

**October 31, 2012**



An interview with:

## **COACH McCAFFERY**

**Q. How do you see your starting five shaping up for Sunday? How content would you be with that being your group for the foreseeable future?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I would say that there's a good chance the team I start on Sunday would be the team I start for a while. Obviously it would depend upon how it unfolds before our eyes. Do we play well? Do we play with chemistry? That kind of thing.

Still tinkering with it a little bit. There's some guys that are pretty obviously going to be in the starting lineup, others not so much.

**Q. How about your rotation? Do you have a feel for that? Eight to nine?**

COACH McCAFFERY: At least 10, maybe 11, but at least 10.

**Q. Have you thought about the redshirt possibilities?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Yes. We can play first-year guys Sunday and still redshirt them, not second-year guys or third-year guys. So any decision on redshirting will not be made until after Sunday's game. I don't plan on redshirting anybody other than a freshman, unless of course they got injured, and hopefully that won't happen.

**Q. Eric May, your starting three?**

COACH McCAFFERY: A possibility, yeah. A possibility. He's plays well enough to be in the starting lineup. I've been very, very happy with Eric May. He's kind of doing everything you would expect him to do when he's healthy, but he's doing more off the dribble, shooting the ball well, really

showing great leadership, playing like a senior, the only senior we have. He's playing like that.

So it's possible he would be in the starting lineup. But the thing about him, whether he's starting or not, he's probably going to have about the same role. He's going to be an integral part of what we're doing. He may be more comfortable coming off the bench, getting the same amount of minutes, bringing energy and experience off the bench. We'll see.

**Q. Based on the scrimmage Sunday, where is your defense? Making progress?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Better than it was. Not where it needs to be by any means. But when you have more people that can come in and be fresh, that can only help your defense. You're looking for two areas. Number one obviously, is improvement in technique, but also improvement in intensity level.

Sometimes your lack of defensive intensity is not a result of the kids not wanting to do it, it's fatigue. So it's funny, because we played a lot of guys on Sunday, and you would think that we kept taking them out, putting them in, taking them out. You think some guy is going to be miffed about how many minutes he got or didn't get. Nobody was complaining because they were coming out when they were tired, and they went back in when they were rested. That was better for us.

**Q. First time you've been able to do that?**

COACH McCAFFERY: First time. Otherwise we have too much trouble scoring. I mean, I'd have certain guys on the floor, didn't matter what we did on defense, we couldn't make a basket. Just couldn't leave Matt out there by himself. We had to have some other pieces around him, guys that could make shots.

**Q. What can you say about the scrimmage? How important was it?**

COACH McCAFFERY: No specific point total or scores or that stuff.

I would say this. It was a substantially better performance than the last time we played them, to say the least. I thought we were very fortunate to be able to get them to play. That doesn't always work. A lot of programs put those two games on their season ticket package, so you can't get a team that's ranked in the top 15. They're anywhere from 9 to 15, depending where you look. They've got two pros legitimately, without question I think. The big fella is in the best shape I've ever seen him. I coached against him when he was at Rutgers. The transformation in him has been tremendous. Credit to him and to Greg and his staff.

McDermott's still one of the best players in the country. First team All-American again I'm sure. We did a better job on him. I would say essentially did a better job from a technical standpoint. Also rotated some guys on him. I think he had 10 of the first 15 points, 12 of the first 15, something like that. This time around he wasn't quite like that.

So I was pleased with overall what we were able to accomplish. The beauty of a game like that is this: you play a game and you can do some situations. I'm not worried about subbing players in. I didn't start Devyn Marble in the second half because I wanted to get some other guys in there. If it was a regular game, I would have. That's kind of how you approach it.

I don't know if he left some of his starters on the bench longer than he would have knowing this game was close, this type of thing. But it's not what that day was about. It was trying to figure out who can play, who's ready, who's not ready, what combinations might work from a lineup standpoint. Can we press effectively a good team, can we do that. We tried to press them last year and it was a non-factor in the game. It was a factor in the game on Sunday, very effective. That's a good sign.

There's a lot of good signs.

We made some mental errors at some crucial points that is a little upsetting. But that's why you do it, because you put them in a position so hopefully they won't make that same mistake the next time you're in that situation, the same people.

I thought our young kids performed extremely well; I'm very pleased with that. We had some tremendous individual performances.



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Without getting into it, phenomenal individual performances, which were very encouraging. You know, when it was over, I think it was one of those things where both programs could look and say that was a worthwhile experience for both of us.

