

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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## Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



**Q. Did you watch last night's Drake game, and what were your impressions of them taking Minnesota down to the last five seconds?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: They've played like that all year. I've watched a lot of tape on them. They played really well against Wake Forest, really well against Colorado. Really impressed with their team. And they've got a veteran club. They're playing that way. They move the ball. They share it.

They've got a lot of guys making 3s, a lot of guys making plays. They play small, but it doesn't seem to affect them on the glass like you think it would.

They're in there battling. I've been impressed. So what happened last night was not a shock to me. I'm sure it wasn't a shock to Richard either.

**Q. The announcers compared Drake's offense to what Michigan does. Do you see that?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: Yeah, there are some similarities. I could see why you would say that. It's different. But conceptually there are some similarities. A lot of times when you're watching Princeton and watching Michigan, they say Beilein is running Princeton stuff. He's not. He's running his own stuff but he's got similarities.

**Q. Do you think you'll run smaller, like you did against Iowa State?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: We could. We'll do both throughout the course of the game, I would think.

**Q. How is Cordell doing the last couple of days?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: He's still sore, yeah. Probably iffy for Saturday. But hopeful. He's not practicing today.

**Q. What's your focus this week in terms -- I imagine it's a good week to sort of focus on yourselves?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: Exactly. We'll show some film today from our previous game. We had yesterday off. And then we'll start really zeroing in -- we'll zero in on Drake, but they won't yet. I'm sure a lot of them watched the game. Some of them probably didn't because we have guys with two finals today. I hope

they weren't watching it.

Some of them were anyway, probably. So it's one of those things where it gives you a little bit of time to work on some things that we haven't done as well as we would have liked, even some of the things we've done fairly well, do a little better, and keeping an eye on kind of what our game plan will be against them.

**Q. When you come into a season, can you identify quickly what the strength and weaknesses of a team are, or does that develop as you get into competition with other teams?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: Usually you can. We've had a unique start to the season in terms of, you look and say we're really deep, so injuries shouldn't affect us. But injuries have affected this team. Without Nicholas, without Connor, without Cordell, without Ryan Kriener, we've had -- our key guys are out there so everyone thinks they're fine.

But we're relying a lot on freshmen. Those two guys are terrific. And Connor was really good Sunday. So it takes a little bit of time to develop your freshman and sophomore class. You've seen Isaiah Moss be spectacular, and you've seen him play like a young kid. So the challenge there is to get him playing consistently well.

**Q. You have young guys in the post. How does that impact maybe their recognition on certain plays when you're playing --**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It does a lot. You would think it wouldn't, especially with Tyler, because he's seen all those defenses before. I think at this level it's a little more sophisticated. They're coming at him, doubling him from the opposite post. So it's big to big; it comes early, it comes late, off the passer.

And again early, late, and you'll see that, maybe in a 20-minute half, you'll see all of those defensive concepts coming at him. And he's an unselfish guy, he's trying to read the double-team, make a play for somebody else. Did that in the first half of the Iowa State game. He had five assists, that was really impressive.

But it also limits his scoring when he's only thinking about passing. So you want him to be able to make a

quick move and score, make the read, make a really nice pass to somebody for a basket. That takes time to feel that and he's really worked at it. He's really trying. He's done fairly well.

**Q. Have you gotten a feel for the lineups that work and the lineups that might not work, the challenge with all the injuries that you've had to deal with?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: We're going to play a lot of guys. You've seen that. We're going to move some guys in and out, move them around -- had to move them around based on injury.

We were going really big. We've gone small. We did a little bit of that in practice where we're looking at one unit versus another unit. But then never really works that way because you put a guy in and he plays well. You put a guy in, he doesn't play well. And then who are you going to go back to? And are you going to shorten your bench in the second half or are you going to just kind of come at them in waves?

That depends on how the game's going. Is it close? All those kinds of things. So I don't know that we've really gotten to that point where we can say, okay, this core nucleus of guys is going to stay together. Probably won't work that way.

**Q. By rule, I believe Connor could still redshirt. Is that still an option or is he full-go right now?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It's not my call, your call or anybody else's call, it's what the doctor's deem. They're monitoring his physical process that he's going through.

**Q. He can play in four games, is that the rule?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: He can play in ten. Has to be in the first half of the year. Really he's not anywhere near physically where he needs to be. We'll see if he can get that done over the next couple of weeks or not.

**Q. Did he come out of Sunday's game okay?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: Yeah, nothing major. He was pretty drained. But the way that game went in the second half with both teams in a 2-3 zone and the game pretty much decided, it was a little different. I don't think he would have played 17 -- I don't think he physically could have played 17 minutes otherwise.

