

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. This game was about pushing hard for 40 minutes -- what did you like about the response from the guys?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I wasn't real pleased with our performance in the first half on a number of different levels. We weren't battling the way we need to battle against a team of this calibre. I've really been impressed with this Pitt team on film. I was impressed with them live, really quick, really compete, and we had to adjust.

We had to adjust personnel and we had to do some things in the second half, and I thought when I challenged them at halftime, in a very direct way, they responded and I'm really proud of that.

They scored 22 points in the second half. You know, we slid our feet. We battled on the glass. We got to the floor, and we really fought. When you win a game like this, it's a great feeling in the locker room because it certainly was not a thing of beauty by any means, but that's how games are sometimes. Every game is different. Every game has a different flow. Every game has a different feel.

We came into the game thinking we could do some things we didn't do and then we did some things we didn't think we'd be able to do, and that's the kind of team we have.

So you have to make adjustments. We made them, and the kids performed well.

Q. To start the second half, you guys score seven straight within the first two minutes.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, you know, you don't have the kind of first half you'd like. They score at the buzzer on sort of a broken play. We trap the ball screen and felt we had a good defensive stop and we don't come up.

So, obviously not very happy about that but second half, you've got to win the first four minutes when you're down six at halftime, so we go up one but they came back and took the lead a couple times.

I think that segment you're referring to, you're right. It was a very critical part and I think it had a lot to do with our confidence moving forward for the rest of the half. I thought offensively, we made 12 threes. We executed fairly well. A couple times, we executed plays to perfection; the shot didn't go in but the kids really executed against heavy duress, and that's what you expect.

Q. A good type of game before the Big Ten season?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, and I guess it's going to be like that all the time. It used to be it wasn't this time of year and we didn't play till later, but it's going to be now with the two Big Ten games and Iowa State, so just the way it is.

Q. What did you think of Joe Wieskamp's performance tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think Joe Wieskamp's pretty good. It's interesting, because I think he has a reputation for being a certain kind of player, but if you watched him, and you know him, he's so much more than that. He drives it, he blocks shots, he defends, he rebounds, he pushes it, he finds people, he makes threes, he gets fouled.

He's not a mistake guy. Tremendous competitor, really intelligent, and you know, ultimately, he's a winner, is what he is.

Q. What about Nicholas, basically had the game on his shoulders.

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's been playing that way all summer, all fall. We haven't really seen him shoot it like that yet. He's played well, but he hasn't shot it like that, but he's been shooting the ball extremely well. So I think it was great for him and it was great for us that he kept going like that.

Obviously, you're right, big factor in our winning the game, certainly.

Q. What can you speak to in terms of Cordell's timetable, and is --

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, it's not. Jack is going to redshirt, and Cordell won't be back. So we'll apply for a medical hardship for him.

Q. Tonight through Iowa State -- have you talked about this four-game jump?

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, no. We talk about one game. I know it sounds like that's what coaches are supposed to say, but we haven't mentioned anybody else. We did the same thing when we played Alabama State. Worry about Alabama State. The only game that matters is the next one, and that's how we handle it.

Q. You guys fought defensively in a lot of key situations, and didn't last year but you looked more effective tonight and when you needed to get a stop, you got a stop.

FRAN McCAFFERY: For a while there, you're thinking, with the way they were driving the ball and as quick as they were, the only chance we have is to play zone. It was really on man-to-man and how we guarded ball screens, how we got over, how we slid our feet, how we stayed vertical, and made them make tough shots, and they didn't really get a lot of clean looks.

In the first half, they had clean looks. They made threes. They are typically not a three-point shooting team, but they were open. And so we did, I think, really stay connected. You heard me use that a lot last year, we weren't connected. Well, we were connected tonight defensively.

Q. Johnson --

FRAN McCAFFERY: We thought that that could be a good matchup for us. Same with Connor because they are both bigger than him but Maishe slides his feet extremely well, and he's 6-7 and long. That's a guy that you can put on a point guard when he can move like that.

Q. Did you like your rotation tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think it helped us at the defensive end, and I think offensively, we had a lot of movement and some good things going because like I said, even when we didn't score, I thought we had good shots.

I thought we came down and we got good shots. That's all you want. You want them to go in but you've got to make sure we come down and we have a good possession. I thought we had a lot of good possessions, and we forced them into a lot more mistakes than we made.

Q. Can you see Wieskamp playing more forward, especially knowing Cordell won't --

FRAN McCAFFERY: I'd rather not. I'd rather not. But he can. You're right, I could play him there. He's smart enough and he's talented enough, and let's face it, a lot of teams in our league are playing six-foot, 6-4 four-men now, so sure he could play the 4.

Q. Looks like you have a nine-man rotation now. How does it change things or does it change things and are you comfortable with it?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I am comfortable with it. Everybody gets to play. I am not afraid to play Riley Till. He didn't play tonight, different kind of game. But Riley, he's a junior. He's an athlete. He's a terrific defender. He's really smart, so he can give us quality minutes. I'm comfortable playing him, so I'm comfortable going ten.

But those nine guys I rotated tonight -- and we had flexibility, like you said. We've got -- Maishe could play 1 through 4. Joe could play 1 through 4. Connor can do the same.

You know, I thought Isaiah gave us some quality minutes, and then our three bigs, we rotate them. Tyler can play. The smaller guys, if we stay big. Luka couldn't get it going tonight. He was working, but he just couldn't get anything going.

Kriener was really good defensively I thought, and that's why we played him a lot and TC was really good.