

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Sunday, November 13, 2016

Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball

Iowa - 116, Savannah State - 84

Q. Brady's had a rough go here with injuries and things like that. Not really a question, but had to feel good about how he played tonight.

COACH MCCAFFERY: He's been playing like that really since this year began, which as I always say it sort of begins in June. He has been -- if you look at his numbers, his assist/turnovers are, I mean, just phenomenal like 4- or 5-to-1 and his shooting percentage is -- his efficiency, I mean, he doesn't make mistakes.

He's defending his position well, sticking his nose on the glass. It's year three. First year he's hurt. Last year he had some good games, some not so good games. Backed his minutes off as the season went on, he just kept battling. I'm really proud of him.

Q. Twelve guys got double-figure minutes. As far as the growth and development will that help your team going forward?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think so. And we still have Dale Jones. He just wasn't ready to go.

Q. How about Cordell? His stat line was pretty impressive tonight.

COACH MCCAFFERY: If he makes his free throws. He's got 15 in 16 minutes. Today he has 18 in 18 minutes. Pretty efficient. But the thing that I always liked about him and the things that you're seeing, he's just a really skilled big man. He can dribble. He can pass, and he can score.

He understands angles. He has a great ability to make a decision in traffic -- when to get rid of it, dump it, shoot it, don't shoot it. He's terrific against pressure.

We had him in the back. They're pressing, 2-2-1, on makes and misses. We put him in the back and we put him in the middle.

So they're the two most difficult positions to play against pressure, where you have to trust that person to make decisions. Sometimes they're facing it and sometimes they have their back to it.



Didn't matter. Put him anywhere and he's effective. That gives us a guy who is 6'8" and 250 that can be placed anywhere on the floor and makes plays like a veteran.

It's a great weapon to have.

Q. Did you know about that coming in, or has he surprised you a little bit?

COACH MCCAFFERY: No, that's exactly what we saw. I've been watching him since he was in eighth grade. He's always been like that. There's no panic in his game at all. Nothing rattles him. Makes a mistake, comes right back, and doesn't let it linger on him.

And that's a special talent to have, especially when you're a young player. And that's what we're trying to get Ryan Kriener through. I was proud of him. He struggled with a couple of goofy turnovers then he settled down. Sometimes it takes guys a little longer to settle down.

Q. You took Tyler out right away at the start of the game, sat him for like a minute. What was the message? You settle him down?

COACH MCCAFFERY: He was going a little fast. We want him to slow down a little. But he was so aggressive defensively, he just deviated from the game plan a little bit. We wanted to him to see it so we diagrammed it for him. Told him we needed a teaching point, go back in. He was really good, the second half, the beginning of the second half, he was a dominant player down on the baseline, they decided to come out in that zone.

They played zone and man. Usually they play man. Today they played a lot of zone. We needed him to go to work on the baseline, which he did.

Q. Tyler deservedly got a lot of the attention preseason, but did we maybe miss the boat on Cordell a little bit?

COACH MCCAFFERY: People forgot about him, I think. It's understandable. He committed a very long time ago. Then he missed his entire junior year in high school with leg surgery.

And you know he did have a stellar senior year. Lost in

the state championship game. He was good when I saw him play both times against West High. He was good.

But watched him at AAU, watching him grow up, he has a feel for how to play the game. And there's just no substitute for that. You want athletic ability, you want high flyers, you want great 3-point shooters. You have a guy that can dribble, pass and shoot, and he's big, strong, smart, and tough. That's a terrific combination.

So I kind of understand how it all went down but he's always been a really good player. When you average 15 and 11 as a freshman in high school, at a high level, it's pretty impressive.

Q. You said a few years back you thought Nicholas Baer would be kind of a secret. No one knows anything about him. You look through back a letter his development, is he like tonight he did a lot of great things might not have shown up in the box score, solid in every aspect?

COACH MCCAFFERY: He was the kind of guy that, a good example I think of what you're talking about, early in the game they want to get it in quickly down the floor and shoot in three seconds.

That's what they were doing against Iowa State. And they were making some of those. So he just comes back and steals one right back in -- at the beginning of the game. It was a big steal. I think we scored. But it was also a message -- we kind of know what your intentions are. And he's able to jump into the passing lane, get a steal, jump in the passing lane, maybe get the guy to come back to get it, give our guys more time to get set, and then he sprints back, finds his man and talks.

