

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. What challenges does Delgado possess?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's got a low post game. He's tough. He's got a toughness. He's a competitor. But I also think as good as he was last year, I think his role has expanded this year. They're going to him a lot with the perimeter guys they have, they're really focusing on being able to have an inside-outside game. And you've got three big-time scorers, and he's one of them.

Q. Playing somebody of this caliber this early, is it going to be good for these guys to face a power conference school?

FRAN McCAFFERY: The thing about them is -- obviously they're coming off a 25-win season. They beat Villanova in the Big East championship game, and they replaced the one guy who went to the league with a fifth-year guy. So you got four juniors and a fifth-year senior. But they have an expectation of winning. They have a winning culture. Kevin's a terrific coach. I've known him a long time. I used to go against him when I was at Siena and he was at Iona. So they present a lot of challenge. They have size. They have tremendous speed. They have experience. They have a multitude of scorers. And I think they have a sufficient amount of depth. And they're going to challenge you with some defenses, and I think ultimately an innate ability to compete. And that's what these kids do. If you watch them over and over like I have, they're all capable of making plays at the end of the game. They all play defense. They all run the floor, and they just kind of keep coming at you. And I think that's why we play the Gavitt Games. You play a team like that early. It was always the ACC/Big Ten Challenge and the Iowa State game for us, before the holiday tournament and the Classic in Des Moines. So they all really challenged us in the preseason, those four opportunities. Now there's a fifth, and it always comes earlier. But you watch some of these games, and I watched the Villanova-Purdue game the other night. That was like a Final Four atmosphere, in November. And I think that was the purpose behind playing these games... compelling television for a lot of basketball fans. But as it relates to trying to get your own team ready, like last year, for example, was also good. We had to go on the road and beat a really good Marquette team in the Bradley Center. It was a great

opportunity for us early on, and it was an opportunity for them to grow. They were young, and this year we're a little bit on the younger side.

Q. Is that part of what makes it even more of a vital opportunity, because of the postseason?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it's a great opportunity because this is a team that's going to be in the NCAA tournament. We're playing an NCAA tournament team. I think they know that. They expect that. And we would like to be there as well. So it's the only chance we're going to get to play them. I think it's great for our fans, too, to see another power conference team that they don't see regularly and maybe play a little bit of a different style. And so I'm looking forward to the challenge for our players.

Q. I know it's early, but will this be one of the more athletic teams you play this year do you think?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. No question. Obviously there's some really athletic teams in our league. But when you watch this group, when you sort of analyze their athletic power, their speed and quickness and leaping ability and ability to recover, how it impacts their defense, the quickness of their closeouts, their closing on penetration and wall off the rim as you're trying to get there is pretty impressive.

Q. I'm guessing Pete and Carrington will probably go head to head?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. It would seem logical that they would match up to start the game.

Q. How do you kind of see that matchup, and they're both probably two of the better shooting guards in the country this year.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I would think you're probably right about that. They're a little bit different, but they're both really good. They're both very competitive guys. They're veterans, and I think both of them realize that they're going to have to work to guard the other guy. And they're both being asked by their team to score. And I think that's the challenge for anybody in that position that sort of views themselves as an NBA prospect, you gotta play both ends.

Q. Must be a lot of intrigue to kind of see how your front line does against this first test since losing Woodbury a year ago?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, no question. He's a crafty guy, Delgado. He can foul out three guys if you don't play him right, and you don't work to play him. You saw that the other night. Haas (Purdue) is a different kind of guy. I referenced that game. He fouled out at least two Villanova guys, and that's what a really good, skilled, strong by guy does that's smart and been around. You're right. It's a terrific challenge for our big guys who are essentially young, freshmen.

Q. Do you think 3-point shooting is going to be a big role in this game?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Always is, but in this game probably -- we made 18 in the last game; it was a different kind of game. It normally wouldn't take 43 threes. Their closeouts will take that away. We won't be able to shoot that many. But you have to be able to move the ball and take and make open threes. I don't know that playing them makes that any different than anybody else. You have to be able to make 3-point shots to win.

Q. Get into working in extra stuff like different kinds of zone defenses maybe or are you still working in more of your base things?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. We don't have a whole lot more to get in defensively. We've got pretty much everything in that we'll need. We do have more to get in offensively. We haven't had enough time to get everything in yet.

Q. What do you like most about Christian Williams so far this year?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's been solid. I think as you look at his development, what I'd like to see is him be even more aggressive. You've seen a little bit of that. And I think for us, you go back to the scrimmage and the exhibition and I'm looking at kind of over a four-game period, I think I've seen progress there, just being confident to be the guy and lead and get us into what we need to get into and be aggressive when he needs to, get to the rim, attack the rim, shoot the ball when he's open. But really know and understand how to get everybody involved and distribute the ball. And I think he's a very unselfish guy. Sometimes I want him to be more self and look for himself a little bit more. I think defensively he's been really good. Been very pleased with him. He's played like a veteran, even though he doesn't have a ton of experience.

Q. What is Dale Jones's situation right now?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He'll be good to go.

Q. The last guy I remember with a stat similar to what Cordell had the other day was probably maybe McCabe in that NIT game four or five years ago. I think McCabe was like 9-for-9. PemsI was 7-

for-7. He's young, the second game he's ever really played in here. That's pretty remarkable.

