

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. Did Peter kind of do that himself in overtime or were you telling them to get him the ball the first possession of overtime

FRAN McCAFFERY: All we were trying to do was move the ball and take what was there. He's obviously a guy who wants the ball and we want to get him the ball. But we never really want to just lock into one guy. We want to be able to establish inside, outside other people, especially when you're in the double bonus.

He was really good. He was really strong. He mixed it up. He posted a little bit. He came up top. He was on the wing. He gave it up a few times. He was really, really special tonight.

Q. Peter Jok is a great free throw shooter anyway, but 22 of 23 is --

FRAN McCAFFERY: I was surprised he missed the one, to be honest with you (laughter)... because usually, not only does he make them, he usually doesn't hit anything but the net.

Q. How bad did you guys need this win tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I don't really look at it that way. We're playing Indiana, a program that I have tremendous respect for and a coach that I have tremendous respect for. Both teams fought. We had some tough losses, recently; so have they. So I just wanted our guys to compete. I wanted them to play well. I wanted them to be connected.

Obviously, we were not at the start of the game. We were sideways. The second group came in and picked us up. First group came back in and were really good. So I'm just really proud of how they sort of stuck together and then we've got so much productivity out of so many different people. I thought Kriener was spectacular tonight, and so was Pemsf off the bench. I thought Christian Williams was really good. I'm so happy for that kid.

Q. You guys kind of mixed traps, press, different kinds of things. Was it going for steals? Was it going for tempo? Was it going to wear you down? What was your goal there with that?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It was to try to create some

turnovers, create some offense with our defense. Get them out of rhythm a little bit. We played a lot of zone because at the beginning of the game, we were man, and they took it right to us. So we went to the zone. The zone was good. Then they figured out the zone, and they were making threes and they were moving the ball. They ran some good stuff against it, and we tied it at 55, and they scored four straight possessions. Scored 11 points.

So that says a lot about them, but it also says a lot about us and our ability to come back and regain the lead and so forth, ultimately win the game.

We're always going to try to disrupt rhythm. Any time we're pressing, we're trying to get some steals and create some offense.

Q. Something you can do on a couple hockey line changes there in the first four minutes. Is it, I've got to find five guys ready to go tonight, or was it just you needed a spark for the whole thing?

FRAN McCAFFERY: We needed some energy. We didn't have the necessary energy at the start of that game, and that's disappointing, quite frankly. To their credit, they were putting it on the deck and driving to the basket, moving the ball. We just didn't answer the bell. So that next group came in and played with great energy and cohesion, and got the crowd involved. Then the other guys came in and picked us up after that.

Q. Jok is a 93% free-throw shooter. You just don't see that from somebody who shoots as many as he does. Where does that come from? How did he become that proficient?

FRAN McCAFFERY: The first time I saw him play as a freshman in high school. He's always had an unbelievable stroke. He has been a great shooter. You know, again, I can't speak to anything before that, but ever since I've known him, he's a shot maker.

I mean, his form is textbook. He's got great confidence in it. But when it comes off his hands so nicely, and he shoots it the same way every time. Everything you've ever heard a shooting coach talk about, his follow through, where he puts his hands, his elbow. I mean, it's perfection.

Q. Were you pretty pleased with what you got at the end of regulation? I mean, Tyler had it right there at the end of the basket?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, we ran a different play, and they got up into Jordan, and he realized the timing of that play was not what it needed to be. The thing you have to do is if they're really taking something, you've just got to go, which is the mistake he made in the possession before, when he turned it over.

He's trying to run the play that we called, but when they're up into it, you've got to go by them. Especially when you're in the double bonus. So he went by them, threw the ball to Tyler. Tyler got it to the front of the rim. So anytime we get that shot, we're going to be happy. Obviously, we hoped it went in, but you just don't want to not get a shot at all.

