

**March 2, 2014**



Iowa – 83  
Purdue – 76  
An interview with:

## **COACH FRAN McCAFFERY**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. How big of a role did turnovers play tonight?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Huge. You know, when you don't shoot a good percentage like we didn't in the second half, you got to give your team a chance every time you come down. Maybe you get a second. But at the very least, you have a chance to get your defense back.

This team is so quick, if they turn you over anywhere around the 10-second line, it's a layup. Last two ball games, that was happening to us. 13 and 17, we're right in the game against two really good teams on the road. But it's tough to overcome that many turnovers.

**Q. 16 also for Purdue?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, we got a lot out of our three-quarter court press today. The zone was good. The change was good. You always worry about rebounding a little bit, especially with a running rebounding team like they are. Obviously the big fella is a handful. But it's those other guys that stand on the perimeter and then fly in and use their athletic ability.

**Q. You were down 4, Woodbury hits a jumper, next time down Aaron hits a 3. Big picture, how big were those two plays?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, they were big in a lot of ways. We weren't scoring, okay? We needed to score. We scored. The 3 gave us the lead. Both baskets clearly got the crowd involved, which I think was absolutely critical. We had a great crowd today. We hadn't given them

much in the second half to cheer about. They scored six of their first seven possessions to start the second half.

We were coming down, hitting okay shots, nothing great. Like I said, we were getting shots.

I think the biggest shot of the game was Marble's step-back jumper in front of our bench. Seems like we went six or seven possessions without coming close, then Gabe had the one that lipped out, Whitey had the one that lipped out.

**Q. It wasn't always pretty, but you got the victory. Talk about getting back on the winning track for this team.**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think for us it was important to have to fight the way we did. We had to take care of the ball. We had to guard. We had to make free throws. We had to be intelligent.

We had a little bit of a tendency in the last two games to quick shoot the ball. If you're struggling on the road, you can't quick shoot the ball. We had longer possessions. By doing that, we were able to drive the ball, throw it inside and get fouled.

When we're going down the stretch with a small lead, I should say, you're getting two shots every time. That's critical.

**Q. What was the level of frustration? You have them down 13 at half. What happened?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I was very disappointed in a couple things. Obviously when they scored six out of seven. I said that already. It was how they scored a couple of them. They just ran a screen, rescreen for their best three-point shooter, Stephens, he shoots an uncontested three. That's what cuts it to 10. Then they came down, got him again.

He's a guy that we marked. We had been doing a pretty good job on the guys that we marked. It's been the X factor guys that have been

getting us. Today Davis and Peck. Hammons, he got a workmanlike 16 points. His second-shot opportunities impacted the game. We did a pretty good job on the Johnsons, I thought. Those are critical guys. Just like we did a great job last game on Yogi and Vonleh. But Robinson and Sheehy kill you.

We're trying to cut down on that, but that was a little bit disappointing.

**Q. How is Marble a better player than he was at the end of last season?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think at the end of last season he's as good as he's been this year. Maybe in the middle of the season he wasn't. He had a stretch where he was I think feeling that he really had to carry this team and he was trying to do too much.

You can argue now that's exactly what he's doing: he's carrying this team. His consistency has been amazing at both ends of the floor. He doesn't rattle. I think what you're seeing is a guy that's playing with a great level of confidence due to the fact that he's taking full advantage of the experience.

He's played a ton of minutes. He's been through the wars. Nothing rattled him. Whether we're home, on the road, the circumstances in the game, he's not rattled.

**Q. Up until the last minute or so of the game, you struggled a little bit from the free-throw line. Mike had struggled a little bit. Pretty much an intentional foul on Mike. (Indiscernible) hits seven of eight. What does that mean for your team to be able to punch it through?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think it's huge for us, huge for him. He was playing great. He got a little tentative. I took him out, put Clemmons in. I walked down the bench and said, Hey, I'm going to put you back in here. You got to play the way you're capable of playing. You're getting tentative. You can't play the game that way. Be who you are, be aggressive, go make plays.

He said, Okay, got it.

Put him in, I thought he was great.

He's going to miss some free throws. But you keep fouling him, he's going to put you away. He missed some this year, yes, but they're isolated situations typically. It's not like he missed seven out of eight. You can expect him to make seven out of eight.

**Q. Where is your team in terms of being a team that can make a run in the Big Dance?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think that question is asked way too many times. We get that question in December now. We get it in November.

I don't care right now. I want to figure, How can we beat Michigan State? How can we keep getting our team better? When that time comes, we'll deal with that.

