

March 10, 2011



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An Interview With:

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY JARRYD COLE MATT GATENS

COACH McCAFFERY: The first thing I would like to say is I want to congratulate Tom and his team. They needed all of the composure that they could muster with the run that we put on them and they played better than we did down the stretch. It's a credit to him and his players, and I wish them luck as they move forward in this tournament and the next one. I just want to say this about my team.

I said this a while ago, how much I love these guys. And it's interesting because you look at our record and you wonder what it's like every day. Every day these guys came with it. They respected each other, they played with tremendous heart and determination. We have one of the greatest leaders and examples of character that I've ever been associated with in 28 years sitting to my right (Jarryd Cole) and a great captain alongside of him (Matt Gatens). And it was a pleasure for me to come to work every day to work with these guys. We continued to get better. We believed in each other, and we will continue to get better.

Q. Matt, coming off that win against Purdue, talk about the confidence of this team, and it seemed like you guys really felt like you could win this game.

MATT GATENS: Yeah, definitely. It was a big win for us and our program and our fans, and we were feeling good and confident. It was a big confidence booster for us coming into this game, and then also playing a team we had just played about a week ago and had beaten about a month

ago, so coming into this game we felt really good about ourselves and our chances in this game, and it just wasn't enough. We had them about 10 minutes to go and then they put a good run on us, and that's what a team like that does. We didn't respond to it, and that's why they won and we lost.

Q. Matt, from your perspective what happened in that 14-2 run? Was it your defense? They scored on like six of seven possessions, or was it your offense?

MATT GATENS: Both. We couldn't get stops, we couldn't get out and run. As coach said, we were playing against a stacked defense every time because they'd score and they'd be back on D, which hurt us because we wanted to get out and run and score on them that way. It's both ends of the floor. But I think it starts on defense, and we broke down in a couple areas, and hats off to them, they continued to play hard and screened well and knocked down some big shots.

Q. Jarryd, as the only scholarship senior on this team, what advice would you give these guys to get them ready for next year?

JARRYD COLE: I would just say practice and work hard. I mean, they're ready. I've definitely seen spurts where these guys can play great basketball. Once we get it to where we can do it or once they get it to where they can do it night after night, then this team is definitely going to be a force to reckon with. There's no doubt in my mind they can get it accomplished. McCaffery has a great style of basketball, and these guys want to do that, and I think that's key for us. Definitely with the coach and player relationship is even right there, you know, so I think as long as they stay on the right page and stay on the page together, then this team can do anything they want to do.

Q. Jarryd, how did this year feel



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different, if at all, compared to the last three times you've been here?

JARRYD COLE: I'd say we grew, you know, the last three years. We started off, and that's pretty much how we stayed. We stayed real stagnant. But this year the fellows grew. You saw a lot of guys blossom, you saw a lot of guys develop. Like Devon Archie, he came in a few games and he did some great things this year. Andrew Brommer, you guys didn't see that in the past, and you guys that are here witnessed that. Just seeing that is a definite upside for Iowa. I think these guys are going to be huge contributors here in the future along with the guards that we have coming back.

Coach McCaffery and the assistants are out on the trail hard to get some new guys coming in that's going to help this team, and once they do that, I think they're going to be all right.

Q. Fran, from your perspective, what went wrong there in that 14-2 run? Did you get out of rhythm offensively, seemed like maybe you were rushing a little and then you couldn't stop them at the other end?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, you know, it's a combination of things, like Matt said. We were running motion primarily. We got a couple clean looks at it, we got it to the rim a couple times, we got the second shot the one time with Bryce. And they are a very dangerous running team. And once we missed, they'd get a run out, we'd miss, they'd get a run out, and then they really started going to (Draymond) Green. He's a handful. He's got a very, very complete skill set. For a guy that big and strong, his handle and his ability to pass, rarely do you see the power forward lead the team in rebounding and assists. He made big plays when they needed them. You know, so it sort of snowballed there, took a time-out to get everything calmed down, we started running a few more sets to try to go to people. We got a few baskets, but we really were not in rhythm at all in that stretch.

