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An Interview With:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. Can you just talk about Matt's all-around game, offense and defense?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think there were a lot of components to it, not the least of which was his effort level on Hardaway and his ability to sustain it.

Offensively, I thought even early when he was missing, he was taking great looks and they all looked like they were going to go in, and then he got hot. He made big shots late when we needed them, free throws late when we needed them. And just an incredibly complete game with phenomenal effort focusing concentration and really proud of him.

Q. His defense was moving over to Burke at times and never seemed to take a possession off.

COACH McCAFFERY: He's locked into the game plan. You know, you look at Michigan, especially late, they are going to go to Hardaway and Burke. They are going to shoot some threes and they are going to spread you.

But those two guys are going to be the guys that go off the grid a little. They are going to be setting ball screens for them and driving and finding the shooters. So if you are in transition, it's not necessarily a function of, okay, I find Hardaway, that's my man. Burke's not covered right now, I have to contain Burke. Somebody else will pick up Hardaway and sustain effort and intensity that way.

Because you know they are going to shoot about 30 threes. They shot 31 today. They are averaging a ton. And you just can't let them -- we

lost to them last year, I think they made 16. You can't win. So you've got to hold them to a legitimate number and you've got to do that by rotating and contesting.

But first and foremost, you've got to contain penetration, because that's where it starts typically, especially with Burke. For the most part I think we did a good job containing him. He got away from us a little bit late but we were really guarding the three at that point.

Q. The ball at halfcourt to Matt -- could have switched -- inaudible. That's kind of the effort you got, isn't it?

COACH McCAFFERY: We had that effort the whole game. In a situation like that, I look at that as a five-point play, because that loose ball was at the ten-second line. If they get it, they are going to go lay it up. We get it, throw it to Matty, it's a three and put it back up at 15 with less than five to go with a double bonus; it's going to be hard at that point. What I told Jack, that's a play being made by somebody who expects to win, not somebody who hopes to win.

Q. You see the way he's riding Burke this year, are you surprised he came out --

COACH McCAFFERY: No, I assumed they took him out even with the rest of the half, he's too valuable to that team. They couldn't risk him getting three. One of those things if you go back and if you lost, you say, we should have put him back in.

But at the time it wasn't a huge lead and they knew that they had to let him -- for him to be able to get you home in the second half like he's done, and like he got 19, he's got to be able to play his game and he can't do that in foul trouble.

Q. How pleased are you with the effort, to bounce back from that.

COACH McCAFFERY: I think that was

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critical that we do that. I thought our focus and concentration in practice was fabulous and now he's got to go out and do it against one of the best teams in the country.

And like I said you've got to sustain it. We started great and had a little trouble in the first half offensively, and Josh got cooking and that was big. In the second half we were not converting in transition; they were, and then Cartwright came in and changed that I thought in a big way. And again we wanted to drive the ball, get into the bonus, get into the double bonus, play our game.

I knew we were going to get great effort today, but again, it's the attention to detail. Last two games what did we do, 21 turnovers in each game. You can't win. We had eight turnovers today. This is a team that is a phenomenal offensive rebounding team that relies on broken-play threes, and if you remember early on, they got three, three of their first 12 points were on broken-play threes.

So we have to get the rebounds and we have to contest, especially when they drive the baseline. And we for the most part did that. They made eight, but they missed a bunch.

Q. How critical was the final minute in the first half there? If they trim the lead down to five and you have the offensive rebound from Archie to hit a three and Marble getting a shot at the end of the half.

COACH McCAFFERY: That was a huge, huge play by Archie and he's done that now twice at the end of a half. I really respect him and his acceptance of that role. He comes in and he gives us energy.

Remember, the play before, he contested Hardaway on the three, and that's how we got the last bucket. So he gets the offensive rebound, kicks it up for three, then he contests and then Marble goes and scores at the buzzer. That was huge for us.

Q. The offensive rebounds, 27 defensive rebounds, that makes you smile a little bit?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, what it means is we are playing good defense to begin with because we are getting them to miss shots, this is a very good shooting team, so now we have to go get it. That's a team like that relies on Novak, he's always in there, Morgan, Smotrycz; those guys are really getting offensive rebounds,

and today we blocked them off. It was a collective effort to tag and pursue, and that's what we did.

Q. The leadership in the first half, I think he had eight points, four assists, no turnovers; did you feel like he was dictating the tempo of the game?

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought he was playing the way we want him to play. He was under control. He drove it when it was there, he made plays when it was there; he defended; he sticks his nose in there; he'll get a rebound, get a rebound off his own miss.

Remember the last play of the first half, we outletted it and he's blowing the ball down with 16 seconds and he pulled it out to make sure we got the last shot of the half. They miss and make a three, it changes everything. So I think that's the sophistication of his game.

Q. How has he changed from the start of the season?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think he's adjusted tremendously, because he had that opportunity when Bryce was hurting. So he was playing 36, 38 minutes a game. I just stuck with him. I think that helped his stamina, and I think it helped complete the picture, and I think last year's experience, coupled with that opportunity, really made a difference in his ability to be an effective point guard at this level on a consistent basis.

Q. And the conditions that you were playing, to come back, is this overall the best performance?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I think it was one of the best. I think when you go on the road and win at the Crisler Center, that's a little bit harder. No disrespect to Michigan, but that's when you go in there and win -- but it was the first time we had done it in a long time. And we knew that we had to have a similar kind of effort. They were very similar games in terms of how we executed the game plan, as a group, not rely on one, two or three guys to carry us.

Q. The total from last game --

COACH McCAFFERY: Probably, but it's not something that we thought about or talked about.

Q. How focused were Eric and Zach

from the start?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, they didn't play well up there. They didn't. You don't have to tell them. They know. And they didn't have a whole lot to say the last couple of days but they practiced well. So I think we saw coming what came.

You know, kind of wanted to have Eric in there a little bit more, late, but we had a lineup on the floor that was cooking with Bryce and Marble and we went with that and he was as happy as could be.

I would tell you that I did not -- I was not surprised at how they responded, both of them. They are great kids.

Q. Late in the game, you had 17 assists and 20 field goals, 18 and 25, pretty good numbers.

COACH McCAFFERY: I think that's one of the things that would make any coach most proud. We are a team that shares the ball. We are an unselfish group and put winning ahead of any personal achievement and I think that's the kind of character we have in that locker room.

Q. Six games in the Big Ten season and some highs and lows in the last week; what do you know about the kids?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think I'm learning a little bit more and more. One of the things that I like is we have a number of different weapons now, so we can beat you offensively if our two or three key people are not scoring. Could not do that last year. So that's good.

I don't think we are making as many mistakes overall, but we did in those last two games. So hopefully that's behind us. Our rebounding has been better. It has been, and it has to be.

You win at Wisconsin, they are a phenomenal rebounding team especially offensively, same thing today. And it's going to be another physical game at Purdue. Tough place to win; athletic; powerful. Playing a lot of four guards against us just like John did today, but they are quick to the ball and they are flying at the glass, and so we have to do a better job.

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