

November 29, 2011



Clemson – 71
Iowa – 55

An interview with:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. Just a bad shooting night you chalk it up to?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think it was more than that. That obviously was a big part of it. I thought early on we had good looks. We fell back into sort of the trap we were in in the Creighton game when they started hitting and we weren't.

To me, that's one of the disappointing things about the first half. Needed to keep them on defense a little bit longer, drive the ball. They were playing physically. They committed 21 fouls. So we were quick shooting the ball. We didn't give them a chance to foul. We didn't drive the basketball, throw it inside, that type of thing. That was disappointing.

It was frustrating for all of us. We had good shooters taking good shots. They just weren't going in. That's when you have to bear down defensively and hold them to a lower number. You can talk about offense all day long. Shoot 48, they shoot 56, 52 for the game. It's going to be hard to win when you're 15 under on the glass.

Q. Another tough night for Mel. He really hasn't gotten on track. How worried are you?

COACH McCAFFERY: The only thing that gives me hope is he practiced well. He got off to a bad start again. He had a couple chances around the rim. Had a wide-open shot that was in and out. I think that was frustrating for him.

What I need him to do is be a little bit more of a factor defensively on the glass. I think offensively we can get him going, but he's not rebounding. He's not a defensive presence like we need him to be.

I do think we did a pretty good job on Booker and Jennings. Those two guys are pretty good. We didn't do as good a job obviously on Young and Sapp.

Q. Is that why you sat him out, because he wasn't defending well?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I got some of my other guys in there. Yeah, I didn't feel like at that point it was worth putting him back in.

Q. How is Marble?

COACH McCAFFERY: He walked it off. He'll be all right. He tweaked it, turned it a little bit. But he'll be all right.

Q. (Question regarding mental focus.)

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought at the beginning of the second half we were pretty focused. We were running our stuff, got it to the rim a couple times, got a bucket early. The defense was pretty good. We had a number of chances to get it under 10. Didn't. They hit a couple shots, went over 20. We scrambled a little bit and were not where we needed to be. They spread us out a little bit. We were in one defense we shouldn't have been in.

All in all, we turned them over 19 times. I thought the press was good to us. Might have been the best part of our defense.

Q. The assists, too, were a problem tonight.

COACH McCAFFERY: You know what, when you're playing a team where the X is on the O, you're not going to have a lot of assist opportunities. You're going to have to drive and

make a play. I thought Marble really tried to do that. He was close to having a good game. In and out. Play right at the end of the half would have been a big play for us. He got it right to the rim. He'll do that.

I thought Cartwright at the start of the second half got it to the rim right at the start of the second half, didn't go in. I think that would have changed everything. It would have softened it a little bit, we could have screened them a little bit more.

They were mugging Oglesby and Gatens pretty good. They called 21 fouls. So that was obviously what the game plan was, to be physical. They were calling it, so...

We make 20 out of 22 from the line. That was one of the few bright spots offensively.

Q. What is your level of frustration? Do you have anything you can envision as glimmers, if not brighter than that?

COACH McCAFFERY: The thing about it is I've been doing this a long time, okay? I stay positive no matter what. I never get too high; I never get too low. You do that and then you'll be taking a year off or two to get yourself straightened out.

I've seen everything. There's nothing I haven't seen. I've seen teams that couldn't shoot. I've seen teams struggle. I've had great teams.

I don't stress about it. What I do is I go to work, my staff will go to work, my players will go to work. We'll get this thing figured out. We're better than we're playing right now and we'll get it figured out.

You always look back and say, Boy, wouldn't it be nice if we had a couple more wins? It would, but we didn't. Okay, what do we have to do to get this team going in the right direction? That's what we're going to do.

Q. Josh and Devyn seemed to be coming off the bench and giving you sparks. Is it almost where you want to put them in right at the beginning?

COACH McCAFFERY: Obviously we've thought about that, as you have. It may be time to put Josh in there, for sure. I think he may have earned it.

The problem with putting Marble in, he's our backup one. Now you start your two ones, it puts a lot more pressure on Branden Stubbs. So it's a possibility. But I might still bring Marble's

reckless abandon in off the bench. He's good at it. He plays more than one position.

But, again, I may go ahead and start him, too.

Q. Creighton and Clemson look a lot of what you're going to see in the Big Ten for most of the season. What does this group have to do to be able to compete?

COACH McCAFFERY: We got to manage the game better. We didn't manage the game in either of those games. We got to rebound. Both those games you referred to, we got kicked pretty good on the glass. It's hard to win when you're getting out-rebounded by 10 or more.

But we can improve that. There's things I can do in terms of subbing, how I sub, who I play. I think we'll be better at that.

What you have to do is manage the game to a point where it doesn't start to get away from you. You have longer possessions. You maybe run a set or two when we were running a little bit more motion. You go to your guys, an equal-opportunity offense.

We had too many guys shooting the ball that shouldn't have been shooting that ball in that stretch, quite frankly. That's not their fault. It's my fault. I'll get that straightened out and addressed.

It's a fine line because you don't want a guy to think that you don't ever want him to shoot the ball because then he's never going to make a shot. So you have to get them to understand at that point in time, we need certain people shooting the ball. At the same time we're going to need those other guys to make shots down the road.

I didn't go after anybody when I thought they were maybe ill-advised shots, not in terms of not being open, but the person shooting at that particular time.

Q. How much longer can you be patient with May? Tried to boost his confidence in a billion different ways.

COACH McCAFFERY: The hard thing for me with him is, I think any coach, I watched him from the end of last year till now. We all know where we're at. We're at a point where he's really struggling, okay? He's a great kid. He worked so hard in the spring, so hard in the summer, so hard in the fall. He was our most consistent player from Labor Day until the first game we played, every day.

His numbers, he was 30 over, assist/turnovers, he was shooting almost 60% from three, he was rebounding better. I wanted to reward that and stick with him because I've seen it. We need that from him. At the same time he may benefit from pressure off him as a starter. Watch it, give him a chance to affect the game with his athleticism defensively, maybe he can be a better rebounder and better defender.

He's a guy that we can't lose. We need him contributing. And the last couple games he hasn't done that. By the same token he struggled, I've taken him out, I haven't put him back in as much.

We'll talk to him. We'll break the film down. We'll go through it with each and every player. We'll stay positive with him.

Q. (Question regarding rebounds.)

COACH McCAFFERY: I think at some level it comes down to effort, it comes down to positioning, it comes down to where is the shot taken from. Is it a long shot? We're getting pushed under on the weak side more than we should be, no question about that. We're not getting rebounding from our three spot. That's disappointing.

Their three man got 14 rebounds, 13 defensive rebounds. That's their three man. We're not getting that from our three spot. It's not just Eric, it's whoever is at that spot. It's almost like we're playing three guards and expecting our post to do all the rebounding.

That's another area we have to think about and address in terms of trying to become a better rebounding team.

Q. You mentioned Gatens and Cartwright especially in the second half. Would you like to see them be more physical when they take it to the rim?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I think they're both pretty physical taking it to the rim. I think Matt was really looking. The way they were guarding, they were staying home on him, which he sees a lot. They were holding him on screens. So he was curling and putting it on the deck and driving to the basket. He got to the free-throw line some.

Cartwright got it at point-blank range and couldn't get it in. I felt bad for him. He kind of got caught in between a couple times. But we wanted him at the start of the second half to attack the

basket, and he did that. We just didn't get as much payback from it as we thought we would.

Thank you.

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