I felt when Eric May came in and got the steal, or actually it was a deflection off of them, that turned it a little bit. It was only a four-point game and we scored and cut it to one so we were in a position to win. So it was frustrating. The other thing, too, is I think Bryce Cartwright was exhausted. You could see it. He was trying to make plays, he was trying to get us into our stuff. Gatens was exhausted. We didn't have Brommer in the second half. I went with a short bench, I went with seven. (Melsahn) Basabe was in foul

trouble. So I do think their intense defensive pressure affected our stamina in a lot of ways. I think the fatigue definitely set in. A couple of those shots that were going were falling off the rim a little bit, and that's unfortunate because we had a chance. I think it was Eric May that had a jump around the corner, up seven, that goes in, we probably win the game.

Q. That last shot that Matt took when you were down three, was he the first option in that play, and was he fouled? We couldn't tell from our vantage point.

COACH McCAFFERY: He was the first option on that play. He was the first of a number of options on that play. It's a read for Bryce (Cartwright). He made a good read. I thought Matt got a good look at it. Whether or not it was a foul or not, you have to determine that.

Q. What do you have to do to put records on a season like this behind you and prevent it from happening again? And what has already been done for that to happen?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, my answer to that is the same as it's always been. We just keep trying to get better. Our team got better, our players got better, and we'll be better next year.

Q. Do you feel like Brommer could have been a factor if he had been available to you in the second half?

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought he was having a pretty nice game. You know, I feel bad for him. Hopefully he's going to be OK. You know, with Melsahn's foul trouble, I think he could have because he gives us another at least another low post scoring threat; he can make a basket. We went to him late, last play of the first half, he got it right to the rim. Any time you have an experienced big guy, and we don't have a lot of size, it would have helped. But we put Melsahn in there, we put Zach (McCabe) in there, we put (Devon) Archie in there. So that's no excuse.

Q. When you look at it, though, having two huge opportunities there, big offensive rebound by Eric May after the first, McCabe missed three, that's all you can really ask for, right?

COACH McCAFFERY: That was a great

save. We got another look at it, and you've got to give them credit, they made their free throws. It was still a one-point game. They had to go make free throws.

Summers, you give the kid credit. He stepped up there and made a big three and then he made his free throws. We always lock into what we could have done or what we should have done. Let's give Tommy and his players some credit for what they did.

Q. Did Melsahn just not get in a groove tonight?

COACH McCAFFERY: It was sideways, there's no question about it. The thing I think was a little bit disappointing for him and for us, early in the year when he got in foul trouble early, he had a hard time getting back in the groove, and really the last 10, 15 games that has not been the case. He's gotten right back in. As soon as I put him back in, he's right back in the flow and put up huge numbers in the second half. He just never got comfortable at either end. They're experienced big guys; they're big and strong, they were posting hard, and he was trying to position it and he was trying to use his feet, and they go high-low a lot, and their post guys, at least (Delvon) Roe and (Draymond) Green are good passers. It was hard for him. And he never got into the flow offensively. He didn't get any put-backs. Usually he's good for a put-back. I felt when he made that step back jump shot, he would be on his way. But he was just sideways and I felt like I had to get him out and get somebody else in there. And of course, Zach comes in and makes a big shot, but Melsahn will be fine.

Q. When you look at all the areas of improvement this year, is there one that stands out? Is it just mentally conditioning themselves from kind of the struggles of the past to actually feeling like they can put themselves in the position to win these types of games?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I think when you go back to the early part of the season, we weren't pushing the ball, we weren't as aggressive offensively, and our defense was just OK. As the season went on, our defense improved, our rebounding improved, our offense picked up the tempo, and individual players got better. Individual players developed confidence and played better. So now we're in a position where we're winning some games, we're right in



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games against really good teams, so the next step has to be getting over the hump to win those games on a regular basis.

We had a number of chances late today, Wisconsin, Michigan, at Northwestern, to win those kind of games, and all of a sudden you win those and you say this is a heck of a record; everything is different. So I'm really pleased with how these kids grew and developed as a team.

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