

November 7, 2010



An interview with:

COACH McCAFFERY

COACH McCAFFERY: Obviously, I was pleased with a lot of aspects of today's game, not the least of which was our intensity level. I thought we competed and I thought we shared the basketball.

When you look at 15 assists and two turnovers from our point guard position, our big guys were involved. We pushed it. Our decision making was pretty good on the break. When to give it up, when to go, when to pull it back.

Defensively we've got some work to do on ball screens, on back picks getting over. But, again, we were covering for each other, and I think that's important. So all in all when you look at the fact we had two freshmen in the starting lineup, both, I think, performed extremely well. I'm very pleased with how we played today.

Q. Coach, you used a lot of different combinations in the first half. How much of that was just this being exhibition game and guys getting to know each other, or how much of it was showing what you're looking to do for the most part?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, I think if you look at even the starting lineup, that was not a lineup that we envisioned starting. With Gatens out, we looked at Bryce Cartwright in the starting position. We went big today. Felt like with the size advantage we would go big.

Wanted to see Zach in the three spot and take a look at Eric in the two spot. So after that it was more a function of foul trouble. We had three

guys with two in the first half, then we had two guy that's got there for us in the second half.

So will we try different combination? Absolutely. Was I looking at that, absolutely. But it was also a function of how the game unfolded.

Q. How much did the Iowa fans keep the tempo up?

COACH McCAFFERY: I can't promise 111 every game, but we're going to try, I can tell you that.

Again, when you're scoring the ball like that, you don't look back and say we quick shot the ball too many times. We had contested shots. We had very few contested shots today, and that's the key.

When you're playing up-tempo, you have good players taking shots in rhythm in their range. Are they good shots for them? Then it doesn't matter when it appears in the shot clock. I think that's where a lot of coaches get bogged down.

Now all of a sudden you're turning down a good shot opportunity and you're getting a rushed shot later with the shot clock.

But I would be upset if I thought we were quick-shooting the ball too often, and if I felt we were shooting forced contested shots. Because if you shoot forced contested shots it's hard to win; you're going to shoot a low number.

Q. (No microphone) 15 assists?

COACH McCAFFERY: And I felt they were coming to get them. They were put something pressure on them. I thought we made good decisions. I do think we still, despite the fact Melsahn has 19, Zach had ten, of course a lot of those were on the perimeter. Cole's got six. We've got to get the ball outside a little bit more.

We missed Brommer a few times. We get the big fella running and we've got to get him the ball inside, and we emphasized that in practice.

When you get the big guys running and

they're posted and they're open, we've got to get them the ball. Sometimes your offense runs better if you throw it in the post, but don't necessarily shoot the ball but go in and out and then reverse the ball with action, and you have even a better opportunity to score.

Q. Both Cole and Marble seemed to penetrate in the line well?

COACH McCAFFERY: They penetrated. They had space. Let's face it, we had a distinct size advantage. So they were fighting the post, fighting the post. So there wasn't as much help on that penetration. So we could draw the defense. I thought Marble did a good job with that as well.

Q. Is that a taste of what Melsahn can do, getting the activity and getting a lot done?

COACH McCAFFERY: He's an efficient player. I think that's a good point. He doesn't try to do what he can't do. He's not going to over dribble. He's not going to be jacking threes. If he stays around the basket, little by little he's showing on ball screens and moving his feet a little more defensively.

But he can block a shot. He can catch and finish around the basket. He's got a jump hook. He can go baseline and dunk the ball and he's an offensive rebounder. So when it's all said and done, you're going to have some numbers.

Q. Can you talk about Eric May and benefiting the most in the change in style. Is this kind of what you were talking about today?

COACH McCAFFERY: When you have a guy like Eric May, you want him to get out in transition and get some easy baskets. When he does, he's going to shoot the ball better. He shot the ball well. He's been shooting the ball extremely well. He's driving the ball, handling the ball, making moves in transition. But he's also penetrating and then giving the ball up.

There's about a stretch of four or five days in practice where he was struggling with turnovers and it's great to get them out flying, but we don't need them turning the ball over. He's corrected that part of his game. He's much more under control. He's driving. And if he's not shooting and he comes to a jump stop and that's what you need to do, so he was spectacular today, no question.

Q. What would you say about your guard play?

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought for the most part it was efficient. Our decision making was good. We got points. We've got the ball to the right people.

Again, I think unless you're counting on one particular guard to be a big scorer, what you're looking for your guards to do is engineer victory and that's what they did.

Q. What about your transition defense today?

COACH McCAFFERY: Just okay. But I thought for the most part we were hustling. One play in the first half, if you remember, the leading three-point shooter was trailing. We just ran right by him and gave up a wide open three. That is the kind of play that could cost you a game.

So we have to lock in a little better to personnel, but we'll learn from that.

Q. As you recruit, do you sell this style of play? Do you sell yourself, do you sell the university?

COACH McCAFFERY: We sell all of that. We have a lot to sell as an institution academically. It's a great place to go to school socially. We offer everything that there is academically, so anything you might want to study.

I'm a guy that I think is relatively easy to play for. We're going to get you ready and we're going to let you play. We're going to push the ball and let you make plays. Make sure you're not afraid to turn it over once in a while.

Obviously we don't want that to happen too much, but if you're going to play and try to score 111, you're occasionally going to drive into a pack of people and turn it over. But the question is what do you do after that? I thought we came back and made good plays after we made mistakes.

Q. What are your thoughts on Darius Stokes at this point?

COACH McCAFFERY: Darius has been a pleasant surprise. We kind of looked at him as a guy that was going to help us in practice, and he's been all of that. But he's a tremendous athlete.

He's got a great feel for how to play. He knows how to play in the motion game. He's an energy guy so he can be a terrific offensive rebounder. Offensively he knows that he's limited on the perimeter, but he can score going to the

basket with his athletic ability.

So he's a guy that you may not see again the rest of the year on the court because we may red shirt him. He can play today. Today's the last day he can play. We'll see. We'll play him if we have to, but we may just use him in practice and save that year of eligibility for him.

Q. Coach, (no microphone) ?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, we've got to make sure if you get three, you can't be chopping. Brommer and Marble both did it in the first half. If you're going to get guys that play you with two, so you can play your game in the second half, you don't get three in the first half. I'm not worried about it other than those two guys fouling when they did.

Q. If I may, you probably covered this before, but T.J. Sayre, how did he get here as a senior?

COACH McCAFFERY: He's a transfer from Creighton. You know, he was a pretty good high school player from what I understand. What we did was we -- he was invited to be on the team because of his size. Not only is he about 6'7", he's 225. It's rare that you have a walk-on that's that big.

So he's not only physically a guy that can help you in practice, especially if Cole's foot's bothering him like it was, or somebody's out. He knows how to play. He does. He's been very impressive and been a big asset to our program.

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