him going. He's a terrific player. Needs one to get be comfortable.

Then we panicked a little. We had freshmen driving the ball into packs of people. Melsahn and Zach did it. That's not their game, they know that. They were trying to make a play. That's what a competitor will do. That's what a freshman will do in that situation sometimes.

We just have to know and understand how to do a better job late game. How do you manage a five-point deficit, how do you manage a three-point lead. Our pressure wasn't what it needed to be down the stretch. We've got to be able to make our free throws so we can get into the press. Three times we made the front, missed the second, couldn't get into the press. We had some things we were working on that we wanted to try to do to disrupt them. Instead, they're just getting it outlet, we have to guard their stuff again.

We'll get better in those areas.

Q. Given it's an entirely new system, young guys you have, how tough was it to open without Matt?

COACH McCAFFERY: It certainly would have been nice to have him. We didn't have that one offensive weapon that you would like to have taking some of the pressure off the other guys. Essentially played eight. I was trying to rotate personnel so we didn't have a lot of fatigue. But when you're pressing full court and they've got you spread out, you're chasing two guys in particular, and we're running, it's going to take great conditioning.

I mean, with Jarryd and Brommer and Zach and Mel, we kept rotating them. We got

Marble in there. I was really pleased with him in the second half. In the first half not so much. He showed me a lot coming back the way he did. That was impressive. So it would have been nice to have him. But others are having an opportunity to see what they can do and learn and grow and we'll get him back sometime soon.

Q. Were you surprised when Cully through that behind-the-back pass?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah.

Q. What was your reaction?

COACH McCAFFERY: It wasn't positive. You know, I think in that situation, two-on-one, you take the ball to the basket, make somebody play you, you kick it off. I think he felt like he could make that play. It was a decent pass, but the defender hadn't committed one way or the other. So now he's on Melsahn. Melsahn fumbles a little bit, doesn't make the layup.

We've got to be able to convert in a two-on-one in that situation. Two-on-one, score the ball. I can't remember if we were down four or two. If we were down two, it would have tied the game.

Q. Do you feel like the problems are the same problems you've been seeing in practice or are these new ones?

COACH McCAFFERY: No, I think they're a function of a lot of things. Everything is new. It's not just style of play. It's everything. Terminology. If I made a play call, if I change the defense, it would be that half a second, Where do I go? What lineup is on the floor? We had some foul trouble in the second half. Now you have a small lineup on the floor, then a big lineup on the floor.

It's just going to take a little bit of time for those guys to as soon as I make the call go and do what I want instead of having a two- or three-second delay. Maybe something that may have been good for us doesn't happen. It wasn't anything bad. We didn't create, I don't think, enough turnovers in the second half with our pressure. The pressure was good, but we didn't do enough to disrupt their rhythm, and they're clearly a rhythm team.

Q. Do you think there needs to be improvement with chemistry on the floor?

COACH McCAFFERY: That's going to take time. Eventually they'll develop chemistry. I think we were starting to develop that. Then, of

course, we're moving Eric May to the two spot, he was in the three spot. He's done fairly well there I thought. Zach played a good part of the pre-season in the four spot, now he's playing the bulk of his minutes at the three spot. There was a big learning curve there for him in particular.

Eventually they'll both know both positions a little bit better. Regardless of what combination is on the floor, we'll be okay.

Q. Jarryd had strong play.

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought Jarryd played with a great level of intensity. He was active defensively. He was a force. We were going to him. We wanted to go to him.

I'd like to think we would get more offensive rebounds than we did from our front court. We rebounded well. Our big guys rebounded well defensively. When we're struggling offensively like we are, I wanted to see Mel and Jarryd in particular and Brommer get on the offensive glass. I think that's an area, when you start talking about fatigue, if you're a little bit fatigued, you don't go to the offensive glass. That's one of the first things that happens, you just start running back. We've got to get in a little better shape.

They have to get used to, when Matt comes back, we're going to play nine. I might throw Archie in there. I just thought that would have been a tough game for him today.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH McCAFFERY: I saw it. We have a copy of it.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I'm not sure where we're going to go when he comes back. I would say that Zach would probably be my first sub, but maybe not. I mean, he's terrific. He can play the four. He's a pick-and-pop four. He can drive it. I thought for his first game, to go for 11-7, pretty good. That kid, he's tough, he's smart, he's just going to keep getting better.

Q. Do you think your point guards are struggling to get the floor, especially in transition?

COACH McCAFFERY: We were blowing the ball down the floor and we didn't get anywhere near as many opportunities as we did in the last

game. Now, this, of course, is a better team. But by the same token, I think we need more penetration from two players who can penetrate. Cully just didn't penetrate tonight. He did one time, took it all the way through, laid it in. I want him to do more of that. I think he got a little tentative when he had the traveling calls earlier, started playing more conservatively.

Bryce has to play at a more intense pace. He plays hard, coasts, kind of goes back and forth. He's talented and can really impact the game more I think. I've talked to him about that.

I think what you'll see is both of those guys play better as we move forward.

Q. Are you glad you're not going to have such a quick turnaround?

COACH McCAFFERY: I would rather have more practice. We need as much time together as we possibly can have just to get comfortable with what we're doing, how we're doing it, why we're doing it, and who's doing it, what combination.

We'll still take advantage of the time. We'll meet tonight. We'll watch film tonight. We'll have an opportunity to introduce our next opponent and get ready to play them.

Thank you.

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