

# NCAA Men's 1st and 2nd

## Rounds: Columbus

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Columbus, Ohio



# Fran McCaffery

# Tyler Cook

# Nicholas Baer

# Jordan Bohannon

Iowa Hawkeyes

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Iowa student-athletes Tyler Cook, Nicholas Baer and Jordan Bohannon.

### Q. Tyler, what's the excitement level back home?

TYLER COOK: We're all super excited. It's a huge opportunity for us, something that we've been working towards since we ended our season last year. And so ever since we saw our name pop up on that screen, we've all just been excited to get to work.

And I feel like we've put forth a good effort in terms of preparing for this game. It's a huge stage for us all. We're just super excited and blessed to be in this position. And I think we'll take full advantage of it.

### Q. Nicholas, do you feel like you've been given the attention you deserve with the season that you had, especially within the Big Ten?

NICHOLAS BAER: Yeah, absolutely. We never get too concerned about attention or anything like that. Obviously we have an opportunity to play in the NCAA Tournament. That's something that we're grateful for and really looking forward to this opportunity to play in Cincinnati and hope we'll be here for a while.

### Q. It's Columbus, you knew that?

NICHOLAS BAER: I did know that.

### Q. Jordan, your thoughts on what the team is doing right now, as far as what level you've been playing compared with the rest of the season?

JORDAN BOHANNON: I feel like we're really prepared to play at this level, knowing -- coming from the Big Ten Conference and the teams we've played against all year. We've played one of the hardest schedules in the country. For us to be able to get on this stage, I think our past will prepare us for these moments.

We've played at Madison Square Garden and big

stages already. I know what we're capable of doing and I think we all have that same mindset.

### Q. You mentioned that Big Ten schedule. It's particularly tough on the road. You feel like that eases once you get into a tournament setting where you have a neutral site like Columbus?

JORDAN BOHANNON: Definitely. Big Ten, we have eight teams in the NCAA Tournament this year. So that says a lot about what it's like day to day in the Big Ten. It's tough to even get a win at home against any Big Ten team.

So traveling and away games is going to prepare us for these neutral-site games. And I think our team's always done pretty well at neutral sites. We're really looking forward until tomorrow.

### Q. Jordan, obviously besides this is a one-and-done situation, what is this week like compared to say a big week in January or February in the Big Ten? Can you feel a difference about what you guys are going about this week?

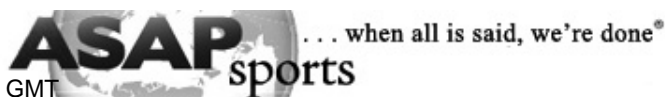
JORDAN BOHANNON: I think it's just all a culmination of our entire work we've put in since last April. It sucks, last year we had a season that no one expected even us, the work we've put in. We had a let-down. And we got to work last April.

So for us to have our name called last Sunday, it was really special, because we know how hard we worked to get to this point. And we're just trying to make the most of it.

### Q. Tyler, how about for you, does this week feel different to you opposed to a random week in the regular season, and in what way?

TYLER COOK: Definitely. I think the energy has been different. We're in kind of uncharted territory for myself and Jordan at least. We haven't been to the tournament yet in our careers. And I speak for most of us when I say that, with the exception of Nicholas.

But it's just been very exciting for us. When Jordan said, when we saw or heard our name called on Sunday, we were all ecstatic. Once we got to work, it just really felt different than the regular season, which it is. So I think like the new energy that comes along with the postseason will serve us well.



comments?

**Q. Tyler, from what you've seen from the UC defense, how does that compare to anything else you've seen or played against this season?**

TYLER COOK: You know, they play a unique style of basketball. You don't see it too often. But just like we do in the regular season, we've got to watch film and scout and do the best that we can and trying to figure out what we can do to try to, I guess, lessen the impact what they do defensively.

So our coaches have done a great job kind of putting together a game plan for us. We watch a ton of film. Like I said, they've scouted to the best of their ability. So I feel like after today, heading into tomorrow morning we'll be prepared for them.

**Q. Nick, I believe you're the only player on this roster that's been to the NCAA Tournament with Iowa. Just what do you remember from that experience? And also, do you buy into the fact that some people say to succeed in the tournament you have to have tournament experience? Do you buy that at all?**

NICHOLAS BAER: I wouldn't say you necessarily have to have tournament experience. I know a lot of guys on this team it's the first time going to the NCAA Tournament. But I think there's certain things you need to be able to do in March that are going to be keys to succeed and to advance. And being able to execute, like, under pressure and being able to stick to your defensive rules, I think those are more important things than having the experience.

This is obviously a very unique atmosphere but at the same time a lot of these guys are preparing for this moment their whole lives, and that's why you come to Iowa and that's why you play at this level is to play on this platform.