**Q. When you talk about Woodbury going head-to-head, that's got to be a great learning tool for him knowing the centers he's going to face week in and week out.**

COACH McCAFFERY: It was great. He's a handful because what he does is he knows how to use his body. Whereas he used to tire early in his career, now he's sort of relentless, constantly wears you out with that frame. He plays within himself. He scores in the post. He doesn't try to do what he can't do. Ultimately he puts up numbers.

I thought Woodbury, from the very beginning, was banging with him and really made it hard on him, didn't back down from him physically. Woodbury is fearless. That's what you need to see. Let's face it, last year, Echenique had his way with us, absolutely had his way, could do whatever he wanted to do.

That wasn't the case. He certainly played well, but he had to work a lot harder. We had a low-post presence in that game. That's going to be very important for us as we move forward.

A low-post presence doesn't mean you throw it in there and he scores. It means you throw it in there, good things happen, whether it's a bucket, a move, post-feed kick-out to the weak side for three, hitting a cutter, collapsing the defense, there's any number of things. That's one of the things where Woody is really good.

**Q. Anybody in the last couple weeks that raised their stock that you're going to have to get minutes for them?**

COACH McCAFFERY: I wouldn't say that. I would say everybody has been pretty consistent there, yeah.

**Q. What is the challenge of having 10 or 11 players on rotation?**

COACH McCAFFERY: The challenges are very simple: there's going to be a guy or two occasionally that thought he was going to play 28 minutes, 32 minutes, he plays 16 or 14. Are they going to be satisfied? Are they going to accept that role? Is that going to be a problem? That's a

personal thing. Might be that they play eight in a particular game.

The flipside of that is, you know, if they only play eight, are they going to be ready for the next game. Forgetting whether or not they were upset about it, am I giving them enough minutes to develop them. It's a two-sided issue there.

So it was not a problem on Sunday. I don't anticipate it being a problem most of the time. At some point, probably going to be a problem. We'll just deal with it at the time.

We've been lucky. We hope we stay healthy as we have been. But that obviously would impact what your question was all about. Somebody gets banged up, can't play. We have three or four guys banged up, none to the point where they wouldn't practice or play.

**Q. Going into Sunday the competition is different. How do you envision playing this? Is this throwing people in, seeing what they do in certain situations?**

COACH McCAFFERY: Anytime we're in that situation, we're going to try to win the game, so we'll go at it like we're trying to win the game. I might be slightly more flexible as the game goes on to play different combinations, but not to the point where we would risk losing the game.

You put the uniforms on, put people in the building, we're keeping score. The focus has to be on, What do we have to do to win? It will be the same for them. They'll come in here, try to play well.

This team won 18 games last year. They didn't play well against Notre Dame. So they're going to come in with a terrific coach, come in with a game plan, try to play a lot better than they did the other night. Hopefully we'll be ready for that.

**Q. Marble is taking on the role as the go-to guy?**

COACH McCAFFERY: He should. That's kind of how we're going to use him. Hopefully he'll be able to do that very consistently.

**Q. You have so many young guys. How important are these exhibition games?**

COACH McCAFFERY: They're incredibly important. These young guys are going to play. They just got to get out there and get their feet wet, make mistakes, they have to be able to run stuff against other people that are taking things away. The sophistication of the scouting as we move forward is going to get more and more intense.

You come down and try to run something, they're going to take it away from you in terms of what your skill set is and what they know we're going to do. You got to go make plays. You have to know when to stay in it, when to go off and make a play. That's hard to do sometimes. Your freshmen are trying to impress, trying to be rock solid, but when it's all said and done you got to go make plays.

When you play for me, that's what I want you to do. At the same time you have to recognize the appropriate time to do so.

I thought Gesell and Clemmons in particular were very good. Clemmons had one or two too many turnovers. They won't be turnovers he will have moving forward. He did Sunday. He learned from it and he'll make the adjustment. He'll have another opportunity to do that Sunday before we play a game that counts.

**Q. Do you see Aaron White in the three spot Sunday?**

COACH McCAFFERY: He'll be there some. He'll go back and forth. He obviously didn't guard any three men last year, so he's got to do that out on the floor. Guys are going to take him off the dribble more than fours and fives. Occasionally you'll get a 6'4", 6'3" man that will try to get up in him. He typically uses his length and won't have a problem.

He was real good on Sunday in the second half. He didn't play well in the first half.

**Q. Will Zach play the three or the four?**

COACH McCAFFERY: He'll play both. He's a better four or five. As we saw last year, he gave everything he had. That's not easy in this league. He's smart and tough. He's a better post player than he is a perimeter player though he's arguably our best shooter.

**Q. Pat wasn't here during the summer; he was hurt a little bit. You said he was behind.**

COACH McCAFFERY: He's still behind.

