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An interview with:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. Talk about Mike Gesell shifting to the off guard position.

COACH McCAFFERY: Number one, he defends pretty well there, and that is obviously a concern you have sometimes when you play a guy there. He can get his own shot. He can shoot off screens. He shoots the three, he can shoot in transition and make plays in transition, and it gives you another driver at that position that can make a play for somebody else.

Q. How did that conversation about moving Mike to the two go?

COACH McCAFFERY: I never had a conversation with him. I just started Clemmons is in the starting lineup and that was that.

Q. Is that partly because you know what he's like?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I didn't think much of it. He's going to play a lot at the one anyway. I think he knows he can play the position. He wants to help our team win. He's accepting of his role regardless of what that is.

He's been really good there. He'll be good at either spot. He's going to be on the floor a lot late at both positions.

Q. Do you think some of that is testimony to his improvement of getting the ball on the floor?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, he's really worked on that, putting it on the floor. He's working on his pull-up game. It's not there yet where it's going to eventually end up. That's when I think he'll be really difficult to guard.

His 3-ball hasn't gone in like it will. He's a very capable, more or less standstill 3-point shooter. But he can get to the rim, get to the free-throw line, but his pull-up game was the last piece. When that comes together, it will really complete the picture for him.

Q. Is he one of those guys that when you watch him on tape, they don't really understand some of the skillsets and when he gets on the floor and what a good jumper he is?

COACH McCAFFERY: He's one of those guys that he just has a knack for kind of figuring out what he needs to do then. He's got a quick first step. Yeah, he's long. He just has real good feel.

So he ends up making something sometimes out of nothing. He recognizes that there's nothing there. He doesn't try to force a lot of things. He's not a mistake guy in general. He's always mentally thinking about what he has to do next. Those are the best players, to be honest with you.

Q. Anthony Clemmons has had 21 assists and only two turnovers since starting. How did you see him moving forward?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I think any time you have a guy with those kinds of numbers, everybody around you settles down. There's no panic in anybody. Now we've got to do it in a neutral site. Eventually we're going to have to do it on the road. That's different. But the good news is we've got experience now in those positions, and I think we'll be fine.

Q. Iowa State is a good 3-point shooting team, good rebounding team, able to utilize those for the win. Different style of play, but similar type of results.

COACH McCAFFERY: I think that's true. UNI has got a lot of weapons. Those are the kind of teams that give you trouble when you're trying to scheme to how you want to defend them. They spread you out. Their bigs can shoot threes. Their guards shoot threes. They're substantially more athletic than I think anybody gives them credit for. I never really understood that.

But they've got guys that go by you at every position. They hold you physical defensively, and they're big and strong. They've got depth. They've got upperclassmen. They've got guys that have been around. So it's a team that will challenge us in a lot of ways.

Q. (No Microphone)?

COACH McCAFFERY: I don't look at it that way. I look at it that we've got another good team on our schedule and we're trying to beat them. That is really the only way I look at it. It's a team that without a doubt, in my view, would be one of the top two or three teams in that league. I mean, it's probably -- I don't know that I have a great history of that conference, but when you think of where they are at the top, it hasn't been too many years where there have been that many good teams. Obviously, Creighton, Wichita State, Northern Iowa, Illinois State, they've got some really good teams in that league with big-time players.

So I'll look at it as an opportunity to play another team that I consider to be one of the premier teams on our schedule.

Q. Effectively, Northern Iowa has kind of carried the banner for the state. They beat Kansas at the Sweet Sixteen. Do you find your program as kind of chasing them still a little bit? Trying to get to them?

COACH McCAFFERY: No, I think the thing about it is, that happened a while ago. That's why we have a new season. They didn't go to the Sweet 16 last year. We don't know who is going to the Sweet 16 this year. We'll have to figure that out.

Q. (No Microphone) is this the way you can keep it alive without having that home at home kind of major? Is it kind of a disadvantage?



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COACH McCAFFERY: I think that's a very legitimate question. But I think they're different eras. When I grew up in Philadelphia, we went to the Palestra expecting to see a doubleheader every Saturday night. We went there to see five teams, essentially. We were going to see five teams. Obviously, that night we were going to see four, but usually it was one from somewhere else. We wanted to see great college basketball. You got out there at 6:30, and you didn't leave until 11. You just stayed there and watched great college basketball.

Now people are more affiliated with a particular team, and that's happened in Philly. They don't have doubleheaders there anymore. There are Villanova fans got to the point where they didn't want to watch Temple. When I grew up, I didn't have an affiliation. I didn't go to either school. That's the way a lot of college basketball fans were then.

So if you look at a college basketball fan in this state, he can go Saturday and watch four really good teams play, and for a relatively inexpensive ticket, have a great day in college basketball.