**Q. The balance, you're trying to get him acclimated but you don't want to push him.**

COACH MCCAFFERY: Yeah, we're watching him pretty close. Brad Floy does a good job of that, our trainer. Obviously I know him really well. So it was one stretch where he was really gassed. But again, you get late in the second half, there's a little more fouling, a little more free throws, there's timeouts, media timeouts. So

you can kind of catch your breath. That's what happened to him.

**Q. Did you like what you saw with the guys (indiscernible) --**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It was better. Because you're right, it wasn't very good before. It was just change for change sake. It wasn't effective.

Our best defense was man-to-man and quite honestly that wasn't very good. So I thought our activity, our ability to recognize where we're moving, when we're moving, why we're moving, was much better. And hopefully that will continue.

**Q. Is the 2-3 working better than the 1-3-1 right now?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: About the same. About the same.

**Q. Drake will probably force you to play a little more man with the way they shoot 3s. Is that fair to say?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It's not uncommon for them -- last night they made 12, it was kind of an off night. A lot of times they're right around 15. You play a team that makes 15 3s, that's going to be a hard team to beat. I don't care who it is.

Like I said, you look at their lineup, the guys that are playing, they're all seniors, fifth-year seniors, and they're just not mistake guys. Timmer is really good. But all those other guys, seems like 100 years ago we played against Woodward at Penn State.

He was a good player then, I thought. I've always liked his game. I thought he was solid. Rivers is good. McMurray is playing really well. They've got some guys that are playing. Arogundade, he was terrific last night. He's been really good. He's kind of playing that forward position, get in there, rebound and stuff.

They're getting good play out of their center position, McGlynn and Schlatter, both of those guys are playing really well and they're executing the offense -- a lot of counters. They challenge you with their action. And like you said, when you've got that many 3-point shooters, it's got you all spread out.

**Q. I think year six of this classic in Des Moines. I can't remember if it's been extended beyond this year. But what do you think of it? Do you think it's worth doing across the board?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think so. I think you said, it's year six. It's kind of just fits on our schedule; it's the next game on the schedule. I don't know where it goes from here in terms of length.

I don't look at this individually at all. I look at the big picture. We've got challenge games. We've got Iowa State. We've got tournaments. And then you've got other situations like we have with Colorado, and then you have this.

And sort of what we just come to expect, sort of what the kids sign up for when they come here. They know we're going to play these kind of games. They know that this game is always going to be a tough game.

We've lost up there, we've won up there. They've all been really good games. It's a good atmosphere. I think it's a first-class event. The facility, they're up there a lot. Whether it's for high school basketball, this, a concert. I mean, that's a first-class facility in terms of everything they do and how they do it. So we're just looking at this game on Saturday and I'm not really thinking about the overall picture of it, to be honest with you.

**Q. 20 conference games, does it make it tougher maybe to fit in something like this?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It does, yeah, it does. But there's a lot of ways to look at it. I think the 20 conference games with the challenge games, do you go to a tournament every year, do you want to go to a tournament every year, because that takes a lot out of you.

We fly essentially, gotta go through customs and play three games in three days against three really good teams. I do think it helps your team. In this case, it didn't help our record. But I do think we learned a lot about who we are and gained some valuable experience. So I think you look at all that.

**Q. In and out of the country for a lot of these exempt tournaments, they used to be every four years, now they're every year. You've had good experiences and ones you need to build on afterwards. But from the fans' perspective there's a lot of complaints that you're playing great teams at a neutral site that they're not going to, but then come back here and maybe get an Iowa State or an ACC team but that's it. Do you think that it's good for basketball, big picture, to have these every year and not necessarily a home-and-home with another --**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think that's a legitimate question. I think what we all have to do is look at it individually, how does it benefit us?

Does it make sense to play those teams, to go to those places? I think one of the problems we had this year in the Cayman Islands, it wasn't on TV.

The folks that ran that event, you can't run a more first-class event than they ran. But I said to those people down there, if this isn't on television, we're not coming back.

Those games have to be on TV, whether it's Maui, Atlantis, or Cancun, you have to be able to turn your TV on and watch it otherwise I don't think it makes sense to go.

I think this was a one-year blip for that particular event. But I think as it relates to your question, I think when you make those decisions to enter into those types of contracts, you need to see TV.

**Q. In terms of improvement overall, work to do on both ends, what are you more focused on, offense or defense at this point?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: Both. We are not executing offensively either at half court or in transition the way we need to.

We're not executing in our man-to-man or our zone or our press as well as we need to. But, again, we're doing it really well at times. And I think that's the frustrating thing for all of us.

We keep saying the same thing over and over. It's inconsistency. It's there. It's not there. But as long as there's effort, I thought we had good effort on Sunday.

Yeah, the effort can overcome some mistakes sometimes.