

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Friday, January 4, 2019

Fran McCaffrey Men's Basketball



Q. You didn't see what you wanted to see from Luka in order to play him last night. What do you need to see the next couple days from him?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It was actually pretty easy. If I asked the kid to play he would've played. That's how he's wired. He wanted to play. The plan all along was to see how he did in practice the night before. Within five minutes you could tell he wasn't ready, so made the decision not to play him.

Warmed him up because he needed to get a little bit of a work out in, and he was told, I'm not going to run you out there unless you're pretty close to 100%. So now he needs to be little more explosive. He's a guy that -- he's not the most explosive guy but he has athletic power, strength, and he can play above the rim when he has to.

So he's mainly got to get that back, especially jumping off his bad foot, which is important for a right-handed guy. So we'll see. He's running better. He's not in pain. But he doesn't have the explosiveness he needs. If he get that, we'll play him. Will he get that by Sunday? I don't know. We'll run him out there today and see how he does, a little bit tomorrow. He's not going to practice the whole time obviously, but we'll see.

Q. The point guard position last night, didn't get a lot -- I mean, is that a concern to you? I know don't dwell on the bad, but...

FRAN McCAFFERY: You know, that position is a little bit unique for us because we got eight assists. As a team we had 14 turnovers. You can't go on the road and turn it over 14 times. So that wasn't good.

Jordan didn't get a lot of clean looks. He's a guy that, yeah, he's a point guard, but you're sort of counting on him to offensive production along with assists. I think when Connor came in I think he felt like he needed to be solid and get us into our stuff and run some stuff and try to get TC involved and Kriener. Did a little bit of that.

But we're kind of used to how they're guarding Jordan now. They're paying a lot of attention to him. That's

something that started happening last year. I think he's trying to look for his shot but not hunt for shots. It's kind of two different things.

He doesn't want to be selfish, but at the same time he's got to be a little bit selfish and really work. We have to do a better job screening for him and getting him the ball. Same for Joe. Got to get him -- he hits two threes to start the game and then don't go to him enough. We have to move the ball better, and that will take some of the pressure off Tyler.

I think the good thing is Kriener got 10. He's got that capability. Three for three, four for four. Gives us another guy who can score.

Connor has to look for his shot a little bit more. He's a guy that can score. He's not a scorer, but did average 20 points a game in high school. Doesn't necessarily equate to this level, but you have to be able to get some points and then that will settle everything else down, I think.

Q. Connor need to trust his three-point shot more?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, he's always been close to 38, 40% in his career. He's not really looking for it. He's sort of driving to the closeouts and feeding the post and moving it, which is fine from that position -- unless you get the ball at the end of the shot clock or unless your man is helping on the roll and you're wide open. Then you have to pull.

But he's had a tendency to just drive that space, which is not a bad way to go, like I said, unless it's the end of the shot clock.

Q. Tyler did a lot of damage inside in the second half. What was different from the first half?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Wasn't anything different in terms of what our approach was. I think he was more aggressive, but we've got to be locked into getting the ball to him when he's working.

We had some ill-advised shots in the first half, especially at the wrong times. That's a fine line, because I'm trying to build confidence in my guys to go get buckets and go score and go make a play, but if you're at the wrong end of a run you need longer possessions, you need to grind it a little bit more.

Go to him. Get Jordan a shot, get Joe a shot. Along with Isaiah, that's our four best offensive players with Luka out. So we've got to be cognizant of that and do a better job there.

Q. He missed a few jumpers in the first half. Does he have instruction -- what are your instructions? When you've got an open shot, take it, take it, take it?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Pretty much. And I think what I was referring to, Mike, was sometimes we shot contested or they were sort of open but not really open. We don't want to shoot those, especially early in the clock. I don't care who it is. If we move it, move it, move it, and you catch it and you're open, you shoot the ball. Those guys know who they are.

We have a lot guys that I'm comfortable with in that scenario, but then get a guy -- Joe makes three in the first half, and then second half he pulls -- shoots a step-back contested three on one pass. That's not a good shot, even though I would always tell Joe Weiskamp, I want you to shoot the ball. Go shoot the ball. That's what you do. But not that one.

So just discerning a good one and not a good one under the circumstances is -- sort of was the challenge last night. Always is moving forward, I guess.

Q. It was said in a TV interview after the game that it seemed like you guys were pushing out on the three too far and getting caught in some of your switches in defense. Seem like you were maybe pushing too far out?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think that's right. You're talking about two guys that made 90 threes coming into the game. That's an astounding number. So you don't want Edwards to hit six and Klein to hit six or five, so you're up on those guys.

They do a good job of screening or dribble hand-offs to them. Their spacing is always good. Where we broke down was, okay, if they're rolling a guy, who has the roll? Okay, who is in the corner? Don't chase to the corner on a non-shooter. You've got to be really locked into personnel, who is on the floor.

A lot of times what happens on that stuff, if you don't stay up on the hand-off guy or the screener, they turn the corner on you. You have to wall them off, which we did a good job of that. But that's the roll guy. Somebody has to get him. Might be Bohannon on Budreau or Harms, but that's got to be a quick switch after that.

We did a pretty good job on it sometimes. Didn't do a

good job on it all the time, and that was the problem. You give up too many layups. Now they're shooting a high percentage, so it doesn't matter. If you give them layups they're probably going to beat you.

Q. I believe you've given up 100 points in the paint in the last two Big Ten games. Too early to say that's a concern?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it is a concern. You know, Nick Ward is a handful in the paint. Okay, that's a different situation completely. But last night, okay, we made a decision again we were really going to focus on those two guys and didn't do a good enough job in the paint.

So I don't know that you want to start blaming all the guys. They were trying to do what we asked them to do. There are things that are in conjunction with that that weren't carried out effectively. We just have to do a better job of getting them ready for that and making sure they're locked into that.

Q. Nebraska, I mean, obviously this is a good team. What would you say defines them?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it's a veteran group that's very talented. They played really well last year when they had some new faces. Even though Palmer and Copeland were there before, they didn't play together. They all came together when they put Robie in the starting lineup. Took the big fella out and put Robie in with Palmer, with Copeland, with Watson, those four guys in particular.

And then the rest of the team, you know, basically have five guys in doubles now. Everybody kind of understands their role. They have a team that I think really -- a team of pieces that fit. They have guys this can go get a bucket. They can score in transition, they can score in set plays. You know, from my estimation they're a very unselfish group. They're committed to winning. They won 13 games in our league last year. You know, they're difficult to guard. They're explosive. They can score in bunches.

So we can't have kind of what we had last night where we're playing pretty well and then a run comes. This team is very capable of a big run.

Q. Last time you lost a road game you came back and had three days to prepare for a rival here. What was the best thing about that turnaround?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, obviously hope to. The first thing you do when you don't play well in a game, whether it's home or away, is address what went wrong, what can we fix, and what went well. There were some good things last night that we need to continue to do, even though it sometimes doesn't seem

that way.

So you want to do that, and then focus on the next opponent. So watched some film last night. Had a meeting about that. Today after this we have practice and we'll start focusing on Nebraska.

Our guys know their players. We played them last year. They know who they have. They know how good they are. A lot of respect for them.

They'll have to lock into the game plan for this one.

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