**Q. Where does he fit in?**

COACH McCAFFERY: He's not in the top 10 right now. He's going to be good, though. It's just taking him a little longer. He's trying. He's really working at it.

**Q. With Matt gone, you kind of have a void in outside shooting. Josh is the obvious choice to step into that role. What does he need to do to fill to role as a go-to perimeter shooter?**

COACH McCAFFERY: We'll go to him. He just has to keep firing. He's an interesting player in that sense because as much as he's a great shooter, he really likes to pass. He gives the ball up a lot. He gives it up easy.

We need him to be a little more aggressive with his thinking. He's shot the ball extremely well from minute one this preseason. He made a couple threes on Sunday in a couple key situations, that type of thing.

We have other guys who can shoot it. Obviously Marble we talked about. McCabe might be our best shooter. Aaron White has substantially improved in that area. Gesell is a terrific shooter. Clemmons can make a three. We've got I think a lot of people that can soften the blow of Matt's 3-point shooting.

Anytime you have a guy that made them when he did, that's two different things: making a three and making a three when they're in your face and it's 67-66 and there's one minute ten to go. He drilled them in those situations. Somebody's got to be that guy. I got plenty of guys that can make threes.

**Q. You talked about before how he needs to look for his shot. As a coach, how much can you help a player get to where they are that aggressive?**

COACH McCAFFERY: We've been helpful. We've tried it a number of different ways. Two weeks ago now we ripped his face off because he kept turning shots down. We were tired of looking at it. He's a funny kid. You have to love him. He gets this funny look on his face, then made the next eight in a row.

I said, "Josh, I love you, but do I have to yell at you to make eight threes in a row?" He said, "No, coach." I said, "just keep firing."

He is not a 3-point shooter who has no conscience. He's not that guy. Most shooters have no conscience. They have complete amnesia. When they take a three, the next three, it's like they never took one before. He's not that guy.

He's efficient with his game, with his complete approach to this game. He knows how to play. He's a coach's son. He can handle it, pass it. He's usually in the right place, whether it's on

defense or on offense. He wants to help his team win games.

We have just consistently wrestled with him to just sort of play with a little more reckless abandon and start firing. But he's never going to be that guy that just starts jacking. I respect that about him. But very few players at this level have the ability to make seven or eight threes in a row in any kind of environment, and he has that. He's got a gift there. We got to get it out of him.

**Q. So many people have optimism about Iowa basketball this year... with the role that Matt played last season, and how easy would it be for this team to take a step back filling that void?**

COACH McCAFFERY: There's a very good chance there's going to be two freshmen in there, Sunday and from that point forward.

Anytime you have two freshmen in the starting lineup, White is going to be in there, you know that, he's a sophomore. We're playing a lot of sophomores. We got a couple juniors that are good.

So when you have youth, filling in for a guy who was such an incredible gamer, things change. As well as we played down the stretch, I mean, you could clearly argue particularly Indiana, Wisconsin wins were clearly on Matt's shoulders. That really helped us moving forward because he got such incredible attention defensively, others stepped up when they had opportunities in space to do something.

So you got a different dynamic now. He's not there. I think Marble has the same kind of confidence and approach that Matt had. I know I'm good, I'll stay within the framework of what we've designed, and I'll be effective in that role.

He's going to score in different ways than Matt did, and that's okay. But a lot will fall on the shoulders of Mike Gesell and Anthony Clemmons playing that point guard position. If they play like freshmen, then we won't be as effective because you always forget, everybody talks about we lost Matt. We lost Bryce Cartwright, too. He was a senior. He has been through the wars. He didn't defend, but he was pretty good on offense. He led the Big Ten in assists. Not many people can say that. When he was healthy last year, we were pretty good.

So we lost two key people. Whenever you have two senior guards, that's usually a recipe for

a team that has a chance to be really good. We're going to probably have, if you think about it, two freshmen, a sophomore and a junior playing in the backcourt most of the year. You don't know how it's going to end up.

I think those kids are smart and tough enough to be really good, but we got to wait and see.

**Q. When you look at Devyn, came in as a young 17-year-old raw athlete, didn't fit in very well maybe his freshman year, played better at the end of last year. Last year made a couple steps. Can he take that next step?**

COACH McCAFFERY: He will, yeah. He definitely will. He's going to be up way above that. I'd be shocked if he wasn't. He's got a game. He's got confidence. He's got a body. At the end of his freshman year, we moved him into the starting lineup, he was making big shots for us. He's not afraid of the limelight in a big game. He wants that. So he's going to have that opportunity.

We're going to go to him. He's going to have the green light. A lot of nights he's going to take more shots than anybody else and he's going to make them.

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