That said, there are going to be some Hawkeye fans who come for our game and leave, and Iowa State fans who come later, and same for Drake and UNI. Will that change? Will people just say, "Hey, we're going to go there on this day and watch two games"? I hope so. I think that was the plan. But you never know.

I mean, we live in a world where people just don't go to college basketball games now planning to stay there for five hours. They just don't run their life that way anymore. So we'll see. We'll see how it goes.

Q. Can you talk about how Adam seems to have found his offensive roots these last couple of games?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think for him the key is to stay out of foul trouble which he's done. We're going to him a lot more. He's really playing with a lot of confidence. He's making his free throws. He's going either way. But I think it's a function of we're making a concerted effort to find him, and he's playing more minutes. That's been a big thing for him. The more minutes he gets, the more comfortable he's going to be.

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Q. (Asking about UNI) they shoot balls from the perimeter, and sometimes deep from the perimeter, and they're able to open up?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, everybody can shoot. They've got you spread out, like you said. Lot of times when teams spread you out, there are one or two guys that can't. Usually it's the bigs, you know. They roll Tuttle a little more than the other guys, but pretty much everybody that you've got out there can make the three.

I don't care who you're playing against, that's going to be hard to guard. You have to defend the guy, and you have to be able to defend ball screens.

Q. You had the opportunity to coach a game at Wells Fargo Arena last year. What did you take away from the experience in that game?

COACH McCAFFERY: Not much.

Q. I know that, but as far as how did it benefit you Saturday?

COACH McCAFFERY: Nothing that happened last year is going to benefit us Saturday, I can tell you that. Hopefully, we'll just be better than we were then. The one thing I do remember is that we did have a substantial amount of Hawk fans at the game. That was great to see. It was unfortunate that we didn't play better when they showed up. I think that's always something that can be a little upsetting when you want your fans to see you play well. They didn't that day and hopefully they will Saturday.

Q. Do you think you're beyond games like that?

COACH McCAFFERY: I like to think we are. That's always a possibility if you're playing a 3-point shooting team. You're playing a team that all of a sudden they make 13 and you make one. Those kinds of games can happen anymore. The 3-point shot has changed it that dramatically. All of that kind of affects momentum and things of that nature.

But I think we'll play better than we played UNI last year. We didn't play very well in that game. We played much better than we did, as I go back and look at it, and really analyze it and study it, they played -- you know, we can get into we were upset and this and that.

But if you just break down how we played, we didn't play well enough to win that game. They

played better. So we have to play substantially better on Saturday.

Q. How does your practice schedule change?

COACH McCAFFERY: It was fine. We were off yesterday. We just have to adjust the times. We were at 12:30. We'll be at 7:30 tomorrow night. Today we're at our usual time, 3-6pm. But that's just the nature of the beast.

The priority, truthfully, has to be that they have the time they need to study and get ready. I mean, you never know. Hopefully they're spaced out, sometimes you have to give a guy some relief, and we will.

Q. Last year after the game you questioned your team's toughness. Does Adam bring a level of toughness that maybe transfers to everybody? Do you feel you have a tougher team now?

COACH McCAFFERY: I think it's more than just toughness. It's consistent work ethic, and attention to detail. That's what Adam and Clemmons and Mike bring so well. We have Marble is that way, McCabe is that way, Basabe is getting more and more that way, and Eric May has always been that way.

So now you have a stable of guys that works hard, competes, pays attention to detail, brings it every day. Doesn't just try to show up and play in the games, and that's so important.

I've been doing this long enough. If you don't have a team of guys like that, you know, you have no chance if you're playing a good team.

I think that's one of the qualities that UNI has. They've got guys that come with it on a regular basis. Anything short of that, you don't have a chance against them. So you have to not only match that level of intensity but do a better job with it.

Q. The last three games, you have five guys averaging points in double digits. As a coach, what does that do for you when you have that kind of offensive power?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, it's a completely different situation than we had before, because there are so many ways we can go. We can run sets; we can run motion; we can push it; we can have longer possessions; we can go inside; we can drive it. The opposition can't lock in

to one or two people.

Two years ago, in particular, it was difficult for Matt Gatens. He just had so many people all over him. Last year it was a little bit easier. He also benefited from going through what he went through the year before. That's what you hope. Now we've got guys that if they're pressuring up over here, and we've got guys over here taking shots.

I have so many more things in my mind that I can go to offensively to get a basket. It's not just the same two or three people.

Q. It seemed like a very emotional victory here the other night. Is there any concern about a letdown at all?

COACH McCAFFERY: No, no, there was plenty of time between games, and that's what the Big Ten is. Two days later, three days later, you better be ready, because if you're not, you're going to get your ears pinned back.

Q. Has there been any discussion of having Drake and UNI being a pay opponent of the future?

COACH McCAFFERY: No.

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