It's a very interesting offense we just had to defend. And that's the beauty of this game, playing this time of year, especially with a short prep. You don't see too many teams -- took 44 3s the other night. They press on makes and misses, and it's all drive and kick. Shot fake, drive and kick; shot fake, drive and kick; drive, get to the front of the rim, turn and throw it to a guy for a 3.

So it takes a certain amount of savvy to defend that kind of action consistently, and that's where a guy like Baer, because he won't stop. He won't forget. He won't slow down.

And everybody kind of rises to his energy level. So we get the lead early and keep it.

Q. Building off that, the talking point you made about Nicholas, that was I think what stood out to me the most -- how much he was talking in the first

few minutes, first few possessions when scores weren't being scored. When you look at how he started here as a walk-on, emerged last season and where he is now as a vocal leader, what have you seen in his evolution off the court?

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think he recognized we've got a young team. So we need leadership. And it just can't all be Pete. Yeah, it's Pete's team. I've said that and I think Pete's done a really good job there. But he's getting some help with Nicholas Baer. If you look back over the years, the teams that we've had with really good leadership, they've all had help.

Gatens and Jarryd Cole, you go right on down, when Melsahn was here, with that senior class, Basabe was really good. He had the respect of the locker room. So guys are leading in different ways.

But like I always say, you have to lead with communication. The lead by example stuff is overrated. Yeah, he plays hard. He's supposed to play hard. He's on a full athletic scholarship. I expect him to play hard. That's doing your job.

There's nothing special about that. What do you do after that? Well, you communicate, you help the young guys along; you execute to perfection.

And if there's a guy on your team that's young that is a little unsure where to go or what to do or he makes a mistake, if I have a guy like Nicholas, we correct that out on the floor before I have to take him out or I have to yell from the bench or make him feel like he's really screwing up. Senior guys, I'll take them and talk to them, it's much better to do it that way.

Q. You had 43 3-point attempts in this game. I think your first nine attempts were from out there. Is that what you want moving forward?

COACH MCCAFFERY: We would have preferred a little more of a mixture of penetration but we have good 3-point shooters. And we were open.

So I thought we went back and got more of them in the second half. We didn't do as good a job in the first half of going to get our misses.

They had more rebounds than us in the first half. We end up outrebounding them 52-40. We went back and got 19 offensive rebounds. A lot of those were in the second half. Wagner, Uhl, Maishe Dailey. So our plan was to shoot a few less 3s and have a few more drive-to-close-out, finish-at-the-rim.

I think we used really good judgment and they made good shot attempts.

Q. When you look at Brady, is it resiliency? He came in here, he had foot issues. Last year he was kind of in and out of the lineup. But he seemed to keep his confidence and he just keeps growing as a player. What does that say about him and his character and what he's been able to do?

COACH MCCAFFERY: He just keeps working. He's not the first guy that came in with an injury and redshirted his first year. Last year is just part of the journey.

I don't know that it was a ton of adversity. He played. He didn't play. He was behind Clemmons, Gesell, Peter Jok. He was a professional in every sense of the word and that's how he approaches every day. He's really smart.

And he's always been a tough kid. And what you're seeing is a guy that develops. Everybody wants it right away. Doesn't happen right away for everybody.

And in Brady's case, it's taken him a little longer, but it's really only year two on the floor. And he did have a 20-point game last year in college.

So while I'm proud of him, I think he's doing what I expected him to do and what he expected of himself, which I think is more important.

Q. Had 33 assists, a lot of that amount of ball movement against their zone, how grateful are you to get an extended look at your zone offense this early in the season?

COACH MCCAFFERY: You know, it was a unique zone offense. And we just kind of moved the ball. It wasn't like we did anything that specific against it. There's other things we can run against zone.

But for us it was all about ball movement, throwbacks. And you're right, the number of assists for the number of field goals, that's a really good percentage. But I was probably more impressed, you look at Bohannon and Christian Williams got 11 assists/one turn against a team that presses every possession.

So then you look at Nicholas Baer, six assists/no turns. As a team we had 33 assists/15 turnovers, because that's a team that expects to turn you over and turn them into 3s. Trade three for two, three for zero. And get you into that kind of game.

And since they play that way all the time and we don't, you say, well, we get you in that kind of game, we'll be better at it than you.

So you have to make an adjustment in a very short period of time to be able to play against that style. So

I'm really proud of our guys that way tonight.

Q. What did you think of Maishe?

COACH MCCAFFERY: A little nervous when we put him in. But I thought after that, he showed his athletic ability. He kills the corner 3. He's not afraid to shoot it.

He had some defensive instincts. He utilized his length. He's going to be really good.