

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



THE MODERATOR: Questions for coach.

Q. The team had yesterday off. How was your schedule this week?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, yesterday was an off day.

Q. What are you going to try focus on today beyond the normal?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I don't know that we will do anything beyond the normal. We had a game the other night; didn't play well. Broke the game down, and we'll try to address what didn't go well in that game and then prepare for our next opponent.

Q. How much are you still trying to figure out what you have? You have a lot of new faces.

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think that's a fair question in a lot of ways. We've got new faces. We're trying to figure out, you know, getting Jordan in there. I think he's doing pretty well. Got Cordell back in there for the first time. Probably need to get Patrick in there a little bit more. I thought Joe Toussaint was really good; I think C.J. is really coming around. I thought he was really good.

Yeah, get Jack going a little bit. He had such a great fall. He's a better player than he played in those last two games.

Q. Is it a mental thing? Seems like if he makes a bad play early it carries on.

FRAN McCAFFERY: That, and then you go to somebody else like Kreiner and he plays really well and he doesn't get back in as much. That's the unfortunate side of that question.

I felt like probably you look at the stats, and I probably should have got him in more than I did. But with all due respect, Kriener was really good so I left him out there.

Q. Talk about Ryan and Luka playing together.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, they're both physical, they both can score, they both can stretch the floor. They were getting in each other's way a little bit because they both typically play essentially the center position. So one has got to step out a little bit more maybe. One

has got to be the trailer on the break. The other one has got to run to the spot.

Either one of them can do that and they both can pass and catch. I think just getting them through more reps maybe in practice together, because they've been going against each other quit a bit.

Q. You don't ever seem to get too high or low. Have you always been like that as a coach? Has that been kind of your way?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. I think you have to be, because I think if you overreact, then they overreact. I think it's only human nature. You have to be honest with them and they have to be honest with themselves. I think we have a group of young guys with character and they're willing to assess themselves honestly, as do we as coaches, all the time.

You know, we had a long day on Saturday, last Saturday. That's my fault. That's not their fault. We tried to get a lot in. Probably did too much. So we agree that we probably should have done it a little differently. Let's do it differently next time and not make that an excuse for anybody.

But we, like I said, violated cardinal rules when you get behind. We tried to get it all back at once. I think we quick shot the ball, we were -- we had guys that I think were trying to make plays because they felt like we needed somebody to make a play. You give them credit for that, but then if it doesn't work you say, Well, let's move it, move it, move it, and then try to make a play.

So you have to learn from that.

Q. That wasn't a problem last year. Seemed if you got behind that your guys did chip away and keep their heads...

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think that's a good point positive. Yeah, we did, and you're right. Why didn't we do it the other night? I don't know that I have an answer for that, but I think in the future at some point we're going to get behind. We've got to make sure we do a better job of handling that.

Like I said, I took a timeout at 10-0; maybe should have taken it at 6-0, maybe at 8-0. I took my second timeout relatively early; maybe I should have taken it earlier

and addressed those things.

But I thought they were trying. We were not clicking, but I thought they were competing. I didn't want to call timeout and start screaming at everybody. That doesn't help at that point. It's not -- challenging them that way at that point was not going to help, in my opinion.

So it was just try to stay together. At some point you also have to give - like I said the other night - credit to your opponent. They played really well. I thought they defended, made shots, and we just have to be better than we were and we have to learn from our mistakes in that game.

Q. Talking about Jack's confidence, how can you help him with that? Something you can do as a coach?

FRAN McCAFFERY: You know, I've had a number of conversations with him since that game and encouraged him. I showed him the stats for five-and-a-half weeks of practice. He's probably been our most consistent guy.

At some point you have to trust your talent and play through -- he had a couple mistakes early; played through those. Okay, you went down the lane, you laid the ball up, doesn't go in. Did you get fouled? Maybe. Why didn't you dunk it? Now they're probably going to call the foul.

Just change your mindset a little bit and be a little more aggressive that way. That might help you. But you can't miss a three and then not shoot again. You have to shoot five more. He's a really good three point shooter. Some guys have that innate characteristic in them. He's a guy that he's an efficient team guy, and if he's missing a three, he's not going to keep firing. He's just got to do and I want him to do what and I keep encouraging him to do that.

So I think he's in a good place today, and I think he'll play better on Friday.

Q. Has he been scoring?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, his shooting percentages from the field and from the three were really good, as were his rebounding numbers, as were his assist turnover numbers. I mean, those are the stat lines you look in terms of gauging productivity.

It's one thing to say, Okay, he made a ton of threes. Well, how many did he take and what was his percentage? Well, his percentage was well into 40%, well over 50 from the field. He's getting to the offensive glass.

You know, he's not a big mistake guy in general, so if

you're scoring big, you want to be able to have more assists than turnovers, and he does. Like I said, it's a body of work thing. It's not like he had a couple good days. That's good, but did you have couple good weeks, which he did.

So hopefully he'll get going.

Q. Is it mental with him or too early to make that diagnosis?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think it's fair if it's two games -- you know, he didn't play well at the start of the game, he didn't play well at the start of the second half, so I put Kriener in; he plays well. Cordell I thought played well at the end. We went small for a minute.

