

Iowa

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Tournaments, always quick tournament around with the next game. What's the biggest thing Coach has stressed to you guys in preparation for tomorrow?

AARON WHITE: Obviously, with a quick turn around the biggest thing for us is mentally being locked in. Last night, we obviously were introduced to Gonzaga, got used to their personnel. Today we watched some of the personnel clips and a game. But really locking in mentally to statistics, what guys do, what they don't do. Kind of how they can beat us. So that's kind of what you lock in here. Obviously, you can't do much in two days physically, so a lot of it is mentally being locked in, being professional about it. Our coaches do a great job and I think that as players, as a group, I think we do a great job of locking into the game plan and following our scouting reports.

Q. Aaron, you guys have won seven road games, but looks like this will probably feel like a road venue tomorrow. How has that been a strength? Why is that a strength of this team, playing well on the road?

AARON WHITE: I don't think I can put one thing on it. I just don't think we really care where we're playing or who we're playing. I think we just go out and play our game. I think that when you watch us, I think we're a group that's really together, that loves one another, that plays for one another. I think that helps us in tough situations. Whether the fans are on us, or whether a call doesn't go our way, or a team goes on a run. I don't really think that phases us because of the fact that we're so together and we like playing with one another. So, like you said, I think that tomorrow will be a great atmosphere. Obviously we're close to Gonzaga, they're going to have a lot of support here. But I think we got a lot of people out here too that are supporting us and should be a fun environment and a fun game.

Q. For Mike, defense has been a hallmark of this team over the last month of the season, and your win streak and then of course yesterday. You seemed to be very locked in on Gibbs, especially. You've got a new test tomorrow in Pangos. What have you seen of him on film and what's the

challenge going to be like for you to defend him?
MIKE GESELL: It's going to be another fun matchup. Seeing it all year. We have played some of the best point guards in the country and Pangos is another one of them. He can do a lot of things. He can shoot, pass, he's kind of the heart and soul of his team. So, really we want to take pride in that matchup and try to disrupt his rhythm a little bit.

Q. Adam, you guys had a big size advantage last night. Now you're playing a team with a lot of size on the front line. How does that differ the approach at all going into this game?

ADAM WOODBURY: The game plan's a little bit different. But during the Big Ten season we saw a lot different size. Played against Carolina and Syracuse and Texas, played against big front lines. We have done it all year long and we're very well tested against our front line. We do it every day in practice. It's one of those things we got to be ready for. It's a little bit of a different game plan than we had last night but we're still trying to impose our will on the glass and get out and run and do the things that we always do.

Q. Aaron, from what you have seen of Kyle Wiltjer, do you see a lot of similarities in both of your games and if there are differences, what are they?

AARON WHITE: There's some similarities. We're both scorers, we're both versatile forwards for our teams. He sets up a lot of his drives with his shot fake. He shoots really well from deep, catch and shoot. Whereas I might do a little bit of my work more off the slashing and use my athleticism to my advantage. But both big versatile forwards that can score and help their teams in multiple ways. It should be a fun matchup.

Q. Mike, last night's game was about as well played of a game as you've had. I think you had 15 points, six assists, no turnovers. How have you -- in what ways do you feel like you've progressed as the season has gone on, and then how did last night -- how were you able to execute the offense as well as you did?

MIKE GESELL: Well, I just was looking to be aggressive. I feel like our offense flows a lot better when me and Clemmons are being very aggressive from the point guard spot. Just opens everything else up for our shooters we have on the wings and our bigs and helps our transition game to get going. So I think

throughout the year I've slowly gotten more comfortable and looked to be more aggressive with my game.

Q. Aaron, being the basketball junkie you are, how much did you know about Gonzaga? How much really when you started breaking them down last night?

AARON WHITE: Quite a bit. When you got a team ranked Top-10 basically all year, they're on TV a lot. I watched them. I was with Pangos this summer at LeBron camp, so I know him a little bit. Wiltjer is big name in college basketball, I watched him. So, yeah, I'm pretty familiar with them. They're very similar to us, to be honest, with the size, the way they want to play. They want to get out and run, they want to score the ball. So it's a team I watched a lot. It's a team that when the bracket was all set up, you kind of looked at them that we might get them in the second round and I was excited about the matchup. And tomorrow should be a great one.

Q. For Aaron, you guys have a chance to do something special that hasn't been done in this program for a long, long time. In order to do that, you have to stay locked in on the moment. Have you guys allowed yourself to kind of take a step back and enjoy what you're doing or is it right now you're too focused on the present to worry about the big picture?

