

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Monday, February 5, 2018

## Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



### **Q. What's Jordan Bohannon's status?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's hanging in there. He's still not feeling too great. I don't think he's going to go today.

### **Q. Do you worry about his illness spreading? Do you try to keep him away?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, if we thought it was the full-blown flu, we obviously would. It's weird because he was feeling awful on Saturday. He felt a little bit better yesterday. Seemed like he was on his way back, and then today he feels worse. So he won't be around anybody today.

### **Q. Will Brady Ellingson be back?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think Brady is going to play, yeah. We need all the guards we can get.

### **Q. How are you planning to increase Maishe's role maybe?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: It all depends on Jordan. His role will be about the same. If Jordan can't play, obviously he'll be more involved and so will Brady, and Isaiah's will stay about the same.

### **Q. Coming off a tough result Saturday, going into three games against ranked teams, what are you pulling at with your team to get them to represent?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I don't really pay any attention to what games come up after Tuesday. We have our hands full with a team that's one of the best teams in the country. They've got multiple pros, and they defend. They share the ball. They run. They're big and physical, and they're deep, so we've got to get them ready. We've got to play better than we did the other night. We have to execute better offensively than we did the other night. That will be a big help.

### **Q. You mentioned physical with Michigan State a few times; is your team -- it being young -- a year away from having that physical maturity to kind of push back against a team like this?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I don't really look at it that way. I could see where you would ask that question. I think you have to look at this team and say, look, we're in the same conference as they are. We'd better be as

physical as they are. We'd better be as tough as they are. We certainly were not the other night. That was clear. So we need to be much improved against Michigan State.

### **Q. You've been kind of reluctant to use that word "young" even since the beginning of the season.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. I look at our team and think we have enough veterans. Now, the younger guys are the ones that are getting the bulk of the playing time, even as you look at a guy like Maishe Dailey, who's a sophomore, but he really didn't play much last year. He's a sophomore. Obviously with the two freshmen they're playing a lot. Bohannon and Pems, they're sophomores. So you're right, we're a young team, but those guys played a lot as freshmen. Two of them started all the games. One of them started a lot of the games. Kriener played a lot. Hopefully he'll be back, too. I don't know for sure. He's going to practice today, so hopefully he'll be back. That will give us a little more depth, another big guy, because they've got a bunch of them.

Dom and Ahmad are veterans. Some of the other guys are playing more than them, so that impacts getting veterans on the floor, clearly. I didn't have a feel of this team being young, but there are times when we have played like a very young team. We have -- remember in the beginning we were turning the ball over, now we've done a better job there. We had some bad turnovers the other night, but for the most part the turnover situation has been better.

Young teams don't work together defensively as well as veteran teams, and that's clearly been a problem. We're giving up high shooting percentages too often, which puts incredible pressure on your offense to score, and we have had a number of games where we scored the ball really well, it's just they scored more.

That is part of the growth process. Shut teams down, don't turn it over and rebound, and you're going to give yourself a pretty good chance to win if you do that.

### **Q. Your team goals coming into the season involved the NCAA Tournament and things like that. Has it been necessary to lower those goals?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, you never do that. It's never anything less than that at the start of the season. You

always have an opportunity to get on a roll. You always have an opportunity to win your conference tournament. So until you're eliminated from your conference tournament, that's never a thought.

**Q. The fact that you get these guys at home is obviously a big plus for you guys.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: We played well the last two home games. We've played them fairly well over the years here at home. This Michigan State team has been a really good road team, which you would expect with the guys they have. Their guards are playing really well. That's a great place to start. But their front line is really difficult. When you think about Bridges and Jackson, those two guys in particular, and they get the bulk of the talk, and Nick Ward is really good. I mean, he is a handful. For most teams, he'd be the complete focal point of what your defense is trying to stop, and I think Tom does a really good job of using all three of them because their skill sets complement one another really well.

I think Winston is playing extremely well. He's always been a really good player. Now he's shooting 53 percent from three-point range. I think Langford is way more versatile than he was last year. I thought he was a really good player last year. He made open shots, made tough shots, made shots late. But he's doing more off the dribble, and he's just way more versatile and a lot tougher to guard.

And then you're bringing in guys like Tum-Tum (Lourawls Nairn Jr.) and Schilling, these are veteran guys, Goins. These guys have played a lot of minutes. Tillman is really good, McQuaid. There's games when he might be the reason they won. The Indiana game he hit four threes when they really needed it, and Indiana played really well. Again, that says a lot about Michigan State. They went in there -- and Indiana played really well. Maybe they didn't play as well if you look at the numbers, but they played well because they fought really hard, and Michigan State still was tough enough to win.

**Q. In terms of pure talent, their starting five, that's got to be about as good as it gets in the Big Ten?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I would say in the country. Yeah, you've got two lottery picks and three other guys got a good shot at it, at playing in the pros.

**Q. Rutgers almost beat them there; what was Rutgers able to do? Have you seen any of that game?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Oh, yeah, watched it a couple times. What Rutgers has is a physicality defensively that's going to keep them in games. When they're scoring the ball, which they did -- I mean, Corey

Sanders had one of his big games. He was terrific. Freeman is a really good player. Baker, the freshman, he's tough. So they've got more offensive weapons than they had last year. When Thiam is making shots like he did against us, they could play with anybody. They almost beat Purdue Saturday, lost by two.

**Q. When you say physicality on defense, what do you mean by that, and do you guys have that at times?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: We have it at times. We haven't had it consistently. With Rutgers, they're big, so it stands to reason that they'd be physical. They're going to body you on cuts, they're going to body you in the post. Every rebound is a difficult rebound. That's what I mean, yeah.

**Q. Have you ever had a year quite like this? You've played 25 games, and I think two of them came down to late-game situation. Seems like every game is either a big win or a big loss.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, probably the only one, the UAB game came down to the last minute, and again, that was down in the Caymans so nobody really saw it. Or you, forgot.

Yeah, I don't know. I remember a couple years ago when we were really good, we had a lot of double-digit wins, too, against good teams, and we were kind of surprised by that. Normally, especially in this league, you're right, five points or less either way is -- you can almost expect games to end up that way. We'll see.