

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Monday, November 11, 2019

Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. Fran, just 13-0 start seemed like from that point you were just playing catch up the whole way.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think that's a fair statement, Pat. I don't think we handled it well, either. We tried to settle them down with the timeout. Maybe should have taken it sooner. Maybe should have taken it at 6-0 rather than 10-0. Took another one shortly thereafter.

They were on fire. We sort of had that mindset that we were going to get it all back at once. You just can't do that. This team is long and athletic and they can compete on the glass. They've got a lot of different guys that can score.

I would've expected us to be a little more concentrated in our effort, ability, to just make a run back at them. You know, 35 minutes to go in the game, and I thought we started hunting shots, quick shooting the ball, driving into packs of people, and making mistakes that were essentially inexperience mistakes by guys that have experience.

Q. What did you tell them after the game?

FRAN McCAFFERY: What I said was let's understand something. It's one game. Yes, it was really disappointing. We expect more from ourselves, and the critical thing is not to blame yourself or blame each other, but take collective responsibility as coaches and players. It's all of us.

It's easy when your team doesn't play well to start blaming. This guy didn't do this and this guy didn't do that. That's not going to fix the situation. We have to recognize that there is a difference between playing hard and competing. I thought we played hard; we didn't compete.

What you got to do is put the game plan together with your effort. Yeah, give them credit because they jumped us, but you have to stay with the game plan then to get back in the game. There is plenty of time. We didn't do that.

Q. Are they fixable things just from a strategic standpoint that you saw?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Absolutely. We had some guys that struggled, and that's obvious. They're better players than they played today. I think offensively if we move the ball -- we're a team that typically moves the ball. We didn't move the ball tonight. We didn't move it. We didn't get it moving side to side. We didn't adjust to what they were doing defensively to individuals.

They're a shooter team. They're a quick-rotate-to-the-ball team. They're low to the ball. You've got to be able to react to that and jump, stop, kick. Shot, fake, jump, stop, drive multiple penetration situations.

If you don't do that, you're going to be shooting contested shots. That's exactly what they wanted us to do and that's what we did. That really wasn't what we wanted to do, but sometimes that happens when you fall behind and the pressure hits.

Q. Jack Nunge struggled. Coming off the redshirt year, what do you kind of say to him?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think he's got to be better. He knows that. He's been without question from the start of practice one of our most consistent players, but he didn't play well the last two games. He missed a layup right at the start the game. Was a good penetration and kick to him and he misses a layup and gets down. And then he had to turnover where he thought he got fouled. You can't look to the ref in that situation. You got to run back and play defense.

He's got to fight through it. One of the things that hurt him, was when I put Kriener in and he played well, so he didn't get back in as much. I got to be able to go back to him and kind of let him play through it a little bit more than I did. But it wasn't one of his better nights clearly.

Q. Kirk was talking to Joe Wieskamp on the bench, were you guys unhappy with him?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, you know, he didn't have a good game. He knows that. He's been a guy that's been really consistent for us with effort, and I think he shot that one early, Mike, and missed it. Then he drove it a couple times, closed down on him quick. He didn't get rid of the ball.

So he was sideways with his game. What we need him to do is be one of our guys. You have to be one of the

guys that in that situation is confident in his own skin to go make plays and take good shots, get on the glass, get a steal, get our break going.

We didn't get our break going until the very end, until the game was essentially over. We've got to get some more easy baskets.

So I have no doubt he'll be better.

Q. Focused on taking Luka away. That's probably something you guys are going to face. What's he got to do to adjust to that?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's got to recognize that the double team comes or not. Sometimes they went after the bounce, sometimes they bodied up and just didn't go for any shot fakes. So he's just got to recognize what they're doing to him. Sometimes he's just got to get rid of it. As soon as he catches it, get rid of it, because if he goes right to the deck, two, three dribbles, everybody is going to come.

So, yeah, that's part of the growth process for him.

Q. Do you feel concerned at all with the lackluster performance long-term?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think you're always concerned when you don't play well. I'm not concerned that this team has problems that are not fixable. It's a good team, good group of young men, and we'll be better.