

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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## Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



**Q. Even without a lot of your best pieces, you've managed to have a really good and efficient offense, even with some of the absences. What has helped the offense continue to grow and be successful and be consistent?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: We still have good ball movement. Obviously, Luka helps a lot, having that post presence that can really score. But he's also done a really good job passing the ball out of the double-team, and he gets to the glass. I think Kriener has been helpful. Wieskamp is having a terrific season. That's important. Connor moves the ball. Toussaint can break defenses down. There's a lot of factors. I think Cordell is a really good passer, Bakari is a really good passer. So you've just got to move it and then pick your spots when you go and try to spread the defense as much as you can.

**Q. How much is that element about discipline and unselfishness, how much do they figure into finding those open shots?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think any team that's going to be efficient offensively has to kind of have that makeup. If there's any element of selfishness, the ball doesn't move, the ball sticks, defense locks in, and you're taking quick shots or you're driving into packs of people and turning it over. So I think even though we didn't shoot it well the other night, you watch the film and we took good shots, guys were open, we moved it, we shot it. It didn't go in. Luka went back and got a bunch of them for us. Kriener got a few. It's the best you can ask for. And I think that has to continue.

**Q. What is Toussaint specifically, and your guards in general, what are they facing tomorrow night against Maryland?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: A tough talented group, Obviously, Cowan is one of the best players in the country, but Ayala and Morsell, Wiggins, these are veteran guys that have really proven to be terrific players in this league. Smith is really good, too. And that presents different problems. Scott has been a fine addition to that team.

Not only do they have versatile options and athletic backcourt people, they're big. They're all 6'5", 6'6",

except for Cowan who's got a tremendous burst. So that presents challenges that are somewhat unique.

**Q. Another team that's kind of gone small -- really Smith isn't even a true post man. Is that something you can take advantage of with the lineup you're using right now?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: We match up with it, obviously with the lineup that we had. With Kriener now in the lineup, that's different. It's one of those things you look and say, well, can we take advantage of it. But then if they're playing four smalls and we've got two bigs, then you look at the other side, are they taking advantage of it. So you're dealing with it at both ends.

**Q. CJ is out for an extended period of time. Where is the biggest void that he's maybe going to leave?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, you know, he's just a terrific player that does everything, makes baskets, makes plays off the dribble, defends. He's not a mistake maker, so you lose a guy like that, it's going to hurt your team. But it's an opportunity for somebody else. I think Bakari has proven he can do it. Kriener has been terrific. Connor can be versatile. Those guys then have to log more minutes, all of them, including Cordell, and then we've got to get Ash ready. He was not available for duty the other night, but he was cleared yesterday.

**Q. Players like minutes, obviously, but when somebody gets four or five more minutes added to their duties, do they have to change at all how they go about things?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, I don't think so. What I have to do is assess whether or not they can handle it from a conditioning standpoint because if you ask them, nobody would ever want to come out, and I respect that, and that's the way I was, and that's what I would expect them to be. But if you have a guy that's really dragging because he's playing too many minutes, that's a problem, and you've got to get the guy out no matter what.

But I think as time goes on, you can condition yourself to play more minutes. If you think about it, you've got four media time-outs in each half, I can use one in the first half, and I can do it again in the second half. I prefer to save mine, as we all know, but we needed them the other night at the end. But you can utilize them differently now with a shorter bench and rest your

guys a little bit more.

**Q. When you're hit with injuries and stuff like this like you have, how important for you and the coaches to stay positive, and it seems like you don't want to hear anything about excuses. That was brought up after the game and you right away did I missed that. How important is that?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think you can really fall into a trap with that. We're not the only team that's going through this. We're not the only team in this league that's going through this. There's guys injured, there's guys that leave. Bottom line is we have other players that we believe in or they wouldn't be wearing this uniform. And so that's an opportunity for them to step up and produce when given the opportunity. Like Mike just said, you have some guys who are going to get more minutes, and they're really good players, okay, they've got to stay on the floor more. And there's coaches in our profession that play six or seven every night. It's all they do. It's what they believe in. I've not done that. I've liked to play more like eight, nine or ten if we can. That way when you're playing a fast tempo you always have fresh bodies out there.

