

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, December 22, 2016

Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. Was it a hip with Peter?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yes. It's pretty sore. We thought start him in the second half, see if he can get it loosened up. He got a quick seven and then said, okay, that's it.

Q. Got a good look at Maishe tonight. What did you like about his game?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, quite frankly, what I've always liked. He's got a versatility about him that's impressive, because he can laterally get his feet apart and move his feet and contain a really smaller, quicker guy. But then he's 6'-7" and long and so he can stick his nose in there on the glass and get rebounds with bigger guys and he can make threes. Eventually, as he gets stronger, he's going to be even more explosive. What I want to see him do now is just kind of just take it and go off the dribble. Trust his ability to do that.

Q. Was it good for a lot of those guys to get a lot of minutes tonight?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Really good. Because Kriener, we threw him in the other night because we had to, and he's been practicing really well, so I was, obviously, not afraid to do that of the. And he played good. We finished the half the other night on a 10-2 run and he had the two. So the thing about him, you put him in, he'll score, he'll rebound, he fights the post. The thing that he has to do is settle down, because he's just way too tough on himself. He just has to let it come to him. He's got a great pair of hands. So he gets his hands in traffic, he corrals the ball.

Q. Overall, how do you feel like you finished non-conference? Do you like where you're at?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Considering where we were, yeah.

Q. How do you treat the next couple days? Are you giving them a couple days off?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah. I've always been big on trying to give them time at Christmas. Not schedule a Christmas tournament, there's not very many of them any more, anyway. But not do that. Get them away, because we have really been going hard, from the tournament, to games coming quickly, then final

exams. We're with each other every day, there's a lot of pressure on the in-state games on these kids. And finals end and you got two more. So it's a constant grind.

So, they get away, they get with their families. I wish it was an extra day, but we play on the 28th this year, so we'll have to bring them back on Christmas night.

Q. Do you think the guys appreciate the value of defense now that they have had to play it and showing some signs of improvement?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, they definitely have shown signs of improvement, you're absolutely right. We played so poorly in that stretch of games defensively. These are great kids, so they know, like we have to be better. So it's one thing to tell them they have to be better and demand that they're better, but you got to show them and you got to work with them. Then they got to figure out how to do it together. Because when we were really struggling, it wasn't all five guys, it was one or two breaking down out of the group.

But they have been really a lot better, in terms of anticipating what's coming. That's the hardest thing. Because at this level, if you try to react to everything, the players are too quick and too good. You're always late and you're always in foul trouble. You're always fouling and they're always in the bonus. So, being to the front, as the play is developing and not trying to get to the front after the screening action just already took place, is two different things.

Q. Is there anything different you do or say to the guys heading into conference play?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Absolutely. With all due respect, to a lot of the teams we have played, we're playing a 15th ranked team in the country, with a lottery pick, a guy who seems to get 20-20 every night. Isaac Haas is probably a first round pick. All their other guys are playing well. It's probably as deep as they have been. They're athletic and the thing with Purdue is they always defend, so it's not easy to score against them, typically. Especially down there.

So, you just want to make sure they know and understand, we have accomplished a great deal, but from here on out it's going to be different, and we have as tough a first game as anybody.

Q. With Purdue you don't see teams with that much size a lot of the time. What kind of challenges that does present at both ends of the court?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: The hardest thing sometimes is to keep your big guys out of foul trouble. Because they just keep throwing it in there. Those two can play together, they can play one behind the other. And they're both going to go get it on the defensive glass and on the offensive glass.

But with them, they have so many other good players. You can't say, okay, we're going to really lock in and stop Haas, stop Swanigan. They got a lot of other weapons. So it's going to be a really, I think, interesting challenge for our young team to see what we can do down there.

Q. You start three freshmen. Is Peter going to have to talk to them and show them what they're going to be getting into?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I'm sure he will. I think that's important. We'll show them a lot of film, too. How do they play against Villanova? How did they play against Notre Dame? How did they play against Louisville? How did they play against us in the past? How do they play at home versus on the road? Try to get a feel for that.

Remember, a lot of these guys have played, like Tyler Cook has played against Swanigan before. He knows and respects him, obviously, but he knows and has played against him before.

Q. Does it feel different going into conference play? Is there a noticeable difference?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: We try not to make it as noticeable by scheduling up like we did this year. With all due respect to Delaware State, I mean, Purdue is, when you have pros, it's a little different. Those kids have been on the road and it's the 11th road game they played already. It's not easy. So, we're playing a team, in their building that's going to be packed, and a different challenge. But it's every game in our league. That's, to me, that's the fun of it. Every game is packed, it's on TV, there's playoff implications and so forth.

Q. Getting Tyler back for Purdue game?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah.

Q. Have you evaluated what you're going to do with the lineup yet or is that what the next few days are for?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: We'll see how he does when he comes back. Thought a lot about it. Obviously, my first inclination is to just slide him back into the starting

lineup. This group has really played well. Ahmad and Cordell have played well together. So, I'll think it through, I'll talk it over with him. It's almost irrelevant, to be truthful, whether he starts, because he's going to play starters' minutes.

Q. What do you expect from him when he comes back? What has he been doing to stay in shape?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: He's in great shape. The hardest thing is just going to be, I think for him, settling down and just playing with confidence and at his own pace. He's going to be anxious to do maybe too much. And I want to make sure that he understands that like we don't expect too much. We expect him to be Tyler Cook and run the floor and post hard and move his feet on defense and provide what he's capable of providing. But not feel like he's got to carry us. I think earlier in this season, Pete and he were the only two that were really scoring consistently, so I think he felt a lot of that pressure. And he shouldn't feel that pressure now, because we got other guys doing some many pretty good things offensively.