

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. Talk about the play of your freshmen point guard. Every phase today, no turnovers. Six assists.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: He's a special player. He plays at his pace, he's really intelligent, he thinks the game, he processes the game plan, the information we give him, and then he's able to make adjustments as the game goes on. But there's no panic in him. He's going to shoot it if he's open. If somebody is open, he's going to pass it. He's not going to turn it over. You can't turn the ball over against this team and win.

Q. He took the shots though in crunch time. I'm sure that's a good thing for you to see.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, in particular because we were riding Pete, so we'll go to Cordell, we'll go to Tyler, we'll go to Jordan. Isaiah's made crunch-time shots. So will Brady. We have got a lot of different guys that can do that. And that's what you need. Because that's what takes the pressure off of Pete.

Q. Seemed like Pete was willing to give it up, too, they were doubling him and he gave it up --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: He's figured out. He's has to be a screener and he's got to be a passer and he can still get 25. And that's what makes him special.

Q. Is he -- some of your guys maybe fighting the flu, it looked like. Some of them were going back and forth to the locker room.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, we had, Tyler was sick and then Ahmad was sick. Everybody else is fine. I think the other stuff was injury related. Christian hurt his back, Brady got the wind knocked out of him on that one play.

Q. You played maybe four point guards in the first half. Is that just the way things worked out?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I didn't want to put Jordan back in and get his third. And then Christian hurt his back and he was done for the game. So, we had been working with Pete and with Brady, in particular.

Q. You hadn't really had a really close, down to the wire game, until this one. You've got to be pretty happy with the way they responded to that.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah, no question. Because we made enough plays. It wasn't perfection, but we made our free throws, we executed the shots that we wanted, a couple times we got it inside, didn't score, but we got it in there. And our defense was clearly better in the second half, in terms of getting out and guarding the baseline drift in the corner and that kind of thing.

Q. You mentioned the difference between telling them and having them understand what Big-10 play is like after Purdue. A win like this, how much or what does that do for these guys that they can come back from being down and win a game?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, it shows you how you have to work and how have you to prepare. The crowd was great. That helped us. So now what we have got to be able to do is understand that and go do it on the road. That is a bigger challenge in this league. Our older guys know that. The younger guys figured that out the other night.

Q. Your poise, especially on offense, in the overtime, was pretty special. After you had three shots and you didn't score the first possession, and then scored like four or five possessions in a row.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, first thing Tyler went and got the tip. I said, we got to get the ball, get the ball first. Go get the tip.

Then we executed and got it inside, like you said. And we could have hung our heads, because we got it in there, looked like we were going to score and take the lead and we didn't. But nothing rattled us from that point forward.

Q. Obviously, Wilson had huge game. Was anything, was it defense lapses on your part or was it just a kid going off?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: That kid's a good player. He is incredibly versatile to be that big. So I really like him. He performed well. We didn't react to where he was a couple times in the first half, and he got some open looks and that got him going. That's what you don't want. When you're playing against a talented guy -- and they have got a number of guys that are -- Walton, Irvin, Robinson, and Wilson in particular and Wagner for that matter, have all had big games for them. So there's a lot of people in that category that you don't

want them to get going early, hit three or four shots, and he did. He had 19 in the first half, he had 16 pretty quickly. We did a better job on him in the second half.

Q. In that last huddle, you had a three-point lead, 19 seconds to go, what are you telling your guys and what are you expecting? Are you expecting them to try to get a kick quick two and make you make free throws, or expecting them to shoot a three or what was your thought process?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I expected them to trap hard and not foul and try to get a quick turnover. And then, if they didn't get a quick turnover, to foul that's what I expected.

Q. Is there a part of Jordan's game that has surprised you. Maybe that he's exceeded at this stage? We knew he could shoot, but as a playmaker maybe, or is this what you expected?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Truthfully, he's kind of done what I thought he would do. If I didn't think he could do it, I wouldn't have offered him a scholarship. I mean, I can't make it any simpler than that. When we make those kind of decisions -- and we're not always right -- but when we offer, we have evaluated thoroughly enough to say, this kid can do it at this level. And I think that I know him a little better than maybe some other people that I recruited. I know his intellect and that's so important at that position, as you well know.

Q. Did you like the way your zone looked compared to against Purdue?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: It was better than Purdue. It was not as good as it needs to be.

Q. The defense has taken, obviously, a ton of the heat, but in the final possession in regulation, final possession in overtime, the guys depended without fouling and defended well. In those two moments, how important is that or what did you think of that?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, I thought it was really good, because it was a deviation from what we had been doing, defensively. You're right, the hardest thing sometimes is to -- and you don't want to be the guy that gives up a bucket. Especially if you're up three, you don't want to give up a three. So you want to chase them off the line and if they score a two, they score a two, you don't want to give them an and-1 and you certainly don't want to go for any shot fake. So, they moved their feet, they switched out and contained and made it hard and also ate up all the clock. So, I couldn't be more proud of that.

Q. What pleases you more, the progress on defense or the fact that other guys are stepping up and the offense doesn't have to run through Pete

any more, other guys are scoring.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think both things are critical for us moving forward. We had to get the defense better. We had to have multiple people contributing. So I don't know if I would say one is more important than the other.

Q. What did you think of Cook and PemsI playing together?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: They're good together. I think they need time to figure it out together. Because they both like to post up, but they both can make a play out on the perimeter. Tyler's figuring out how to screen and then how to get himself open. He's a handful. When he screens and rolls, you got to deal with him, because if not, he's going to dunk the ball. So, I was really happy for him, because he really grew up today. He battled, he competed. He made some mistakes in the first half, and he knows it and it was pointed out to him and he corrected it. And that shows you what he's capable of.

Q. Your rebounding really took a positive step. Early in the game they seemed to be getting a lot of second chances.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: We weren't putting a body on anybody, we were just kind of watching the ball and trying to go get a long rebound, because they were shooting a ton of threes. But you still have to put a body on somebody and we did a much better job in the second half.