

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Sunday, November 20, 2016

Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. Fran, where did you progress tonight?

COACH McCAFFERY: Obviously the start of the second half, I thought our intensity level, attention to detail, at that juncture of the game, I think we were up by 13, 14 at halftime, something like that. So you want to go 13 to 30, 13 to 23, as opposed to 13 to 4. So I'm just pleased with that.

Q. As you try to weed out your rotation, who can play defense and carry the most weight?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, but I don't know about exclusively. I mean, every game's different, okay. This team is pressing and running and jumping, and who can handle the ball. You know, they were up in the passing lanes and shooting gaps.

So you know, who can handle and pass and catch and make a play off the dribble? That's what I was really impressed with Isaiah Moss today, he and Brady both, coming off the bench.

Q. Is this a valuable game, though, because eight started seven minutes the second half, guys like Bohannon got a ton of minutes, a lot of guys.

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, you know, I'm struggling, because you know, we look at Ahmad Wagner, and even I said the other night, he's experienced, but he's still pretty young. I wanted to get him back in there.

And I wanted to get Cordell more minutes, but he's been having a little groin issue. So I probably should never have put him back in at all, but I wanted to give him another shot and I yanked him pretty quick.

You know, but there's no reason to put Pete back in. He wanted to go back in because he banged knees, and wanted to see if he could loosen that thing back up. But the last thing I wanted to do was to put him back in and having something happen to him.

Q. So it wasn't an ankle?

COACH McCAFFERY: It was banged knees, yeah.

Q. He's okay, though?

COACH McCAFFERY: He's fine. That hurts. We've all played and banged knees; it hurts, but he'll be fine.

Q. What did you like about -- Bohannon had a tough quarter or two against Seton Hall, but he had a lot of minutes. Wasn't perfect, but what did you like about the way he was playing?

COACH McCAFFERY: He does a really good job of trying to get the ball inside, and understanding that we have to have an inside/outside game. We have a lot of different three-point shooters and we become a little three happy at times and we have to be careful, especially when you have Tyler Cook on your team, or Cordell, or Ryan, when he's in there; you've got to throw it in there.

And he does a good job of getting it in there. He does a good job against the press. He had six assists. A couple of shots go in and all of a sudden you're looking and saying, well, he had an unbelievable game. So his shot was off. He pulled a couple quick ones, and maybe should have driven it and drawn the defense, and relied on his creativity a little bit more. But he'll get that figured out. He's young.

Q. You had to get on him -- did the guys relax or what was going on?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, if you remember, I kind of went almost, not complete man substitution, but I went three-and-two quickly, and then we had a little lull there. That was disappointing, because you know, it was a combination of things: Defense, ball handling, rebounding, you know, it didn't really come together in that one stretch and they make a run back at us.

So you know, I always feel bad. You put some guys in, it doesn't go well, and then you feel like you have got to yank him and put the other guys back in, but that's how it works. The other guys had gotten us a big lead. They needed to go back in, and I thought Baer in the first half, and Pete, were fabulous, both of them.

Q. What did you like about Ryan's game tonight?

COACH McCAFFERY: Same thing I like about him all the time. He just keeps working. He's a big presence in the post. He gets tall. He wants to post. He runs the floor. He screens and gets people open.

You know, when he really figures out what we're doing, and he's pretty good, but he's just new. He's going to be really good. He can shoot the ball, as well, so he

can stretch the floor, like a lot of our other guys can.

Q. Collectively, you've got a pretty good shooting team from the perimeter. One of your better ones probably since you've been here. Do you like the percentages now or are they shooting a little bit to much?

COACH McCAFFERY: I thought we shoot a few too many today, but it's a fine line, Scott, because you want them to have that free and clear mind to pull if they are open, if they are a good shooter. You don't want them thinking about, Oh, Coach is going to be mad if I take this three, because then they'll never make it. That's a fine line.

The only time I tell them to slow it down is when I'd say we take three quick threes, three transition opportunities, and none of them go in and they score twice or they score, -- well, now we need a longer possession. Understand, like in both halves, we were in the bonus early, and the double bonus early.

So you've got to drive the ball. You've got to throw it inside and get to the free throw line. And then you can get into your press and do some things defensively, and how that changes the game; and^ it's well, I'm open, so I'm going to shoot. Most of the time it's okay to do that, but in that stretch it was not.

