

November 12, 2012



Final Score:

Iowa – 73
Central Michigan – 61

An Interview With:

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY

Q In the second half you played a lot of four guards with May, Clemmons running the point. What were your thoughts on that?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, we were just matching up to them. They went small and quick. They took their center out, and they were spreading us and driving the ball. So we had to put a team out there that could contain penetration. We gave them five threes in the first half. We felt like if we gave them five threes in the second half, that would really be problematic. So we contained penetration better and contested threes better. Then, of course, we got a little more movement on offense and really executed substantially better in the second half offensively.

Q. Talk about Mike's (Gesell) play. He was more of an offensive force, of course he had Anthony handling the ball, but he hit those big threes.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, he was open, guys were making plays. They were finding him. We missed our first three jumpers and got a little tight, and then we threw it inside and turned it over and stood around. And in the second half, we had a lineup on the floor that would attack whenever they were in and just make plays, and we spaced it better, we screened it, we slipped, we got some offensive rebounds that were really good for us.

Q. Did you go into the game thinking you were going to play Mike and Anthony a lot together?

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, it's just the way it worked out. We were not containing penetration in the first half. That's part of the reason why they hit five threes and felt like in order to solve that we needed to have Marble, Eric May, and Anthony (Clemmons) and Mike (Gesell) on the floor. That makes us small and it changes what we can do on offense. There's not a lot of sets we can run because those guys are not typically in those positions so then we just had to go play.

Q. Were you pleased Mike and Anthony stepped up?

FRAN McCAFFERY: They didn't play like freshmen, Mike never does. The great thing about Anthony is he made a couple freshman mistakes but came right back. He didn't linger on them, and that's a big-time sign for me that he's special.

Q. Was there ever a point where you thought about taking him out there in the second half or was he impressing you enough?

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, he was just too good. He was in control. I mean, he didn't look rattled at all. He played both ends. There were a lot of timeouts. Keno took a bunch, and then with the media timeouts, we didn't have a tired team. There was one time in the second half where I thought Whitey (Aaron White) was tired; we took him out. I took Mike (Gesell) out with nine and a half and put him back in with 7:47 just to give him two minutes. I knew we would need him down the stretch because I knew they were going to start pressing and trapping full, and I needed to have my handlers ready.

Q. Melsahn really had an active first half, came off the bench and really provided energy, I think four blocks in the first half.

FRAN McCAFFERY: He was terrific. He made a couple big baskets. When we were struggling for a basket, two different situations, he made a big basket for us. And then of course he made the one free throw he had. We were 14 for 23, and we were getting to the free-throw line. They were fouling with the small lineup, and we missed four front ends. Well, you miss nine free throws, four front ends, that's the difference in a game right there. Could have been a lot worse.

Q. You're going into a game pretty quick here again. Has Anthony kind of moved up in your mind or will it be a match-up thing?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It will be a match-up thing, and that's what I told the guys in the locker room. I didn't anticipate ending the game with that lineup on the floor, but that's the lineup that won the game for us, so we have to understand and appreciate that and be ready to step up. We might go big at some point in time. I thought Gabe (Olaseni) played well enough to go back in, but it wasn't his kind of game. So he didn't get to go back in in the second half. Josh (Oglesby) didn't go back in in the second half. And that's unfortunate because those two guys have played well enough to go back in, and I feel badly about that. But at that point in time we needed to have the team on the floor that I felt could give us the best chance to win, and that will fluctuate. We're fortunate enough to be able to do that.

Q. Do you have more ways to handle different match-ups now than you used to?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Exactly, more guys that can score.

Q. Do you feel like Eric (May) was playing to his forte; playing defense, coming off, providing energy?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's been spectacular. I mean, in practice, in the summer, in the fall, everything we had hoped he would be. We put him in the game, he doesn't make mistakes, he makes plays. He's healthy. He's really playing with confidence, so when he does make a mistake, he plays through it. That used to linger on him. He put too much pressure on himself.

He doesn't do that anymore. He just goes down and does something good for you. We had him on the five man there down the stretch, just go front the five man and be ready to go in there and get a rebound for us. He was great.



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Q. He's a physical player.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, he's tough, he's mentally tough, he's physically tough, he's quick, and he's smart, and those are the guys that win for you.

Q. When you envisioned both Anthony (Clemmons) and Mike (Gesell) in this class, I think you envisioned there would be significant times when they would be playing together, right?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I did, and I told them that, and I think it was important to both of them to know and understand that that might happen, because very rarely when one point guard commits another point guard comes. It just doesn't happen. But both of them can shoot the ball, and both of them can defend. So I could legitimately honestly tell them that I would play them both together at different times, and I have, and I will.

Q. What was it like coaching against Keno with all his family ties to the program?

FRAN McCAFFERY: To be honest with you I didn't really think about that.

Q. Talk about (Adam) Woodbury in the second half.

FRAN McCAFFERY: You know, the thing about Adam, I thought he was great tonight. He fumbled it the first time he got it. It was a different kind of game for him. He made a big put-back, he got his hands on balls, but the thing, you look at four offensive rebounds, and we really needed the ball back. He played great post defense when he was in there. He's going to be great.

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