

November 23, 2011



An Interview With:

COACH McCAFFERY

COACH McCAFFERY: Not a lot to talk about.

Q. You just had no defense -- but right at the end of the first half, they seemed to turn it up maybe for the first time.

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, Rick, that's an accurate statement. Yeah, we didn't have the kind of defensive intensity you need to play a team of this calibre, and it wasn't like we didn't know they were good. You could tell, as you saw, in five minutes, it's a pretty good team, right. You could tell the same thing on film. They are undefeated, 5-0, if you count the exhibition game. They have beaten teams from Conference USA. They have some players, and you could see it, early.

Yeah, I don't think it was just that. We weren't executing on offense and we weren't running the way we want to run. We weren't really doing anything that we wanted to do and we weren't doing anything effectively, that's for sure, on either end of the floor.

Q. What was your message to the team then?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I think when it's all said and done, you have to come and compete. And that's not hustle. Hustle is to be expected. Competing is thinking the game plan through and fighting through a mistake, fighting through a missed shot.

I mean, that kid's pretty good. I don't know if we are going to play many guys the rest of the season who are as good as he is. You know,

nobody ever heard of him, but that kid, he does this every game: Blocks shots, he dunks, he runs, he works, he makes baskets, he makes 3s, he makes foul shots. And he rebounds, every game.

So, all right, we got our hands full. They have got different pieces. They have got a great shooting point guard. They have a terrific two who is an older guy who can play anywhere. And they were quicker than we were I think. They were quicker to the ball coming off the glass, they were quicker to the ball if it was loose.

Anyway, we got behind and we struggled obviously shooting after that. I don't think -- we certainly didn't have a good shooting day. Shot 29 in the second half, but 36 for the game. I didn't have to look at it know we didn't shoot well. I didn't know exactly what it was, and we weren't getting any seconds.

Mel got three early, I thought that was a good sign and McCabe got six and that was good. But we are just not rebounding and not reacting. I'm trying different lineup combinations. We went small and I thought that was effective for awhile in the Creighton game and it was effective a little bit tonight. Eric at the four gives Josh opportunities to come in and help offensively. I don't know that you could say that -- I thought Marble was really good tonight and I thought that was a big plus for us.

Q. The timing -- looks like almost lacks toughness around the boards, Aaron got blocked four times --

COACH McCAFFERY: Toughness in general. I don't know about toughness around the boards -- yeah, around the boards, but in the perimeter, in the press. We are not -- get up to the ball, over toward the ball; don't chase away. All of the things that we worked on, we are just not showing any toughness at all.

It clearly manifested itself around the basket, like you said, and it has a more direct impact on the game. They are getting put backs,

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we're not. We are missing chippies; they are not. You know, so the score is going in the wrong direction. But it carries over to other parts of the floor which manifest itself over time. And that's unfortunate.

Q. What do you do now, between now and Saturday's game? How do you approach this?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, what you do is you've got to be careful. Did I get on them a little bit? Yeah. Did I go completely insane? No.

They know they are not playing well. And I think the last thing as a coach, that you want to do, is blame. You know, it's -- when you're in the locker room or we're having a discussion like we just had. It's us. It's we. We are not doing. It's not you're not doing. Because I cannot sit here and not take blame for how we played the last two games. It is not just them, okay. There's something we are not doing. There's something we are not communicating to them.

Because you've seen them play better. Okay, the competition wasn't the same, but you've seen them play better against good competition, okay.

Obviously Melsahn is struggling. We are trying to get him going. We are doing a lot of things with him. We are trying to peel some weight off him. We tried to put weight on him and now we are trying to get it off him. He looks lethargic to me. I thought early he was trying. It's good to get Brommer back. That will help.

But you know, we try to simplify the game plan. As the game progressed, like I said the other day, okay, maybe we are too complicated, let's simplify it a little bit. Maybe the simpler way to go will be more effective for this group because we still have a lot of young guys that are playing a lot of minutes.

So, you know, you have to be careful when you have young guys that are struggling. You just start screaming at them and kicking stuff and blaming them for everything. Well, then how are they ever going to get any confidence now? I don't think any team will ever respect their coach if they blame them completely, solely, and that's not the case. We are all at fault. Assistant coaches, the head coach, the players, but we have time to get it figured out. We are better than this. I think we thought we would be better. I think everybody thought we would be better. Well, we're not.

But you've got to go back to work. You've got to watch more film. We have to do skill development work. Okay, we have got to work on dummy offense with different lineups so we can execute more effectively. We have to work on late-game situations, because we haven't been good; pressing.

I think we'll get this thing figured out. We'll get better.

Q. You started the second half with a different lineup. Have you thought about --

COACH McCAFFERY: The only reason I did that was -- the answer to your question is, yes, I thought about a different lineup. But the reason I went with that lineup, as Rick mentioned earlier, at the end of a half, that was a lineup that got us back in the game. I felt like, you know what, I'm going with those five guys. And then of course, I intended to go back, get Josh back in the game and get Melsahn back in the game. That's what we did.

Q. Bryce last year, played with, it looked like an edge to him, but this year he has not been able to get on track. What have been his issues?

COACH McCAFFERY: I'm at a loss for that answer. I wish I had that answer for you. But I will tell you this, he's a good kid, and he's smart, and he's better than he's playing.

So it's incumbent upon me and my staff to get it out of him. Because we are not getting it out of he or Melsahn right now, and it's my responsibility, it's our responsibility to get the best out of players and get them to play up to capability, and we are not doing that.

So, Bryce his turnover numbers coming into the game weren't bad. He's not shooting the ball. I think he's putting a little pressure on himself to make shots, especially when we are struggling. He had some really good looks today, were in and out, and I think he'll get better. He had the little episode, whatever it was, the headache, so I think he's feeling better. We'll just stay with him.

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