

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Tuesday, February 5, 2019

## Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



**Q. We just talked to Connor over at the baseball media day. He talked about juggling what he has to juggle. How are you handling that to make sure he's not overworked?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think the important thing is that he engages over there when he can. For example, this weekend we played obviously Friday night. We didn't play until Thursday. It's been a long season; we got a tough stretch coming up.

I gave the team off Saturday/Sunday, so he practiced with the baseball team on Saturday and Sunday. He took advantage of those opportunities. There is going to be times when he can get over there for a half hour and hit or maybe he goes over there and throws for a little bit; some days he can't show up at all.

He's going to want to join that team whenever our season ends and be ready. If you don't go over there you're not going to be ready. He recognizes that, and so I work with him on it.

But you're right. You talk to him about overdoing it. The thing that is important is that you get over there and hit and throw. He's going to be in shape. He doesn't have to go over there and run. He doesn't have to lift. He lifts with us. Doesn't have to do everything they're doing, but you got to go over there and hit in the cage and get some live pitching and stuff like that.

**Q. You tied Lute Olson in wins at Iowa after Friday's win. What does that mean to you?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it means a lot because I've had the opportunity to get to know him. Obviously he's a Hall of Famer, but I think those of you who have gotten a chance to know him, even better person than he is coach. He's been really good to me. When I first got here, reached out to him and wanted to talk to him about it. We spent a lot of time together, and subsequently have gotten closer.

We see them at the Final Four; we see them on the Nike trip and spend quality time with them. Still really engaged with the game, but I think set a great standard for how to be not only a great coach but a terrific

person, somebody that I would emulate and take advice from.

So any time you're mentioned with him, that's a tremendous feeling.

**Q. What's the best advice he's given you?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: A lot of it had to do with coaching here. You know, we played 18 holes of golf together so talked for a long time about it. The thing that I think was most impressive to me was he loved it here. Obviously he left and had a great experience at Arizona, but he always appreciated the people here. He loved Bump Elliott. He talked about a lot of people. I think more so what it's like to be the coach here than technical side of it.

**Q. What areas do you maybe want to see the overall team aspect get more consistent from game to game?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: That never goes away. You're constantly trying to get better on both ends of the floor, trying to get better collectively, trying to get better individually. If individuals improve, then the team improves.

We are kind of locked into the rotations we have. It's a little bit of a shorter bench than last year with C.J. and Jack and Cordell on the side, but the nine guys that I'm playing that are scholarship guys, along with Riley Till, who has been excellent when we've called upon him.

Those guys have accepted and handled their roles well. Sometimes they play more, sometimes they play less. You just want to consistently be better at the defensive end, whether we're in in zone, man, or in the press, and then run our offense with efficiency, get good shots every time down; don't turn it over.

Nothing changes time of the season from the beginning of the season, quite honestly.

**Q. I know it's not easy, but Luka is making 20 points look easy. What's gone on the last seven games? He's got at least 60 points.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, he's healthy. That's pretty much all it is. He was playing great before he got hurt and then when he was hurt and he wasn't playing, and then he was only playing a little bit. Now that he's

healthy, he's doing what he's capable of doing. He's really worked hard to get to this point. He really put the time in this summer. I'm really proud of him.

**Q. Offensively when you were recruiting him did you see it carrying over like this?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: He could always score. He has an unbelievable knack for getting the ball in the basket. He will make a nine-footer while he's getting banged off the glass in traffic look like a layup. That's really hard to do.

Then he'll step out and make a three, then make a 12-foot jumper, an 18-foot jumper, a 23-foot jumper, a shot fake one dribble pull-up. He has the total package when it comes to scoring the ball.

**Q. Was he always this good a free throw shooter?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. Tremendous confidence in his ability to shoot it in the hole.

**Q. Ever see a big guy with that kind of shooting touch?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. There's a number of them in the NBA. We had Pat Garrity and Troy Murphy when I was at Notre Dame. Those guys were capable of stretching the floor. Both had 10-year NBA careers.