**Q. Tyler, I think I saw on an interview you did in the last few days sometime that you may have played with or against Jarron Cumberland in high school. Could you elaborate and share those memories?**

TYLER COOK: We don't have like a super close relationship or anything like that. I met him in Chicago at the Nike Global games. I believe it was my junior year at high school. We played on the same team together. It was me, him, Myles, (indiscernible) Cassius, Nick Ward. He played well.

It was the first time I saw him play and first time I met him. And from then I knew he would be a really good player, which he is today. That's the first time I've seen him play.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Coach McCaffery,

COACH MCCAFFERY: We're thrilled to have this opportunity. Proud of our team. Tremendous respect for Cincinnati and the job that Mick Cronin has done there and the success that that team had. We played a long, grueling, 20-game schedule in the Big Ten and accomplished a lot of great things. Proud of my guys and looking forward to playing tomorrow.

**Q. Coach Cronin mentioned this week that you guys are friends off the court. I'm curious how that relationship started and what it's like.**

COACH MCCAFFERY: It started many years ago before he even got into this business. I was at Notre Dame and he was a very young coach, and got to know him then and over the years obviously we crossed paths. But we spent a lot of time a few years ago at the Final Four when my son Patrick was sick. That was in 2013 when he was diagnosed with cancer.

We have a lot of mutual friends. We talk periodically and so we're on the road. We spend time together, go out to dinner, that type of thing. Just a coach that I have tremendous respect for -- how he does it. I think he is a guy that has great respect for the game and has had an interesting path to the success where he is. He grinded his way up. And that's kind of who he is.

So I would say he's a dear friend in this business and somebody that I have tremendous respect for.

**Q. Is it easier or more difficult to prepare for a coach that you know that well?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I think it's about the same simply because we don't see a lot of teams in that league. We don't watch them as much. I kind of follow him because of my friendship with him and hope he does well. But it wasn't until now that we really studied his program.

I kind of know they defend, they rebound. They have a toughness about them that's somewhat unique. But I've been really impressed with how they share the basketball. Even with Cumberland shooting as many shots as he shoots, he gives it up easy. He has 123 assists.

So I think that's kind of the beauty of this tournament. You're playing teams that sort of know you but don't know you as well because we're grinding so hard with a 20-game Big Ten schedule.

**Q. Obviously the kids are excited and probably nervous and butterflies. You've been doing this a long time. This isn't your first rodeo. Do you get nervous, amped up and nervous for this weekend?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I don't get nervous coaching the game. I've done it so many times. But I understand and appreciate that this is different. And it should be. It's a tremendous accomplishment. Everybody wants to do well.

Every coach, every player, every assistant coach who had that scout, you want to do the best you can. You want to help your team advance. We're all trying to do the same thing. So I'm understanding and respectful of that.

We'll do everything we can to stay positive, because when you get out there, the critical thing is going to be can you get to the next play, because somebody's going to miss a shot, somebody is going to make a mistake, turn it over, forget an assignment. You want that to be obviously limited and not be a trend. Once it happens once, twice, three times, that can't happen when you get here. So I think our guys are mature enough and intelligent enough to understand that and after what we've been through, get ready for it.

**Q. Connor's had an interesting week. Just curious as his father and as his coach in basketball you've seen him juggle the baseball, basketball thing, and obviously it's got to be tough.**

COACH MCCAFFERY: I was just incredibly impressed with him. We got up after we lost to Michigan on Friday night, and I didn't really know that he was going to jump in the car and head up and play on Saturday. We got back in time to see him. He played Saturday. Then he played a doubleheader Sunday. Then he played Tuesday.

He was at practice. He didn't miss any practices for us. And then to go 4-for-8 with two walks and two stolen bases and a couple of doubles, I was really impressed that he was able to do that. But probably more so that he was Academic All-Big Ten while doing all of that. So just couldn't be more proud of him.

And I remember, seems like yesterday that he was thrilled to be out there in the layup lines when we're warming up in Tampa, 2008, and now he's playing. So, it's really a proud moment.

**Q. In your experience entering this tournament, is there any different way you have to approach it when you win a lot of games coming into the tournament or you're in a bit of a downspout coming in?**

COACH MCCAFFERY: No, I don't think so. We've kind of done it both ways. I think you feel better if you came in riding a winning streak. A couple years ago I know we were 6-6, ended up 12-6 in the league and won our last six games in a row and felt really good.

But I think you look at the body of work and you consistently analyze where do we have to get better? If we didn't win, what could we have done differently? And then you're now shifting to a completely different team, from a different league. But your preparation is very similar, very business-like -- grind, watching film, get on the court in practice. This time of year I think if you're going two and a half hours in practice, you're crazy. So we scaled back practice time, make sure we have fresh legs, but at the same time focus on the interesting or specific things that we have to do for that game.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.