AARON WHITE: No, I wouldn't say that -- I would say we enjoyed last night. We were a happy group after yesterday's game. I thought we earned that victory. I thought we were really locked in the whole week. But once this morning came up, actually once last night came up and we introduced Gonzaga, we knew we had them. I thought we were very professional about it. We locked into kind of what this team is going to do personnel-wise and scheme-wise. So, yeah, we enjoyed it from basically from when our buzzer went off until their buzzer went off and we were introduced to them by our coaching staff. So we definitely enjoyed it in the locker room and as a group. But like you said, we're focused on the next task at hand and excited for tomorrow.

Q. For Aaron, early on you were motivated I imagine by not being as heavily recruited as others like when you were a freshman. How much of that still exists now as a motivator?

AARON WHITE: Yeah, I've always been a kid that's kind of tried to put a chip on my shoulder. Even when I had success I still kind of looked at other guys across the country that might have got a little more pub than I have or a little bit more national recognition than I have. But, so, you always got to take the floor with a little bit of a chip on your shoulder and I think I've done that my

whole career. No matter what's happened, positive or negative, just tried to be motivated by little things. So definitely carried that over into my senior year here now and tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you. We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

COACH MCCAFFERY: Take questions for coach.

Q. Last night, Mike Gesell had maybe his best game at your school. 15 points, six assist, no turnovers. Locked in on defense. Did you see that type of effort coming throughout the week in his preparation and the way he defended? How does that -- what kind of confidence does that give you going up against that matchup with Pangos?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think you know how I feel about Mike Gesell. I love the kid. I loved him the first time I saw him play. He was the highest priority in our recruiting. So, to see him playing like this is not a surprise at all. But I think you're right, Pangos is so good at sort of engineering victory for his team. You look at 33 wins. He's really a tremendous point guard. He scores when he has to, he distributes what when he has to, he plays fast, he plays slow, he can grind it, whatever his team needs him to do. You got to have somebody guarding him that can defend and can stay after him. I think that it will be a good challenge for Mike.

Q. Gonzaga has tried to elevate itself from a Mid Major into a national brand. What is the perception in Iowa of Gonzaga as a national program?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I don't think it's any different than it is in any or state. I think everybody knows that Gonzaga is a Top-10 program. They have been that for quite some time now. You win 33 and you look at the streaks that they have had in terms of winning. They step out of their conference and schedule pretty difficult teams regularly and able to win on the road and win in tournament situations with really good teams. So, I think the days of anyone even remotely trying to refer to them as a Mid Major program is somebody that's clearly not tuned into the college basketball world.

Q. What's the one thing you, for you and your staff, that stood out to you while watching Gonzaga on the floor last night?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think the thing about them is, I don't think there is one thing. There's a lot of things. You look at their size, you look at their ability to move the ball down the floor. Like I said, they play fast or they can grind it on you. They have got talented players at every position. They have got talented players coming off the bench. They got pieces that fit. They can play

smaller, they can play bigger. But when you have -- it starts with, obviously, Pangos and Wiltjer, two All-American players. But their size is difficult to handle. Because you know that any time the game gets a little bit sticky, they can go inside and throw that ball inside and get production, get to the free-throw line. They can also score in transition with their athletic guys on the wing. So, incredibly talented team, versatile. I think a team that doesn't make mistakes. You look at the numbers, they don't turn it over.

Q. This will probably feel like a road game tomorrow night, tomorrow afternoon. You guys have won seven road games and played some of your best basketball on the road. So in that sense, is that not an overwhelming factor with your team?

COACH MCCAFFERY: We have an experienced team and we have played well on the road. This is a big stage. It will be a road game essentially in terms of the crowd atmosphere. But it still comes down to what happens when you take the floor. Do you take care of the ball, do you move the ball, do you get good shots, can you rebound with this team. Their rebounding numbers are staggering. They're plus seven. So you got to do the same things that we did the other night against a much bigger team and a much, I would say a much deeper team in that sense.

Q. Mark Few the other day mentioned that, we're talking about the pace of play of basketball and he his teams like to run it at a fast pace. Mentioned something about the 24-second clock.

Philosophically, what are your thoughts about moving it to a 24-second clock?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well, I think it's fine where it is. If it moved to 30, I would be fine with that. If it moved to 24, I would be fine with that. I don't see it going to 24. I see it going to 30 potentially. I know we're experimenting with that right now. But Mark and have I similar philosophies in terms of running the ball down the floor and we tend to shoot it quicker, drive the ball to the basket, shoot threes. All those kinds of things. So, I think that in general the faster pace, the better.

Q. Last time Iowa played Gonzaga was 1986. Tell me what you were doing in 1986, if you could roll back the clock that far back?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Okay, 1986? I was -- '85-'86, that was my first year as a head coach at Lehigh. I was 26. So, we went to the tournament in '85. I was the assistant. And then I got the job that fall and had a pretty decent season. Were not in the NCAA Tournament, but we were in '88.

