

FRAN MCCAFFERY TELECONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT - DEC. 18, 2012

What do you want to see out of your team the last two nonconference games? Where do you want to be?

McCaffery: We want to be 11-2, but what I want to see is improvement. I want to see defensive intensity, sustained effort and execution. I want to see getting better collectively and getting better individually.

On Saturday, Anthony (Clemmons) and Adam (Woodbury) didn't have performances they were satisfied with. What type of response are you expecting to get out of those two?

McCaffery: They're both very resilient individuals. They are very competitive and have a lot of pride. What they have to realize is it's a hard thing because what I'd like to be able to do is allow a young guy to play though his mistakes, but in a game like that that was close, I have other options. I have to go with my other options and find the mix that is playing well. They have been very mature and understanding in that aspect and have worked hard in practice the last couple of days. They're great people in terms of character. I have no doubt they're going to bounce back.

You've had nine players score in double digits in a game this year. Are you curious yourself to see who's going to step up any given game?

McCaffery: It has been interesting. It has been different people. The beauty of that is it makes us harder to prepare for. They can't lock in on one guy like they did with (Matt) Gatens last year. That was what made what he did so amazing. We have more weapons and different ways we can go whether it be motions and sets or defensively. That's what makes practices more interesting and it makes it interesting moving forward to see how everything is going to ultimately develop.

Going back to the two freshmen that struggled, are you glad that it happened early in the year where they can get a lesson out of it?

McCaffery: It is part of it. Obviously, we don't want it to happen, but it's sort of inevitable sometimes when you have young guys. True freshmen, it's amazing what they've accomplished so far, and they'll continue to get better. They didn't play well; they played against an experienced team. It's part of the growth process. It's a matter of how you handle and approach it.

How do you show up in practice the very next practice? Those guys have worked really hard and really got after it. It's a great time of year to be a college basketball player because you don't have anything else to do besides working on their game. Exams are over and that's what these guys are doing.

With these next few weeks without school, what are you able to do practice-wise and how important is it with the growth of this team?

McCaffery: It's very important. We don't have to give a day off, there are no restrictions on time, so if guys want to get in and get extra work in, they can. We had a group come in this morning and they're already done. We're flat out getting after it. Coach Francis was in early;

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coach Speraw comes in early and works these guys out. Then we go to breakfast, then we come back and watch film and shoot free throws. Then they go to lunch, come back, watch film and practice and watch more film and then go to dinner. It's a long regimented day. It keeps them focused. When we're done practicing they have the rest of the night to themselves if they want to go to the movies or something like that.

They key now is to understand nutrition, take care of your bodies and prepare. If you're shots are a little bit off, we have the facility to get some shots up. That's what Aaron White has done in particular. He's gotten in here and gotten extra shots in. His shot was a little bit off on Saturday, he's been playing extremely well. He's a very good 3-point shooter, his numbers don't show that right now, and he's taking care of that.

What are your expectations for how long you have players coming around and being at the facility? Does it vary player-to-player or do you have a set amount of minutes or a set amount of hours you want them to be around daily?

McCaffery: We require them to be here two times. If they want to come in a third time on their own, that's on them. They can do it early or they can do it late, it doesn't matter. That's the beauty of the facility. This time of year it was never a problem before because there was never anyone else here. It's just us and the women's team so we work everything out; there is plenty of time. We have the court, we have Carver, and we have the practice facility, so if a guy wants to get it in, he can get it in.

You talked about the difficulty of having a 10 or 11-man rotation. To look ahead a little bit, you're losing Eric May and you're adding Kyle Meyer, Peter Jok and Jarrod Uthoff. You figure things are going to get more competitive for playing time aren't they as you look ahead?

McCaffery: It will. Fortunately we have versatile players so you can see it now because in practice, other than Peter, the other two guys are here. We can move guys around. It also impacts a guy like Darius Stokes who has really worked himself into a position where he can be a factor, but we have some guys that are ahead of him right now and that's unfortunate, but he is an integral part of what we're doing. We look so much different in terms of our size and length and our versatility, but it is going to get even more competitive, no question.

I'm sure most of your players saw the final score of your next opponent in last night's game, I think they got beat by 51 at Missouri. What do you do to try to keep them focused on the task at hand and not look and say, 'Wow, that team is terrible.'

McCaffery: (South Carolina State) is not terrible. Missouri made them look terrible. If you watch this team play, they're talented. I have seen a number of their games, they played substantially better against Maryland. They played substantially better against Albany is a team I'm familiar with -- they are 9-2. They played really well against Norfolk State. You look at their players individually, they have a 6-11 center, they have bullet-quick guards that can score. They have athletic wings. They ran into a buzz saw last night. Missouri was absolutely relentless with their defense, with their fast break. They are so athletically powerful. I haven't seen another team -- obviously I focus on the team's we are playing -- I'll see other teams based on who they play, so I haven't really studied Duke -- I saw the Duke-Ohio State game, so I have seen them a little bit.

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But this team right here, Missouri, is as athletic as any team that is out there. If there is a team that is more athletic or quicker or more powerful, I want to see them. With all due respect to Michigan and those folks that are ranked No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, et cetera. So what we have to understand is we have to play the same way; we have to get after it the same way. What was interesting in that game is they are up 35 and they are playing like they are down five. That's a mentality we have to emulate. It's a great learning experience because what you're going to see, is you are going to see a team come in here on Wednesday night and you're going to say, 'Wow, how did they lose by 50?' Well, they lost by 50 because Missouri won by 50, and they are going to play a lot differently because they have talent. They have shot-makers, they have post players and they have some depth.

Coach, do you feel confident academically; is everyone going to be fine?

McCaffery: I do.

Is everybody healthy?

McCaffery: We have a couple guys banged up, but everybody is going to play.