Q. After Thursday, what was the biggest improvement you stressed and did you see it tonight?

COACH McCAFFERY: We stress a lot of different things. It wasn't just one thing. But I thought, like I said at the start, you know, how we performed at the start of the second half, because really in, all three games, we weren't very good at the start of the second half. We won two of them before today.

So I thought, the intensity level, the focus, concentration, execution, at that juncture, was critical, and we really did a good job there. I was proud of the guys.

Q. You're going to face a real defensive juggernaut the next game, Virginia. What do you do to get ready for the pressure you'll see there?

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, you know, other teams play like that. They aren't the only team that plays like that. There are a lot of teams in our league that really dig in a halfcourt and guard you and they are really quick on the perimeter, and obviously have a reputation for being a really good defensive team. You've got to execute. You've got to move the ball.

It's not a team you're going to be able to score on one pass. You've got to work the ball. When we're running

sets or motion, you're got to run your stuff. You've got to get the ball moving. You've got to recognize: When to drive it, when to shoot it, when to pass it, what the shot clock is, when to set a ball screen, and if you don't, they hold you to a low number.

Q. Is this where you wanted to be before you went to this tournament?

COACH McCAFFERY: No. I wanted to be 4-0.

Q. Another ten missed free throws tonight. Is that becoming a concern?

COACH McCAFFERY: Yeah, a little bit. I think that's a little bit of a concern. But it was better in the second half.

Q. Pete's done a good job of moving the ball, but now, especially, coming off screens, coming off the top of the key, shooting, seems to be as good as I can recall.

COACH McCAFFERY: Well, he's got a real good pace to his game and I think that's kind of what you're alluding to. He knows when to speed up, when to slow down, when to wait. You know, he's taken a lot of shots. I mean, he got more than anybody today and he didn't play a ton, and I wanted him to take a lot of shots.

I don't think he's hunting shots. I don't think he's being selfish at all. A couple at the end the other night, we were trying; we were scrambling to try to get a three, call a time-out and win the game. But I've been really pleased with him with, his shot selection. 27 points on 13 shots, pretty impressive.

Q. How confident are you with this team if he's not making shots right now?

COACH McCAFFERY: Still confident. Obviously it will be a lot harder and we have to change the complexion a little bit. I mean, who is on the floor, are we small, are we big. If we're big, we've got to throw it in. If we're small without him, we still can put some three-point shooters out there: Isaiah, Brady Ellingson, Bohannon, Baer. It's not like he's our only three-point threat. I think that's helpful.

Q. How far do you have to go until you feel the guys are comfortable in what you want to do on both ends of the floor?

COACH McCAFFERY: That's going to be ongoing for the remainder of the season. I don't know that that's going to happen any time soon. Last year we had an experienced team, and the Villanova game, we're still trying to get them to do exactly what we need them to do, and that's what coaching is; and getting them to know and understand the anatomy of the game. And every game's different: Is it a fast game; is it a slow

game; are they pressing; are they zone; are they trapping; are they switching; and reacting accordingly.

And understanding where are our advantages and how are we going to move the ball and how are we going to score and how we're going to stop them. I mean, are they taking us off the dribble; we've got to be in the gaps. Are they jacking threes; well, we've got to get long rebounds and we can't give them second shots.

And who are the guys. I got a little upset in the first half, we're in the zone and we leave Green. He's the leading scorer, made seven threes in a game this year. He whacks a three out of the corner. Luckily we scored at the buzzer, but we can't let him get that three there. If somebody else makes a three, okay, they make a three.

But it's understanding, okay, we're zone, we're under half a minute in the game, where is Green. Sometimes you'll play teams that have four Greens. But this team had one. And you know, when you get a guy who is getting 28, 35, and you've to mark him if we're in zone, where is he. Everybody's got to be talking and communicating where he is.

Q. The news about Dale Jones --

COACH McCAFFERY: I feel awful for him.

Q. What do you say to him?

COACH McCAFFERY: I gave him a hug at practice. He walked in, he's got the cast on it, walked over and gave him a hug and said, it's going to happen for you this year, just got to stay positive. He's had an unbelievably positive attitude. I thought now he would be as down as he's ever been. He's been good. I've been really impressed with his maturity, helping the other guys, being a leader, really proud of him.