

December 22, 2013



An Interview With:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. What a nice return for Josh.

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I wasn't surprised. I was honest with you guys. I told you that he looked really good and he looks like he's in pretty good shape.

Right off the bat, he was doing things. He's in the pool and the underwater treadmill, and he's riding a bike right away when he was still in the boot. He was winded a little bit but not too bad -- we started practicing him hard this week, get his timing back, and I thought he was really good. But not only did he make shots, he was passing it well. He looked very comfortable out there I thought.

Q. Good for him to come back off the injury, but also his confidence.

COACH McCAFFERY: He never lost his confidence. He looks good.

Q. Have you ever had a game where you win by almost 27 turnovers?

COACH McCAFFERY: I can't remember any, no.

Q. Disappointed the way the game ended?

COACH McCAFFERY: I don't care about that really. They were pressing the scout team. I've got a lot of inexperienced guys out there. It's no big deal.

Q. What's your initial take on heading into the Big Ten season? Do you like where you're at?

COACH McCAFFERY: I do. I think the thing that you have to do now is just look ahead. You don't want to look back and say, we could have won this or if I could have done -- we're 11-2,

that's what we are, and it wasn't easy to get there, and we don't know what these next 18 are, every one. And I've got enough experience in that locker room to know and understand what that means in terms of preparation and execution, and we'll be ready.

Q. Anything about the Big Ten surprise you so far or jump out?

COACH McCAFFERY: No.

Q. The 3-point shooting, shot almost 60 percent tonight and it's been a lot better non-conference than it was last season.

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought, with the addition of Jarrod and Peter, I thought that would help. But I also knew that both Josh and Zach, in particular, last year, was not consistent with what I thought that they would do. It's not like it isn't what they have done before, and both of those guys are making shots. And I thought Gesell, Clemmons would be solid, and I thought Marble would improve.

So we've got a lot of different players who are capable of making threes and we're going to be an unselfish team, so we are sharing the ball, for example, tonight, the way they played that zone, you have to keep moving it and you have got to keep passing, making shots, faking in and out, side to side, skip pass, shot-fake-drive, skip it again. We had some goofy turnovers, but for the most part we handled the ball well and had good shot opportunity and made our threes.

Q. Why do you think you guys were able to stay sharp even with the long layoff?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think we have a maturity. I would have been surprised if it was anything other than that.

I have yet to see with this group, you know, oh, they came out flat; they were looking past that team to get to that game. It hasn't

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happened. It didn't happen against Fairleigh Dickinson or before the Iowa State game and didn't happen before we went to Atlantis and there's a lot of expectation there. So I knew pretty much that that wasn't going to happen to this team.

Q. At halftime, you joked, you were going to get a technical -- just send him out. Just talk about his last game, you've seen him in a lot of games now.

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, it's interesting with him, because he's always had an incredible amount of respect from his colleagues, both coaches and other officials, administrators. He's very successful in his professional career. He does this because he loves the game.

He's one of those guys that has an incredible ability to manage the game in a way where he can communicate with the players and the coaches, and you always know you're going to get a great shot. You're going to get a great night from him. He's going to give you everything he's got and it's going to be fair and you're not going to have to worry, like, do I have to work this guy to get a call because he's working it -- he's been above that for as long as I've known him.

Q. His last game today --

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I thought, when I heard it first, it was his last game here, he was going to finish the year. It's officially his last game. I asked him if we could talk about it but he said no.

Q. Marble and White in the second half, is that just to get other guys in?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, Whitey was sick. He missed practice yesterday, and we didn't know if he would play at all, so I was not going back to him. With as sloppy as the game ended, I wasn't going to put Marble out there and get him hurt with a goofy play. That's pretty much my thinking there.

Okay, happy holidays.

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