But things change throughout the course of the season. You have to make adjustments, and guys have to recognize that. The only way we're going to overcome it is if everybody is on the same page in regard to the attitude that's necessary to continue to be successful.

**Q. Garza played 36 minutes Tuesday night. Seems like he's built for that. Is that a fair assessment?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Oh, yeah, he's capable. We try to get him out a minute here, a minute there. You hope he stays out of foul trouble so you don't have to keep him out longer than that. He needs to be on the floor. Same with Joe. I think Connor needs to be out there. Toussaint, as well.

I think Kriener has had a terrific season. He was decent the other night. He was disappointed in himself, which I respect. When a guy says, hey, I need to be better, you respect that about somebody's character, and he will be.

**Q. Connor's outside shot has really come along. What was the work that he did, and was there anything --**

FRAN McCAFFERY: It's minor stuff. I think more importantly putting the work in, as you said. You get in the gym and you shoot a ton. It's all about lift and follow-through typically, getting your lower half involved, and then just raise up and shoot it when you're open. Guys that typically struggle shooting the ball are guys that are shooting contested shot. If you're open and

you've got a solid stroke, you'll make a fair amount. I think the thing for him is he's got to be ready to shoot it when it's available. If they're doubling Luka, they're running at Joe, the other guys on the floor have to be able to step up and make shots.

**Q. You mentioned the doubles and triples going at Luka. How do you combat that moving forward?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, there's no simple solution. You have to move the ball, screen, and cut. You have to go in and out. He has to keep working. We have to keep recognizing when he is open he's got to get it. We can't stop going to him because they're doubling him, but we've seen it all already, whether it's just sitting on top of him or doubling on the catch, doubling on the bounce, doubling from different locations. There's nothing he's not used to, and if there's two on one, then you've got an advantage somewhere else.

**Q. Bakari seemed to really get into the flow of it against Cincinnati but sometimes seems tentative to maybe shoot. Do you need to encourage him?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: He needs to shoot the ball. He's a good shooter. He didn't shoot it well the other night, but if you break the film down, he played well, and that's what you have to be thankful for, that he was out there effectively doing what he's supposed to do at both ends, moving the ball, driving the ball, feeding the post, playing defense. He played 15 minutes. Sometimes when you played 15 minutes, you don't get into the flow offensively, and he took three threes, and he was open, and didn't make any of them, so maybe he decided I'll just move it, I'll just drive it, which is fine.

But I will continue to encourage him to shoot.

**Q. How important is it for you to get a stretch of games at home?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, we haven't been here much. Our fan base when we have been here has been tremendous, and we need that, especially when you're playing a ranked team like Maryland. It's been a good game when we've played them, whether it's been here or there. They've been good games. We're looking forward to being back here.

**Q. How tough is that schedule? You guys have been traveling a lot.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, it's one of those things that you just kind of deal with it. You don't think about it. You don't talk about it. It's just prepare for the next game, and after we came back from Cincinnati, that stretch before Cincinnati was difficult. But then we had a break, and then we played Kennesaw, then we had another little break. Typically everybody has a break around finals, which I guess you could argue is not really a break because you're just working hard in a

different area. It's not like you're relaxing. But the fact that we played on the 21st and had a couple days at Christmas I think was really important for kids to see their families, and then you know coming back after Ken saw you're going to play all Big Ten games. You're a little bit more of a regimen now with two games a week, so hopefully that will help us.

**Q. Home teams have been really good in the conference so far. Anything you think that can be attributed to or is it kind of the way it's been?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think that's the way it normally is. I don't think there's anything special about it. I think you have a lot of good teams in this league and good teams oftentimes win at home. But when you look at the rosters of who you're playing against, they obviously have the capability of beating you at any time. Everybody has got good players. Everybody has got a good coach. Everybody has got a great atmosphere. Hopefully the atmosphere will be really good tomorrow night.