It drives me crazy. You watch ESPN. That's all they talk about. Who is going to make a run? Who is the No. 1 seed? Why are we talking about the No. 1 seed in February? Somebody is going to be the No. 1 seed. You're the No. 2 seed, who cares. Get in. Go try to win.

**Q. There's talk of Iowa and the Final Four. Do you think those words got into the heads of your players?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I don't think so. I think it's a legitimate question. I don't think so.

I think I would be able to say if I saw a change in their professionalism or their work ethic, we get a little fat-headed, I would say maybe that's true. Their approach has been very professional.

There's no question this last week we were a little bit tired. I don't say that as an excuse. I hope it doesn't come across that way because it's not my intention, because we travel in a first-class way. But it seemed like we were a little bit tired.

I really backed them off in practice these last two days, trying to get them as much rest as I can for the two games coming up.

**Q. Your rotation, you went more eight, a little less nine and ten. Was that intentional today?**

COACH McCAFFERY: It's never intentional, okay? It's a function of how the game goes.

In the first half we had a different lineup on the floor that was really in there when we extended the lead. In the second half, it was a different lineup. The only change I made was I took Gabe out, put Woody in, then put Gabe back in for Woody. Those two guys were tremendous I thought.

But I left Josh in. I left Whitey in. I left Dev and Mike in. I think the first half, Uthoff and Zach were in there at one point. They were both great.

So that's the team we have.

Fortunately the guys that weren't in there at the end aren't pouting. They're thrilled for us to win, know that it might be them the next time we play.

**Q. Talk about the week ahead.**

COACH McCAFFERY: Michigan State on the road. Don't have to say much more than that. Plus they just lost their last game, so they're going to be ready for us.

We'll be ready. It will be a great atmosphere, a huge game.

**Q. If you had a nominating speech for Marble for Player of the Year, how would it go?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I would argue this. I would say that nobody has been asked to do more. There's a lot of guys that are close, okay? We all know who they are. I could start naming names.

But I play him at the 2, I play him at the 1, I play him at the 3. He guards bigger guys, smaller guys. I isolate him. I post him up. I set him up on ball screen action, I set him up on staggers. He plays a ton of minutes. He's going to have the ball late.

I think he's the guy right now. Obviously you could argue a number of other people. I think that's the thing about our league, you start going through it, how do you pick five? How do you pick ten? I'm going to have to do it this week. I had to do an all-district team, which is essentially the all-Big Ten team.

You look at a guy like Kaminsky. Who is playing better than him? Petteway. Who is playing better than him? D.J. Newbill. His team isn't winning as much, although they've had great wins and won more. There's so many guys.

Coming into the season, you're thinking Craft, Appling. Appling was a guy you had to look at until he hurt his wrist. Same with Payne. Those were two guys that you thought would have had a shot at.

You go team by team. Stauskas and Caris LeVert maybe playing better than anybody at Michigan. Who is playing better than LeVert right now? Very few people.

That's what this league is. The fact that you ask the question, because it's a legitimate question, I think that speaks to what Dev has accomplished.

**Q. Everything that happened on social media last weekend, how was it to hear the ovation the crowd gave Zach?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I was thrilled. The thing what I've tried to stress with him is just how awesome Hawkeye fans are.

The troubling aspect I have with regard to social media, whoever did come after him and pretended to be a Hawk fan, maybe they were, but maybe they weren't, okay? Maybe they were the fan of an opposing team that was trying to get in his head. You don't know that.

We have to be careful to rush to judgment, especially when people don't put their name to it. If you don't put your name to it, then I don't really care what you say. It's irrelevant on this planet Earth what your opinion is.

I'm proud of him. He lashed out. He regretted it. He apologized. We shut it down. We're trying to lock in on being a really good team.

**Q. Did you hit the panic button following three losses?**

COACH McCAFFERY: No.

**Q. Speaking of the panic button...**

COACH McCAFFERY: I'm not speaking of the panic button clearly (laughter).

**Q. You were down four.**

COACH McCAFFERY: I wasn't panicking. I got it. But we weren't panicking.

**Q. Your team did a gut check.**

COACH McCAFFERY: It was a gut check, there's no question about that. I think, you know, we showed a lot of character, there's no question.

**Q. Not that anybody takes winning for granted, but after going through the week you just had, does this feel better than a normal win or just kind of a release, relaxing kind of feeling?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I think when you lost three in a row, that's a safe statement. It feels a little better to know that you went back to work, you put a game plan together, executed the game plan. They made mistakes. Every time you put a game plan together, there's going to be mistakes. But do we have enough toughness and talent and togetherness and character to go get the W? That's what we had.