

**October 31, 2013**



An Interview With:

## **IOWA COACH FRAN MCCAFFERY**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by coach Fran McCaffery. Coach, an opening statement.

COACH MCCAFFERY: Obviously we're very optimistic about this year's team. Recognize the position we're in and welcome the challenge. I've not had a team in my entire career that is this deep.

I think we have to make sure that we're able to rotate personnel in a way that maximizes our effectiveness. But I think we have a great level of maturity on this team and we're really looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Can you kind of talk about how Devyn Marble has elevated his level of play since really the middle part of last season? And what do you expect from him this year in taking another step forward?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think it's critical for our team that he do exactly what you just said: Take another step forward.

The thing about him is he will put the time in to make that happen. Incredibly hard worker. And that's how he worked his way out of the slump he was in midway through last season.

He got back in the gym. He came early. He got extra shots up. Really studied film, and he's a student of the game. And I think at this point he's feeling really good about himself.

He had a great trip overseas. Played six games in August. He's been practicing extremely well. He's been very consistent. And that's what we need from him this year.

**Q. Talk to me a little bit about your offensive skill level at shooters. You've obviously been very good defensively. What**

**have you done to try to develop perimeter fire power?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: You know, it's interesting. You look at our team last year, and clearly you look at the defensive numbers and you see that's why we won 25 games.

The offensive numbers would not equate to that number. We were a little surprised, because we felt like, particularly with Zach McCabe and Josh Oglesby, doing what they did the previous year, you expect them to be around the same numbers. They were not. I think they'll come back to something close to those numbers. Zach was 41 as a sophomore; Josh, 39 as a freshman.

So both those guys worked extremely hard. They're in great shape. Now one's a junior and one's a senior. I think those two in particular will have big years.

I think you'll see Gesell and Marble in particular. Mike's a sophomore now, and Marble's numbers went up from his sophomore year, so those guys will be solid. I think the addition of Jarrod Uthoff and Peter Jok, both excellent shooters, phenomenal shooters, both of them.

When you couple that with Aaron White's ability to score and Melsahn Basabe's ability to score, and pretty much if you look at the 11 guys we're going to play, all of them can score points, all of them are capable of double-figure games.

I think you'll see a completely different Adam Woodbury and Gabriel Olaseni in the 5 spot as scorers.

So now it takes the defense's ability away from being able to get up into the guys that they expect to make shots.

I think what you'll see is a much more well-rounded offensive team, and I think we'll shoot the ball just fine.

**Q. Can you just talk about how Gabriel Olaseni has progressed since he's gotten into Iowa City and how he can challenge Woodbury for some more minutes than he may have gotten last year?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: The thing about Gabe, obviously when he came here he didn't have a lot of basketball in his background. But when you're 6'10" with a 7'3" wing span and maybe the fastest guy on the team, the only thing that you need to see is a work ethic that is going to be required to reach the potential that he has, and he has one of the greatest work ethics I've ever been around. So what you're seeing is a guy who, as a freshman, he got some minutes. He got his feet wet.

As a sophomore, he was instrumental in some of our big wins. Played a lot more.

And I think this year what you're going to see is a much more complete player. He's an unbelievable offensive rebounder. He runs the floor extremely well and he can finish with either hand.

He's also developed about a 12- to 15-foot jump shot that has been very good, which will really set up his drive because he has an unbelievable first step.

So there's no question that those two guys, in particular, will have much greater impact on our team, and what happens in practice every day is that they really go after each other.

Gabriel Olaseni has made Adam Woodbury a better player and vice versa.

**Q. Aside from Devyn Marble, who will you be leaning on to, A, help establish your team identity, and, B, as a big defensive presence?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think the next guy we would look at would be Aaron White. Obviously had an amazing summer playing for the United States team and also traveling with us.

He's also a junior. He's our second-leading returning scorer. You would not have looked at him as a defensive presence as a freshman. More of a steals guy who could rebound. But now you're seeing somebody who really understands the game and can impact the game defensively and offensively. Truly understands how to win. So I think he would be the guy.

And I think you look at Mike Gesell as well. Incredibly hard worker, can put pressure on the basketball. Can guard a 1 or 2 and can make shots in traffic, can make shots late. I think those two guys, and the next one would be Basabe. What we'll see with him is a guy who will have his senior year commensurate with what we saw when he was a freshman. Sophomore year wasn't so

good. Last year substantially better. Completely different level of maturity. Physically ready to go. And obviously we've seen the incredible talent that he has.

**Q. Over the last four or five years in your career, the wins for your seasons for the teams that you've been, from Siena to now, continue to rack up 25, 26 wins a season. Was there an adjustment for you trying to build off of the success at Siena to this past year? Is there something you leaned on from your prior position to what you're doing now at Iowa, and have you seen a change in yourself in maybe a coaching style or coaching philosophy that's kind of helped you keep success where you've gone the last few years?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think it's more a function of the places where I've gone. We went to Greensboro, we went to Siena and went to Iowa, you know, the programs were struggling at that time. And the administration was looking to me to sort of solidify what we were doing, build a program.

I've never taken a shortcut approach. We primarily built it with incoming freshmen. We believed in the guys who remained. I think so often you hear a guy takes a job and, okay, when you get your own guys in there, things will get better. I always looked at it like this: The minute I take that job, whoever is there, they're my guys. Whoever I bring in, they're my guys. And together it will build it step-by-step. And we won't succumb to pressure. You're not moving it quickly enough.

I look at it like this: There's only one way to do it, and that's the right way. You've got to teach your guys and get them to buy into your philosophy. Obviously we play fast. We want guys willing to play fast. But we don't play nuts. So you've got to make sure you understand we know how to do that.

We're going to recruit. We're going to recruit hard. We're going to involve our players in recruiting; that's the most important thing. We'll recruit student-athletes who are going to compete and be able to handle the pressures that come with competing at this level.

What's been successful for me so far, I'm also smart enough to know that you have to surround yourself with really good staff members. So wherever I've been I've had smart, talented coaches along with me.

When you have character on your team and intelligent coaches, you can usually win.

**Q. What do you think of the new rules, the block charge and the defending the player with the ball, and what effect do you think it will have on the game?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It appears to me it's going to have a tremendous effect on the game. It only stands to reason there will be a lot more fouls called out and away from the basket. What I don't want to see is touch fouls away from the basket and guys getting mugged off the ball, because that won't work.

I've been saying for years we need to clean up those collisions at the rim. So I think that is brilliant what they're doing there, to protect the driver. Too many guys that were talented enough to go by their man and three guys falling down before the guy even got to the rim.

So I think to clean up those collisions at the rim is a great thing. It will be interesting to see if the moves out front and the touch fouls will be sustainable.

I think in theory it will work. In practicality it may make the games long and grueling, and it may have an adverse effect with regard to we're trying to open up the game and teams may have to play more zone because you have to protect your guys who are in foul trouble.

So I think when it's all said and done, we really don't know what's going to happen. But I like the thought process. I'm an offensive guy. We're going to drive the ball to the basket. So those rules would in theory help us. So we'll see how it ends up.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.  
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