**Q. I've heard him say on a few occasions that he has studied game tapes of NBA players from the '70s and '80s. You know any college players who do that?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: No. He may be the only one. But if you know his father you can understand why he's like that. They have a great relationship. Frank's a basketball historian. He's a bright guy. He's a thinker. He played himself, so he understands footwork. We talk about Jack Sikma and people like that that nobody talks about anymore unless they talk about the Sikma move.

I think it's valuable information that he's gotten from his dad and from the tapes that he's watched. He's not making it up.

**Q. What are you seeing from Indiana? They were going through a rough patch and all of a sudden they turn around and get a win in Michigan State.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: You have to look at the situation. It's kind of like why is Luka scoring 20 points a game? Well, he's healthy. Why did Indiana beat Michigan State at Michigan State? Well, they're healthy.

They weren't healthy. They were losing seven in a row and weren't getting drilled so they were playing as well as they were capable. They were 12-2 when they were healthy, beat Louisville, and then Green is out,

Phinisee is out, Davis is out. It's going to be different.

Now they're all back. Go on the road and beat Michigan State. That's who we're playing.

**Q. After the last game, Joe and Ryan both credit Kirk Speraw for just the film sessions throughout the week. How important has he been over the last week and maybe in the off-season?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Kirk does a good job with one-on-one film sessions. He's not the only one, but he's religious with it and he's really good when he does it. We show a lot of film. For example, what we'll do is we'll pull a variety of clips from every game and they're all teaching points. They're teaching points for everybody.

But sometimes having a one-on-one session where you only watch yourself is good, too. That's what he did with them. It was very beneficial.

**Q. What are your thoughts on what you've seen from Romeo Langford in his first year at Indiana?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: He came in with a huge reputation, and I think a lot of times there is a lot of pressure on guys like him. He's going to be the fifth pick, going to be the sixth pick, but hasn't played a college game yet. I don't think that's easy. He's handled it as well as anybody I've seen.

He plays at his pace. He's got a complete game. He can dribble, pass, and shoot. Plays defense, rebounds, they go to him late, makes big shots. Made big shots the other night in that game. Has tremendous confidence in himself.

He's one of the best players in the country.

**Q. Joe has put up really good numbers in home games; his numbers in road games aren't nearly as good. Is that something you come to expect from a freshman? Is it just a matter of being more comfortable at home?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: You know, I think everybody is going to be more comfortable at home. He's a guy that teams are going to mark. We don't have a huge sample of road games that he's played in, so I wouldn't read too much into it. Some of the teams we played on the road are pretty good teams. Played Michigan State, Purdue on the road, Minnesota on the road.

You're going against Amir Coffey. He's a pro; pretty good player. I think you look at who it was against more so than where it was.

**Q. Less than a turnover in the game in the Big Ten; steals to turnovers is almost two to one, which just**

**isn't done. Where does the defensive prowess so soon come from?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's a competitor. He's got a body for it. He's got length. He can slide his feet really well laterally. So if he's guarding a smaller guy or a bigger guy he can hold his own because he's legitimate 6'6" with long arms and then can slide his feet on a quick guy.

Essentially he's in the right place. That comes with playing a lot of basketball over the years, playing for good coaches over the years, listening to the tape review and the drills that we do and picking it up quickly.

A lot of guys, they will chase their man and turn their heads and stuff that seems pretty simple, but when you get out there and you start running around and the place is crazy, sometimes you do that. He's pretty locked in when it comes to the technical side of how to play defense, so he's going to be in the right place.

You don't make steals unless you're in the right place.

**Q. You mentioned the games you lost. In the two you won, is there anything to draw, any commonality?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: No. I think we competed. I don't think -- thinking back to those two games I thought when the game was in the balance we made good decisions and we fought on the glass and got the stops we needed.

Penn State, you know, we go up seven with, with three minutes to go and they score eight straight points in like 1:40. Usually that equates to a victory, especially when the team at home does that.

We fought and ended up getting a win there. I thought we showed some toughness.