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's smart and he's really skilled. And he has a body. The thing that you never know about a guy is how is he going to perform under pressure at this level. He's always performed well under pressure in his career, so I think what you're seeing is a guy who's very comfortable doing what he does and stays within himself, finishes around the basket. But he can play away from the basket. He made some passes against the press in that game that were spectacular. I mean his vision and awareness was really special, and that's why he's back there. So we put him in the middle. We put him in the back facing the press. We put him in the middle to attack. We put him in the baseline to the zone, offense. Put him in the high post. He plays pretty much anywhere in transition, he can be the first post down or he can be the trailer. And he's very comfortable in all of those places on the floor. That's what I like about him. You can pretty much put him anywhere. He's smart. He's tough. And he doesn't rattle. There's no panic in his game at all.

Q. Does he have the body type where he could probably be able to get really big and thick or if you needed to slim him down you could slim him down?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think he's pretty much going to be thick. He's a big, strong kid. I don't see us trying to thin him out. He plays with I think a much greater athleticism than people think. He'll get traffic rebounds. He'll jump and dunks the ball easy. He can play in the running style. You've seen him run the floor. I think that's about what you're going to get from him.

Q. He's got a maturity about him, too, that's probably further than his age a little bit.

FRAN McCAFFERY: There's no question. And I think that's really important for any player. If you're young, it's rare to be that poised out there and that under control. You can't speed him up. You can't get him sideways. He's just going to do what he does, and if he's in a tough spot, he'll just move the ball on. He won't try to do something that's not there and make a mistake and then foul a guy and compound the first mistake. He just knows how to do that and how to play. I think what will happen is you'll see him as he gets more comfortable with what we're doing and the nuances of what we're doing, he'll get better. But right now he's awfully good.

Q. Injuries kind of kept him maybe under the radar some, maybe underrated some in high school?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Probably. He didn't get a lot of AAU exposure, and a lot of those ratings, if you remember when he was a sophomore he was invited to

the Nike Top 100. And the first play of the first game he suffered a concussion. I was there, he went home. He didn't play in that. Then he didn't play AAU the summer when Jordan (Bohannon) and Ryan (Kriener) were on that team that did so well in Florida, and they did really well in South Carolina, he wasn't playing, so nobody saw him. You know that I don't get that worked up about ratings anyway, but I think in fairness to the people that rate, they didn't see him.

Q. Along the lines of not being rattled, did you like how he responded to that in that opening game?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's really been an interesting guy to study because the only thing he has to do is to slow down a little bit. He's incredibly talented, versatile, and when he gathers himself, he's a dominant player. And you're right. He didn't have the greatest game offensively in the first game, but he also had ten rebounds. So he's going to give you effort and energy, and another guy who's really still learning what we're doing, and I'm trying to move him around, and that's not easy. Not easy for him. And he's done that pretty well. So I mean I've been really impressed with him. Again, I look at his complete body of work, six weeks of practice and four games, four times we've played other teams. The thing that will be interesting to see is now we're stepping up in class here. And we'll see how he does there. And going against a crafty veteran and staying out of foul trouble and still doing the things that he does well, just we'll see.

Q. Your kind of bench in this game being able to be pretty liberal?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I might not be as liberal. But again, it'll be a function of how the game goes, how do I feel, what do I think we need, foul trouble. Now, Dale Jones is ready to go. It's hard to get 13 guys in. That's going to be hard to do. I think everybody knows that. I'll play who I think deserves to play at that particular time, and we're going to try to win the game.

Q. Injury situation other than Dale?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Everybody's fine.

Q. We didn't have a chance to ask about Jack Nunge last week.

FRAN McCAFFERY: We're thrilled with Jack, and I started watching him awhile ago. He used to live in Iowa City and moved to Evansville, Indiana, and so we started watching him. And when I first saw him, I thought, wow, he's really got a chance, big, skinny guy, can shoot the ball. And the more you watch him, the more you realize how skilled he is. He had a terrific year and played for a really good coach and a really good program. And his numbers were really impressive. And he kind of reminds me of uh top in some ways because his length being able to block

shots like Jarrod used to and he shoots the three extremely well for a big guy. Maybe as he gets stronger, I think maybe even do more in the post potentially. His size and length and he keeps getting stronger. But he had a terrific summer in AAU. He's going to have a really good senior year, there's no question in my mind. And we think he's got a chance to be really special here. So we're thrilled with Jack, and again, both he and Luka are as fine of people as you're ever going to meet. And when it's all said and done, you need character in your program if you want to be really good and those two guys come from great families, have great character.

Q. Will he serve a three-four hybrid role?

FRAN McCAFFERY: You could play him at center. He's probably at 215 pounds now, so he's going to have to get a little stronger than that to play the five. But his length and his athleticism. And he dunks it easy, runs the floor, take it coast to coast with the dribble. And the thing that I've always noticed about him is he's particularly good at crunch time. So he understands and knows how to win.

Q. Have you had a chance to follow up on any of your former players now playing in the league, Uthoff, Woodbury?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. Matt's recently got hurt; that's been unfortunate. So I've been talking to him predominantly. I got a really nice email from Anthony Clemmons. He's doing really well. He's following the team and stays in touch with Pete and Christian. They have a lot of respect for him. Mike's doing really well. He had a game two weeks ago where he went head to head against his team played Marble's team, and that was interesting to follow. We followed that in the office. Marble's team is a lot better. They won, but Mike's playing really well. I'm happy for him. And Marble is playing really well. Aaron White is playing extremely well. I'll be talking to Woody probably in the next couple of days and checking on him.