Q. With the resiliency you've shown tonight down 13 in the first half, 8 in the second half and working back each time?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I was incredibly impressed, and I told them so after the game how proud I was of them. And the beautiful thing was it was so many different people. But, like I said, there were a number of times where we could have packed it in and we never did. That says a lot about our guys.

Q. Hard to win close games in this league. But for a young team to get one, how important is that?

FRAN McCAFFERY: This is the fourth time we've won two overtime games. We lost two double overtime games. So it tells you that we're fighting and we're in there. You know, sometimes we're making mistakes, but a lot of times we're doing really good things.

But you have to kind of go through that and experience it, because every one of those is different. Are they driving it? Are they going inside? What defense are they in? Are they trapping ball screens? Are they picking us up full court? Are we running motion? Are we running sets? What kind of action is working for us? Can we still run? Can we still get something out of our press? Those are decisions we're constantly making on the bench.

Q. What can you say about Indiana? They've been devastated by injuries. They've lost a lot of close games. This season has come unravelled since the start?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think you look at Indiana, I think the hard thing is there were such great expectations. I happen to be a big Collin Hartman fan, and I think he would make a big difference on this team. They haven't had him all year, and they still beat Kansas, North Carolina when they still had OG. You know, he was a lottery pick. Blackmon was out for a

while, he's your best shooter.

So, I think Tom has done a great job keeping them together, keeping them fighting. It's got to be difficult to battle the way they've battled, and then lose some close games the way they have, they also won a couple. The two Penn State games were games that they pulled out.

So, I think from that standpoint, I've been impressed with that coaching staff. They're still coaching them up. Those kids are still fighting. They're sharing the ball. I don't see any selfishness. I don't see any quit. We had to really play well, and really had to fight today to win this game.

Q. You were down eight with less than five minutes to go, and you were on a series there where I think nine straight possessions you were able to score points. I mean, how good was your offense down the stretch?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it was really good. And that's the interesting thing, because a lot of times when you're doing that, you're calling sets, and you're going to certain people. We just went straight motion and decided to move it and share it and screen and take what they give us and drive it home to get to the free-throw line. Throw it inside, hit a jumper. That's the beauty of the motion offense.

Sometimes you have the wrong guy shooting the ball at the wrong times. If you have a couple guys you want to go to, but I'm very comfortable with this team and their ability to understand who should be shooting the ball. I had a pretty good offensive team out there at that time.

Q. You played Christian and Jordan together quite a bit tonight. What did you like about that?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Take some of the ball-handling pressures off of Jordan, and it also sets him up to be a little bit of a scorer. I just felt Christian's energy level and his defense were spectacular. From the opening tip, he was great in both halves. And the play he threw at Tyler Cook in transition was really something.

They went up four, and he just pushed it down and went right through them and scored. Those are the kinds of plays that he's capable of making, and that's in him. I said to him today, I want you to attack. I want you to go right through them and he did.

Q. Given the way the last three games ended and those double overtime losses that you mentioned, are those a way of exorcising any demons for the guys?

FRAN McCAFFERY: We don't have any demons.

There are no demons.

Q. How do you take the energy from tonight and carry it to two games on the road against top teams?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It's late, it's a hard-fought game, you let them enjoy it and rest a little bit and just go back to work. We understand who Maryland is. They beat us here. Not only are they one of the best teams in the league, they're one of the best teams in the country.

They have tremendous personnel. They have a great coach. So we have an opportunity to go on the road to play a team to see if we can handle that environment. We were there last year, as you know. Terrific environment, very intense. Another step, another opportunity to improve and gain confidence.

Q. You look at Kriener and his tenacity, especially going against Bryant who is a lottery-type pick, he's been playing like that all year, but to do it against that player has got to be good.

FRAN McCAFFERY: The thing about him, he's a competitor. He won't back down, and he was physical. The blocked shot down the stretch was huge. Three blocks, he scored two buckets. He's not a mistake-guy. The only mistakes he makes is setting an illegal screen and trying to get his teammates open. So I'm not going to be upset with him about that. So I'm really excited about him.