So he only played for ten minutes. I don't think we want to kill the kid for ten minutes of activity.

Q. Question regarding Joe Wieskamp?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think his aggressiveness. You know, I think he plays both ends. He pushes the ball. He's a guy that scores the ball. He's not just a driver. He's a finisher. He can throw a jumper in. He's made a couple threes.

But, you know, I think he changes the pace. I think he was really good in our press.

Q. Joe Wieskamp talked about how the team needs to come into practice with more energetic mindset and more locked in. Did you sense a little bit of unease last week?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I didn't sense that. We didn't have a good practice on Saturday, like I said. We kept them here for a while. We had a lot of stuff to go over.

But, you know, they were locked into the game plan. I mean, we quiz them on that stuff. If they don't know it, they know that's going to be a problem.

But we go through it for two days and they absorb it, and then they have it. So they knew the play calls, knew the personnel, knew what the offensive game plan was. We just started playing a little too fast.

I think he put a lot on himself. He's obviously one of our guys. He kind of wants to put his head down and go make a play. We needed somebody to go score; I'll go do it. It's just hard to do that against a stacked defense with length and athleticism like they had. You got to move it first and then go.

Q. What's been Cordell's attitude since the suspension?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's been great. Yeah, he's been

very up beat. He's working hard. He's always been a team guy because he's a skilled big. He can dribble and pass. He's? Always been able to score, but he hasn't been scoring as much because he's been shutting people up. He's a really good screener.

He just has a really good sense of what's necessary at any particular time.

Q. Is he far behind everybody else?

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, he's not. You know, he's been here a while so he knows what we want. He also is a guy that when he's on the bench or at practice, like he takes it all in, so when he comes in he knows what he with need. He's always going to provide some toughness, but sometimes tough guys aren't skilled. He's got skill.

Q. Joe Toussaint and Patrick stayed on the floor for 30, 40 minutes after the game shooting and getting in some extra work. Seems like those two kind of get it already?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, they did it both games. They did that both games. I'm proud of them for that. They're both very close. They're close friends, roommates. I had to turn the lights out on them on Friday night because it got really late. It was probably about 11:30 and they were still in there, so got them out of there.

But that's what you want from your young guys. It's what you want from everybody, quite frankly.

Q. You literally had to turn the lights off on these guys?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, at some point -- and it's one of the things about having the practice facility we have. Guys will be in there all hours of the night pretty much all year long. But especially after a game where they didn't feel like they shot it that well or we didn't play well, they want to get in there and get a workout. Cook used to do that a lot.

So at some point I'm going to go in there and say, All right, you got to go to bed. It's the law of diminishing returns. You got your shots up, got comfortable. You felt like you needed to do that. Now it's time to go eat and go to sleep.

Q. Joe Toussaint really plays with an edge. Looks like he talks a lot of trash out there. Is that something you like?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think he plays with an edge. I don't know if he talks as much. He's from the Bronx. They probably do a little bit. But he's not a real big talker. He's funny. He's got a great sense of humor.

But he's got a competitive edge. When you grow up

where he did and play at Cardinal Hayes and for the AAU team that he played for, there is only one way to go.

Q. You talked before the season about Connor maybe playing some three. Is that a path for Toussaint maybe to get more minutes?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, yes. I mean, it's an avenue for a lot of people to get more minutes. Bakari needs more minutes. He's been playing really well in practice and gotten a chance, but probably would like more of a chance.

You know, you go back to the numbers. For five, six weeks, Patrick's numbers were probably better than anybody else's and he's not playing much either because he's got to get work done at the end other. Those guys are ahead of him defensively. That's not uncommon for a freshman.

So the more you play other people at the three spot, that's less minutes for him because Joe is going to get a lot, Joe Wieskamp, is going to get a lot there as well. So it's always interesting to try to figure out how we get enough guys enough minutes to where they develop confidence.

That's the hardest thing.

Q. With Connor's size wouldn't that give you the option you could have Toussaint, Bohannon, and Connor in at the same time?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Right, and we played Connor at the 4 spot the other night, and we can do that against certain teams. Certain teams you can't. So we will definitely look at that.

Q. Oral Roberts has played good games at tough places already, what do you see in ORU?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Very good team. They're a veteran club. They've got some grad transfers and some older guys. They play at a good pace. They run good stuff. They've got multiple guys that can score.

It's not like you can say, okay, we can lock into these two guys; we can stop them. They've got a lot of different players that can score. They shoot a lot of threes. They play loose with great confidence. I think they share the ball. They play hard.

It'll be a real tough game for us.

Q. With Toussaint, what are your takeaways from the first two games?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think he's been really good. I think the real important thing -- obviously he was terrific in the second half the other night. I think that's

important because he started slow. That's what you want to see, just him come back. I thought he really executed the game plan kind of to perfection in the second half, and played with a little bit of reckless abandon. At some point you have to do that.

I think he also showed his complete skillset.

Q. Are you done recruiting for the fall?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah. Yeah, we're done with it. Then we'll see how things go in the spring. Did anybody leave early, that kind of stuff, you know.