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An Interview With:

COACH McCAFFERY

COACH McCAFFERY: I think a couple things. You know, No. 1, I think Bill has done a real good job with his team. He's got a terrific club.

From our standpoint, the disappointing thing is, we had a very poor performance on Sunday, and obviously come in here to try to rectify some of the mistakes that we made. Early on, we weren't able to do that. We fell behind. I thought our defense in the first, ten, 15 minutes was not good at all. And not against a team that runs stuff like they do and executes and has the kind of players that they have. So that's disappointing.

Thought there were some bright spots individually. I think we always look for some of the positives that can come out of a game like this. But overall, very disappointed in our effort and concentration and execution.

Q. How do you explain the 3-point shooting that's gone on, not just tonight.

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, that's the disconcerting thing for us. It happened in the South Dakota State game, and then it happened in the Iowa State game. It happened Sunday. It happened tonight. And I'm sure you can give me a few other games that -- I don't know that -- I have an explanation other than we have talked about it. It's one of the top -- certainly the top 3-point shooting team in our league. It's the top ten 3-point shooting team in the country, and they get a lot of points from the 3-point line.

Okay, you're right, they are not an easy team to guard. I think everybody will recognize that, with double-out backdoors and the ball rotations and things when they have you spread out. But at some point after Crawford has made one or made two, then can we get a little closer to

them. Those are the things that seemed to be simple and for whatever reason, we are having a hard time with it. So we'll just keep working at it.

Q. Bryce had an outstanding night offensively; what are your thoughts on that?

COACH McCAFFERY: I tell you, I thought Bryce was tremendous. I thought Bryce and Matt Gatens were spectacular. They fought. They kept making plays. We needed plays made. You know, when you're playing against a team that's switching and a team that's playing 1-3-1, it's a non-traditional look.

So you're not going to be able to come down and run a set play and then score. You're not going to be able to direct the ball to somebody in a certain situation, certain place on the floor. So you have to rely on screening and cutting and reads and somebody making plays, and those two guys made plays. So did Stoermer. I thought Stoermer was spectacular tonight.

Q. First seven baskets, they really seemed to affect your offense because you came down and didn't have any rhythm.

COACH McCAFFERY: I think there's a certain amount of truth to that, but at the same time -- three, four, five possessions and they had not hit seven 3s yet and that's disappointing.

Now, granted we got a shot and an offensive rebound and then turned it over the first possession. But we have to make sure that we don't have empty possessions early. We had empty possessions early in the last game, eight turnovers in the first eight minutes.

If you were to evaluate -- there's a lot of things that you can say positively about Northwestern and how Billy runs his club and the kind of team that they have. But the one thing they don't have are empty possessions. His turnover numbers are among the best in the country. So they come down and they make you defend and

make you take the shot. A lot of times it's a three. So if the numbers are good, like 14-for-28, you have a hard time beating them. But by the same token, they got a shot. You know, they made you guard them. So now we have got to come down and we have to score.

I do think your point is well taken. It did affect our offense a little bit. I think it always affects your offense when you fall behind. It also affects your ability to make threes when you get ahead. That's what I'm trying to get our guys to understand. You know, it's one thing to get Crawford to raise up and shoot a three when they are up 14, but what if they are up or down one? Different feeling when you're raising up to shoot that ball. We have to get ourselves to the point where we can take care of that.

Q. How do you get Eric May going again? He has struggled the last couple of games.

COACH McCAFFERY: I think for him, the injury set him back, you know, he was out for a long time. Missed the game. Didn't play particularly well. I don't think he's 100% against Purdue.

Tonight, he was clearly sideways. So his game is not what it could be; what it should be right now. So it's incumbent upon us to challenge him and help him get it figured out, get some shots up, stay after it in the training room so he's closer to 100%.

And I think for him, he needs something to go down for him. He has not had anything go down in a while. So we have to get him going. We need him. We just need him. Because where are we getting points? Talking about the defense which was obviously the problem, but where are we getting points? Thankfully we had two guys go for 45, but that's not going to happen every night. I need Melsahn, I need Eric May, I need Marble, I need Cole and Brommer. I need four, six, eight from everybody, to beat a team of this caliber.

Q. You talk about Jordan just a little bit there. Talk about the energy he brings.

COACH McCAFFERY: Jordan, he's got savvy. You know, it's not just energy. He's a really good basketball player. He knows how to play basketball. He has a feel. He has instincts, defensively and offensively: How to get open; how to make a defensive play.

And the only reason he has not been playing more is he hurt his back. He was playing

well, hurt his back, was playing but really was -- he had no movement. He had no explosion at all. He's not a high flyer anyway. So you limit his mobility, he's going to be less effective.

So now that he's got his legs back underneath him, he's going to play, because he can make shots, but he just -- he understands everything that's going on on the floor. He plays like a veteran and right now, we need that desperately.

Q. You talked about the effort against Purdue and you were very unhappy with that. Do you think the effort was better tonight?

COACH McCAFFERY: No.

Q. How do you fix that? You guys looked so good against Ohio State.

COACH McCAFFERY: We did. And we looked good against some other folks. We'll get it fixed. It's a confidence thing and it's an inexperience thing. You know, I think the point that Rick made before is a good one. When you're struggling, you know, it affects your offense. It affects your aggressiveness offensively. It also affects your decision making. If you think about Eric May and Zach McCabe's mistakes, what were they? Driving into packs of people against a healthy defense and spinning in traffic trying to make a play.

You commend them for wanting to make a play but then you have to be smarter than that. We showed you, you can't do that. It's not going to be there. You have to see everything, longer possessions, have some patience. That's going to come with experience and both of those guys need a shot to go down desperately.

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