

Big Ten Conference Basketball Media Days

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Fran McCaffery

Iowa Hawkeyes

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I'm really excited about this team. It's a different team than last year. Got a lot of new faces, and I think that's the challenge, especially going into a season where Michigan State is the clear favorite. But 20 league games against what I consider the best this league has ever been, top to bottom, and we put together our most challenging schedule to go along with that.

I'm excited for the challenge, and we started practice on Saturday, and we were anxious to get going.

Q. A lot of people talked about the new three-point line, speculating how it's going to have an impact. How do you think it's going to impact college basketball and in particular, how do you think it's going to impact Big Ten play, the first season it's in play?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: It's funny because I thought initially it would have a great impact, and it may. We don't know yet. You're expecting three-point percentages to go down a little bit, fewer -- maybe fewer attempts, fewer makes. Does that lend to more pack line defense, does that lend to more teams playing zone, because you don't see a lot of zone anymore.

So I think those are things that could eventually happen. I think all in all, it will maybe open up the post a little bit. We have Luka Garza, Ryan Kriener, Jack Nunge. So for us, I think it's a good thing to be able to throw that thing inside and play in and out, as well.

So I think ultimately it will be better. We don't know what it's going to look like in the short run, but we might see more pack line and more zone defense as a result.

Q. There's a game that stands out, December 21st, the return to United Center to play Cincinnati. How big would that be, especially in the fact that you guys had that tournament game last year against them in Columbus?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, it's interesting because when we scheduled the game, obviously we didn't know we were going to play Cincinnati in the NCAA Tournament, so to play them again so quickly, new coach, different style. But for us, I think we looked at it to play a prominent program in a fabulous facility in a



city where we have a ton of alumni. Just a great opportunity, I think, for our program to get on television in that atmosphere.

I felt like the more you think about it, the more you hear, you more you listen, you have to challenge your team with a tough schedule. If you want to be considered on Selection Sunday, the message has been pretty clear. You have to do that.

So that was -- we play two challenge games, we're in a great tournament with Texas Tech, Creighton, and San Diego State. We're at Iowa State, we're playing Cincinnati in the United Center, 20 league games. By far the most challenging schedule we've ever put together. But I think even though we still have some new faces, I still think we have enough veterans that can handle that and that's the challenge of it.

Q. Do you guys plan on playing with or without Jordan Bohannon this season?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, if he's healthy, we plan on playing with him. If he's not, we'll play without him. I don't know what else to say about that, other than he -- I think it's a good question because nobody knows what his status is, and he's obviously critical to our team.

I would have said eight weeks ago, seven weeks ago, we're playing it without him. Now there's, I think, the possibility. He's not playing, but he's dribbling and shooting and doing some things. So yeah, you feel -- we're trying not to put pressure on him in any way, shape or form. I want him to be able to play his senior year as pain-free as possible.

So we're planning as if he's not playing. If he plays, we'll be thrilled that he is, and he'll be able to jump back in because of how good he is and because he's our senior leader.