

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Monday, January 27, 2020

## Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball

Iowa - 68, Wisconsin - 62

### **Q. What were some of the keys to that comeback?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think the first thing is you can't panic. They hit some shots, we had some breakdowns, you have to respect your opponent that they're going to do some things well, you have to keep executing, and then you have to keep defending. And sometimes you execute really well and you don't score, but we got it where we wanted, we had a good look at it, all right, run back and guard them. I thought the press was really good. I thought we defended coming down the stretch. 23-5 to end the game is typically more of an indication of your defense than it is your offense, and I would say that's the case.

### **Q. Talking about playing and not panicking. Toussaint had some nice drives to the basket late in the game, seemed like he was really under control.**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: He can always have nice drives to the basket. I think, for him, his decision making today was spectacular. That's who he has to be. When to go, when not to go. And big play at the end of the half, the big plays coming down the stretch, intelligent post feeds, moving the ball, and his defense on Trice, who is a very good player, was really good.

### **Q. You guys went 3-20 from three but you still win the game. What does that say about this team?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think it stays a lot. I thought Wieskamp in particular, the way they were guarding him, he was putting it on the deck and attacking the rim. A couple big finishes, also got to the free-throw line. And I thought that we were able to get baskets other than threes and other than Luka, yet we're going to keep going to Luka, we're going to keep throwing it to him. And boy, was he great tonight.

### **Q. In the past you've struggled a lot of times and come back, whether it's going to be, you're going to fight back and win or not. In this case, down 12, seven minutes to go you were able to really push through and what does it say about the mental makeup of this team?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: First of all, we're not going to, we



don't even think about what happened three or four years ago. We don't care about that. We care about what's going on right now. And this team has the ability to execute, defend, and continue to fight. They have done it all year, hopefully, will continue to do it, because if you're going to win in this league you have to do it.

### **Q. Can you speak to the crowd because they were definitely into it.**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah, they were spectacular. It's a weeknight, you got snow, you can come up with any number of excuses, but these fans come out either way. C.J.'s three went in. That was pretty loud. And I thought coming down the stretch you're going to need energy at the defensive end and the crowd provided that for us, without question.

### **Q. It's one thing to play really well and win as you've done during this streak lately, but was this sort a key kind of win for you to have a real struggle all night and still come through?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, I think that's true. Can you win when you're not at your best offensively. Because you manage -- we managed the game, start of the second half was not good, okay, and then the middle portion of the second half was not good. We didn't -- we had a couple breakdowns on defense, we shot it quick without making the defense work, contested, bad looks, but stayed the course, stayed together, got the stops we needed, ran when it was there, pressed them when we had opportunities, rebounded the ball, because they're going to fight on the glass, you know that. So you have to be able to manage the game and keep it to where you can come back and win. Because it gets to 12, it can go to 20 or it can go to zero. And we really stayed together there.

### **Q. What did that press do for you?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: It does a lot of things. We got a couple turnovers, we gave up a three, maybe in each half. You're not pressing to give up open threes. But I thought for the most part when you're defending them, whether you're man or zone, they really screened and cut and move it in and out, side to side, the press enables you to maybe get a turnover, but it gets them going side to side and then maybe through defending that stuff for 18 or 19 seconds rather than 30.

### **Q. What's the explanation when Connor goes to the**

**line late? Was it just a hook and hold?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Flagrant.

**Q. -- with Luka at the end there --**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: It was a flagrant one, so it was two and the ball. And then Luka said something.

**Q. You mentioned a couple weeks ago watching Kobe in the Palestra when he was in high school. What was yesterday like for you and obviously the guys wearing stuff on their shoes there had to be some --**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: The team decided to all wear Kobe's, that's why I wore Kobe's. He and I played for the same AAU coach, Sam Rines, real Philly basketball legend, was my mentor. I knew his dad really well, Joe Bryant. I knew his uncle, Chubby Cox. Recruited him when I was at Notre Dame, spoke to him on the phone, went and saw him, took my head coach to go see him in the Palestra when he played against Rip Hamilton, one of the best high school games I ever saw. Those of you that were at the game when we played Penn State, that's how loud it was for that high school game. The playoffs are at the Palestra in the state of Pennsylvania, at least in the eastern part. So, you know, thoughts and prayers go out for his family. Like I said, knowing his parents, knowing the rest of his family, knowing the impact that he made, I think in particular on the generation that is our guys right now; like us older guys a little more Michael. And then for me I watched Kobe grow up, I watched him in high school, I watched him when he was a kid. But these guys it really hit home for them and when they had the idea to where the Kobe's I said, I'm on board, I'm going to wear the Kobe's as well.

**Q. Did you say anything to the guys?**

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well it's strange because we practiced yesterday and as soon as practice was over I got up to my office, Kirk and I were watching film, and then I got a text from Margaret, she was at my son, Jack's game and said, Hey, Kobe's been killed in a helicopter crash. And we looked on ESPN, they didn't have anything on yet, because they wanted to make sure. TMZ runs with everything. And then everything kind of stopped for everyone. The players were really affected.

But when I got here today, they had already decided that this was a meaningful thing to them and they wanted to wear the shoes. And guys had stuff written on their sneakers and on their wrist bands and whatnot, so that's what we did.