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An Interview With:

**IOWA
FRAN MCCAFFERY**

THE MODERATOR: Up next is Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery.

If you would like to start with an opening statement, then we'll go to questions.

COACH MCCAFFERY: This is an exciting time for me. A great challenge ahead. And I think the first thing I need to say is I really like my team.

I think the core group of young players that we have, in particular, have responded well to the changes that we're trying to make. I think we have a great group of young freshmen who will not have the ability to take their time. They're going to play right away. They're going to have to play like veterans.

But the great thing there is they'll be able to play through their mistakes right away. I think we have a good core group of about nine, maybe 10. Obviously we have to stay healthy. That took a little bit of a setback recently with injury to Matt Gatens, but I feel good about his recovery in short order.

So as we move forward in a very challenging conference, as you all know, I like my team. And my responsibility is to make sure we continue to make progress, play together, and play our style of play.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Could you be a little more specific on Matt, like any kind of timetable? And who would he fill his spot in the interim while he's not there?

COACH MCCAFFERY: You know, Matt's having surgery today. You're probably looking at three weeks before he can play. He's obviously going to want to play before that. I think that the iffy thing right now is will he play in our first game,

will he play in our first two games. That I can't answer. It's a possibility, but it may not happen.

After that he'll be able to play with something on his thumb. And then after two more weeks, after that, it will be something else. But a little less intrusive. The fact that it's his left hand is a good thing, obviously, being a right-handed player.

So I think he'll be back within three weeks. The person that would fill in for him would be Roy Devyn Marble. He's a freshman. I think Dev has really come on, especially in about the last five or six practices.

The first five or six he was playing like a freshman. And he just does not have that luxury. Especially now. So I feel good about him. And it will be a tremendous opportunity for him to play if Matt can't. If Matt can, then he'll be back in a month.

Q. How so far how have the guards looked, Cully Payne, (Bryce Cartwright? Have they worked together, or are they competing against one another for that spot?

COACH MCCAFFERY: We've done both. Obviously I think for the practice to be the most competitive they can be, Bryce runs one team, Cully runs the other. We mix the lineups around them. But at times we play them both together and we use Branden Stubbs, our walk-on point guard, to run the other team. It gives them the opportunity to play together. They play well together and they will play together at times.

It gives us a different look. Both can drive it. Both can make plays on the break, and the good thing is they both can make 3s. So I think it's not like you're playing two non-scoring point guards together to try to get penetration. Because if they can't shoot, you're not going to be able to drive it anyway.

So the fact they're making shots and they're driving the ball and they're creating a faster pace together, I think you'll see those guys on the floor.

Q. How has the transition been to the more up-tempo attack and how has the team figured out your fastbreak and what you like to do there?

COACH MCCAFFERY: You know, they've been great. They want to play that way. I think most athletes want to play that way. The critical thing there is understanding how to play that way, because you can run and quick shoot the ball and turn the ball over and you really haven't improved very much.

And I think our fans are smart enough to recognize if we're playing faster, then we better have a plan behind it. We better make good decisions on the break. And I think the first three or four days of practice, to be honest with you, was absolute mayhem. We were going so fast, kicking the ball all over the arena and not making good decisions.

And that was okay. To get them to understand that we're going to push the ball, we're going to push it on makes and misses, we've got to get it in quick. We've got to get our wings running and our posts running. I think that was step one.

Step two becomes we're going to probe the defense and sometimes the best play is no play at all. You've got to pull it out. Then you've got to run some offense, and then know what we're doing after the fastbreak. So you have primary break and then we go into our offense. We don't run secondary break. It's primary break and then we go into our offense.

And that transition has been something that they've been able to grasp over the last week or so. At the beginning they were not grasping that at all. So I expected that. You have some changes. Last year they played slower. They were much more under control. So there's times when we have to be under control.

If we're going to win close games, we better know how to play under control and be able to play at half court. So, yes, we're going to run but we're going to play intelligent basketball.

Q. How do you stack up at the 4 and 5?

COACH MCCAFFERY: Well, I think when you look at our post positions, clearly Jarryd Cole and Andrew Brommer in particular are the first two guys we've got to get something, especially out of Brommer. I think everybody knows that Jarryd Cole is a solid player. He put up good numbers. He's got a frame. He's got experience. He can score. He's got the physical presence defensively in the low post to go against some of the other

great posts in our league. We need him to play like a senior leader and so far he's done all of that.

Brommer hasn't played much, but he's 6'9", about 240. He has a great skill set. He can run. He's got a jump hook. He can hit the trail 3. And he's somebody that I think will surprise people when you look at our team, you're not expecting anything from him. I think he averaged a point and a half last year.

But he's going to get a chance to play more, and he's going to be able to get a chance to settle down. He never had that opportunity. If you watched him, if you watched any tape like I did, watched the games last year, he was kind of always on edge and he never settled down.

And he would make some ill-advised mistakes, but you're going to see somebody now that I'm going to let him play through that and I think our style of play will help him. And you're going to see somebody who is a legitimate post player in this league.

After that, we've got two freshmen, Melsahn Basabe and Zach McCabe. Both are really talented. I would expect Melsahn to be a starter. He's long, he runs, he can score, he can block shots. Terrific person. And, again, a great opportunity for him to learn right from the start what it's like to be a Division I player right into the Big Ten.

Zach McCabe has a different game. He's a tremendous 3-point shooter. When you have a player who is playing the 4 who might be with Matt Gatens, our best 3-point shooter who can put it on the deck but has enough strength and toughness to do some things inside, now we've got a little bit of versatility.

We've got a couple of power guys, and we've got an athletic 4 and then we've got a versatile 4. So we can do some different things on offense.

Q. I'm sure you had an impression of the Big Ten before. What are your impressions now that you've really studied it in the offseason?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I've always had tremendous respect for this league. But when you look now at three of the top five teams, arguably, and five of maybe the top 18 and projecting seven teams maybe to go to the tournament, very few leagues that you look at, not only this year, but over the years that have that kind of depth and

with that many teams with a legitimate chance to go to the Final Four.

So as you sit in my chair, you know, it's a formidable challenge to take a young team and play those teams, not only at home but on the road. So I think the critical thing for us is to know and understand how we have to compete. And when we find ourselves in close games with those teams, doing the right things that will help us win those close games.

Because that's what's really going to help develop our team as we move forward, develop our confidence. We can't be satisfied this year with moral victories, hey, we played Michigan State tough. At some point we've got to beat some of these teams and we're going to have to do it with young players. And that's what we're looking at. And that's what we're going to get ready for.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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