

# Big Ten Conference Basketball Media Days

Thursday October 13, 2016

## Fran McCaffery

Iowa

FRAN MCCAFFREY: This is a team that I'm very excited about. Obviously we have a lot of new faces, but I think we have tremendous leadership, starting with Peter Jok and Dale Jones, and we're excited to get started.

**Q. Peter was named to the Pre-Season All Big Ten list. How big of an influence and boost of confidence do you feel like those types of accolades early on in the season can have to a team as you head in?**

FRAN MCCAFFREY: I think truthfully it's something that I'm very proud of Pete for getting, but I think it's something that he expected. I think his approach has really impressed me from the end of last season, knowing we were losing four seniors, four captains, and it was going to be his team. And it's different because he put his name into the draft, and that was a possibility. But the way that he did that and prepared for the draft, but then also maintained his responsibility as the captain of our team was something that really made me feel good as a coach in knowing that I could turn the team over to him. So ultimately when he came back, he's a guy that knows and understands what this league is, and he can help our young guys who are a talented group get ready for what we all know is an incredibly grueling task, and that's the Big Ten schedule.

**Q. Fran, Peter and his brother have had a heck of a life, a heck of an upbringing. Anything about his maturity that you think will allow him to guide a bunch of kids? He's got a completely different role than he did last year when he was essentially the kid with four other guys that had been around?**

FRAN MCCAFFREY: I don't think there is any question about that. I don't know if there is a better example of how to lead than what he saw with his brother. Essentially taking over as the parent in that family; the male role model. When he was a freshman, if you know Pete at all, he's a fun-loving, easy-going, sort of free-spirit kind of guy. So we had Marble, and Aaron White, and Basabe and all those guys in the group ahead of him, and he didn't have to think about that at all. He just had to hoop. We went overseas the summer before his freshman year, he was our second-leading scorer. Played with reckless abandon. What he had to figure out is he had to get in better shape,



and he had to play defense because he could always score. I think when you have talented offensive players that figure out what they need to do to get better, and then gradually mature as he did, he had to fight for a starting position as a sophomore and then become one of the elite players in the league as a junior, and I think he had great examples of how to lead.

What you're seeing now is the culmination of all of his experiences, and I'm really proud of him for that.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned the confidence that Jok has. The whole team seems to have that despite its youth. How much is that going to help as you get deeper into the year, not having to cross that hurdle?**

FRAN MCCAFFREY: I think what we have right now, as you mentioned, is a very confident group for being so young. The critical thing is going to be as you go through the journey, and we all know it's a difficult journey. Can we sustain that when we have bumps in the road? And that's where the leadership comes in.

I think we have enough depth, enough size, enough three-point shooting, enough ball handlers, and I think we have great chemistry. But it still remains to be seen how all that meshes together when the games begin. I think that's the fun of it, that's the challenge that we all face. I think what we have is a young group that's excited about the opportunity before them, and they believe in each other.