

December 22, 2011



Iowa – 81
Boise State – 72

An interview with:

COACH McCAFFERY

Q. That was a clean half of basketball. One turnover in the second half, five overall. You must be happy.

COACH McCAFFERY: I think when you're going to beat a good team, there's a number of things you have to do. In the first half I thought we got pounded on the glass. We ended up out-rebounding them for the game. We out-rebounded them in the second half I think by four. Five turnovers for the game. You know they're going to press late if they're behind, which they did. So we handled the pressure.

We drove the ball against a team that's going to be up. Got to the free-throw line, 25 for 31, essentially put the game away late by making sure we're in a double bonus. That's understanding how to manage the game.

A lot of great individual performances. I thought Basabe with the double-double, four blocks. We've been on him to start cleaning up the lane a little bit. Much better defensively I thought. Our focus was better. We did give them 55% in the second half. They were taking the ball to the basket a lot.

We've got to do a little better job containing dribble-penetration. Wiley got away from us twice. They were breakdowns. He's too good a three-point shooter. That was early. We cleaned that up.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, and it's exactly how we want to play. At that juncture in the game, they were driving the ball more than they were shooting the ball. If they come down the lane, you have to challenge at the rim, which is what he did, then you have to convert at the other end. That was a big play, no question about it.

Q. Do you feel good where Melsahn is?

COACH McCAFFERY: More like himself, he is. He's much more comfortable. We haven't broken the game down. As we talked about the game, probably need to give him the ball more. I think he's at that point. What did he go? He was 6 for 9. A lot of those were putbacks. We have to go to him even a little bit more and I think he'll respond.

Q. Seemed like last year you didn't have a lot of options. Seems like you can score from a lot of different spots this year.

COACH McCAFFERY: We can. Of course, that's what we had hoped to achieve. I thought Oglesby's three was as big a shot in the game as there was. Aaron White, he's got the inside-outside game. And Zach was in foul trouble, so he wasn't really as effective tonight. But he is a weapon. We do have a lot of options, and it makes us that much harder to guard, especially late.

Q. Devyn made that leap in the last couple weeks. Talk about what Aaron White is doing. Is he striving to get that consistency? Can he do that all season long?

COACH McCAFFERY: He can. He's going to go up against some really strong seniors in this league as we move into league play. I think one of the problems he had up until now was not his ability, it was fatigue, it was stamina, sustaining the effort that he gives you right when you put him in the game.

But I think what's happened is as he's gotten more minutes and he's had more success, he's understanding how to manage his wind, especially with timeouts, assert himself. Early on he was sort of just dying on us. We had to go get him. He was shot. He'd play himself to where he couldn't make another move. He's not doing that now.

When you look at 18 and 6. When you look at Marble, 18, 8, 5, 3, 3. That's a pretty good line right there.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH McCAFFERY: The thing about it, I think that's a good observation. Who is going to block that? He's 6'6" and long. If he drives you back and raises up, he's going to get that shot off, and he's making it. I think you can see in his face he's very comfortable shooting it.

The one he made to put us up 8, I forget how much time was left. That was a big shot right in front of our bench. He raised up and knew that sucker was in. That's how you want your guys playing.

Q. You won three games in the last six days. Looked good doing it. Do you feel like you're kind of hitting a stride now?

COACH McCAFFERY: You know, I think what we did was we grew up a little bit. We're obviously playing better at both ends of the floor. We have more people playing better. We're still finding our way. We had some injuries. Cartwright's situation in that period of time was unknown virtually. We had to put Devyn in there, figure out where we were going to go behind him. Now at least we have them both. We can play them both. We can play Bryce behind Devyn.

It settled everybody down. Once Devyn has established he's really a quality point guard, and we have an incredibly talented backup who may end up starting at some point if he keeps working on it, it settles everybody else down.

You can run your sets. You can run your motion. You have more drivers. You have more people breaking the defense down to then set up your shooters. Eric May is open. Josh and Matt are open. That's what you need.

Q. You talked about Boise on film looking like a team that would give you a Big Ten-like test. Did it turn out that way?

COACH McCAFFERY: There's no question. I knew they would. I don't often talk

about the other coach. I think Leon does a really good job with this team. I mean, they are hard to prepare for. They have you spread out. They run this direction. They dribble handoffs, counters. It really, really forces the defense to focus the entire possession, the entire game.

They can carve you up. They have a number of different weapons. And their players play with a comfort-ability that you want. That's the reason why they have nine wins. That team will make some noise in that league, I can tell you that.

Q. Give the guys a couple days off?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, I really believe they need to be with their families, step away for a couple days. So tomorrow they'll go home. Some will go home tonight, the ones that can drive. Be home tomorrow, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We'll practice on the 26th.

What I told them to do was they got to get after it when they're home. Don't play, but get on the bike, run, get shots up, stretch, that kind of thing.

Q. With the younger guys like Marble and White, looks like they're going to have other responsibilities during the Big Ten schedule. How do you prepare those guys?

COACH McCAFFERY: We just stay on them and keep showing film and keep talking to them, making sure they understand what's necessary. Then we also talk about understanding how to manage the next couple months off the court, the decisions that you make, where you go. Are you getting your rest? Are you taking care of your body? Are you eating properly?

Sometimes these young kids, they don't eat, they don't sleep, can't understand why they lost nine pounds. Those kinds of things we constantly talk to them about to make sure that doesn't happen. For those two guys in particular, that would be a problem.

Q. Are you happy where your team was, close the whole game, and didn't (indiscernible)?

COACH McCAFFERY: As I looked at this game, part of me said, I don't need Boise State in my life right now. We're trying to get some confidence. But the reality is that's sort of exactly what we needed.

We needed a test tonight. We needed

somebody to come in here, you hit them, they hit you back, you hit them, they hit you back. That's what our league is night in and night out. We had to gut one out. We had a close game. We had to make our free throws, not turn it over, get a couple stops against good players when we needed them, and that's what we did.

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