Q. You guys were as locked in as any time I've seen you last night in your game. You accomplished something special, something that hadn't been

done for a long, long time, yet you've got something bigger in mind. How long did you allow yourself and the team to kind of enjoy the moment, celebrate it, because it is so special and yet turn your focus on to an opponent that's one of the best in the country?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Normally as you know, I like to give them the rest of the day to enjoy it. Didn't have that luxury in this case. So, what we did was allow them to enjoy it in the locker room, come out, a lot of families are here, spend some time with your families, come back to the hotel, get some dinner. And then we had a meeting and went through scouting report and then we put them to bed and then we went to work. And of course, Andrew has been working on them since the bids came out. He's been working on Gonzaga. So they have to lock in, same day we play. That's what happens when you play with such a short turn around.

Q. How close is Aaron to where you thought he would be when you first recruited him, he was so lightly recruited, and did you see any of this coming?

COACH MCCAFFERY: We thought he was going to be great. That's the interesting thing about recruiting. Clearly, it's been proven over time that it's not an exact science. Nobody else in our league offered him a scholarship. A lot of people looked at him. A lot of people thought he would be better suited at the Atlantic 10 level. But we believed in him. I think when you recruit somebody you have an idea what you think they can become. But until you get your hands on them and see them work every day and see them prepare and truly get to know their character, you'll never really know if they're going to be great. I knew he was going to be really good, but when he got to campus and started working as hard as he did, both in the weight room, in our practice facility, which had just opened, you knew we got something special here. So the fact that he's our second leading scorer in school history is not a surprise.

Q. Just about every position, it seems to be a comparable matchup here. When you look at Wiltjer and his -- what he's able to do and then you also look at Ukah, for instance, and his skill set. They seem to be fairly comparable in the way Ukah defended last night against Kalinoski. How favorable or I should say, how does Ukah matchup with Wiltjer?

COACH MCCAFFERY: It's a completely different situation. He had a significant height advantage on Kalinoski. He's really a point guard or a two guard, he's playing small forward for them. Wiltjer, he's kind of a power forward with small forward skills. He could play center if you needed him to. So I think a very good

matchup in terms of length, the ability to shoot it deep, put it on the deck. They both have post moves, counter moves but ultimately both have really good feel for how to play. They are both winners.

Q. We had Louisville in here and they had to deal with the Chris Jones situation. It just feels like you really can't open a magazine or newspaper and not read about campus sexual assault. It's a very hot topic, not hot in an exciting way obviously, but President Obama talks about it. I think the NCAA has teamed up with their Its On Us initiative. I was wondering, as a coach, is that something that you talk about with your players?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Regularly, yeah. We do a lot in terms of education and understanding, whether it be date rape, expectations. We really, as an institution, try to make sure that that never happens. It's horrible and I don't think it's a bad thing that there's conversation going on about it and hopefully that will curtail future examples of it.

Q. In terms of tempo and maybe just the overall ebb and flow of this game, lower scoring better if this game stays in the sixties for Iowa, or can it drift into the 70's and 80s and you still come out on top?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Nothing would change for us in terms of what we try to do. We try to score in the 80s every game if we can. 90s would be great. We'll play 80s, 90s. Interesting thing there is our defense has been a lot better this year. Our scores have been a lot lower. We have spent more time offensively, less time quick shooting the ball and we have defended better. So the scores have been lower in our games this year than they were last year. I think you think about it. If you're playing Gonzaga, you would be like, wow if it's in the 90s we could be in foul trouble, it could be a bad thing. You're right. So, we're going to try to get stops and run out and score the ball. Obviously, if we're in the 80s or 90s, we hope we have more than they do. But we're not going to come in with a mindset that, hey, we got to keep this thing, we got to work the ball. No, that's just not who we are.

Q. Talk about Gabriel Olaseni. He called your team a team full of underdogs, whether it was from low recruiting or what have you?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I don't really look at it that way. I can see why he would say that. We're from the Big Ten. I don't think anybody in the Big Ten looks at themselves as underdogs. When you play the number of teams that we have played this year who are in the tournament, and you play teams that we have played on the road in our league. And the ACC Big Ten challenge, the tournaments that we play in typically. I think we are pretty confident in our own skin. But at the

same time, we're very respectful of what Gonzaga has done, not only this year, but over the years, and any team that wins 33 is going to get your attention.

Q. Go back to when you were 6-6 in the Big Ten coming off a couple losses, the season maybe at a tipping point. What does that say for this group that they were able to turn it in a positive direction, one, and what does that do for the long-term stability of your program, do you think?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well, what we had to do there was go on the road and win and had to beat good teams and we had to keep doing it. What that took was leadership. It started with Aaron White, but I think it was also with Mike Gesell particularly at the point guard position. Then our other juniors and seniors as well. I think when you have teams that perform that way under those types of circumstances, I think it bodes well for how people view your program and the kind of success that you can have moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.