

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball



Q. The zone I guess in the last eight minutes, it seemed to frustrate their offense. What did it do well?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: You know what, I think we played it better. Our activity, our cohesion, we played it in the first half without that level of success. We were just a little kind of like our man defense was, we were a little bit a step slow. This is a quick team. You have to be -- whether you're man or zone -- you got to be down in your stance and you got to stay down there for the entire possession or you're going to get blown by. And so, in the zone we did a better job guarding dribble penetration in the zone, and not bumping unnecessarily, staying matched. And then talling up when the penetration came. So you're not putting them on the free-throw line.

Q. Is this just if you're going to start four freshmen, you're going to have nights like this or is this something else that you see?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, I think what you have to do is not jump to that type of thinking. I think you have to give more respect to our opponent and the job that Coach Pikiell is doing with that program. They're a different team defensively and they're a different team offensively. 19 offensive rebounds, they out-rebounded us, they turned us 18 times. You got to credit those kids from Rutgers for that.

Q. Pretty athletic, too.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: They're long. And they're athletic and he can go small, he can play Williams, Johnson, and Sanders, or he can go big and play Dom at the small forward, he's 6'-9". And then they bring in seven footers, two of them, and then a 6'-11" guy off the bench and he's rotating those guys, so he's got fresh bodies flying at the glass. It's a tough team to rebound against.

Q. After Dom broke the scoring drought, everything seemed to be more active like a flipped switch. Was there anything you saw specifically that was different?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Him. Yeah, it was him. He was the man today. He was the difference in the game without question. Dom Uhl. I was so proud of him. I

should have played him more in the second half the other night. It was one of those games where we kind of had a lineup and we stuck with that group. You go back and you break down the film and see what the guys did right and wrong and you see what you did right and wrong. And I felt comfortable with that group and they fought for me. But maybe another fresh body and a guy who played well enough in the first half to come back in. He could have hung his head, he had a terrific practice yesterday, I just thought he earned the opportunity to get more minutes and that's the reason we won.

Q. He didn't score, but it seems like Christian Williams his length kind of caused --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I told him that. I think he was down, especially because he made that incredible steal, then he missed the layup. I think that really upset him. But he impacted both ends. When he came in, I thought his activity level and his ability to push the ball was really good.

Q. A couple hours before the game Dom was out there shooting by himself. Didn't look like a guy who was down on his game. Looked like a guy who was trying to work his way out of it.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: And that's the professionalism that you always hope to have on your team. It would have been real easy for him to get mad at me and make excuses. He just kept working. He's here two hours early and working and he whacks a three as soon as we put him in.

Q. What's your approach with him when he was slumping a little bit and struggling to kind of get in a rhythm, how do you handle that? Do you even talk to him or just let him get out of it on their own?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: A little bit of both. Sometimes you leave them alone, sometimes you sit them down, sometimes it's one or two encouraging things. When it's you all said and done, it will always be a positive approach in that situation. Because he's already struggling a little bit about certain things. So, he doesn't need me to be negative, or my coaching staff. So we'll just stay positive with him, encourage his effort level because he gives you that every day. And we have all seen him play this well and it will be a big impact on our team if he continues to do that.

Q. How hard is it, or is it hard at all, to bounce back from a game like Thursday that's so draining?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: It's funny, because I've been asked that question so many times in the last three days. And when I was first asked the question it was like, do you think there's going to be a hangover? I mean hangover for what? We lost. So, there should never be a hangover. You should be hungry and ready to get back to work and ready to fight. But everybody seems to keep asking me the same question because, clearly, they think that that was a possibility. And then we don't play well in the first half and it kind of sort of looks like, well, maybe they just weren't quite ready. But again, I mean, I thought we were ready, I thought Rutgers was ready, too.

Q. Do you think it was a matter of having tired legs though in the first half?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I thought there was one stretch where Pete was tired. And we got him. And it was one stretch where Baer was tired and we got him. The rest of the guys didn't play enough minutes to be tired, in my opinion.

Q. Is this a confidence thing at all with Dom, sometimes it seems like once he gets going --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: It's always going to be a confidence thing at some level. How do you feel about your self. You always hear sometimes you just have to see the ball go in once or twice. And when he came in, he made impact plays immediately and that really changed it for him, because then his impact defensively in this game was tremendous. And the thing that you don't realize sometimes -- you guys have been around, so you probably do -- but we play him at 3, 4, and 5. And he's always in the right place. And that's a lot harder than people think. Some guys just can't do that. They just can't. Even though they have the ability to play three positions, they just can't remember three positions and they're infective. So they end up being poor at all three of them rather than good at one of them. But he can equally do all three and it doesn't seem to be a problem for him.

Q. Do you think this kind of game, maybe getting him going, that you'll hopefully have more of the same?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Absolutely. That's my plan and my hope and obviously his hope for himself.

Q. When you start four freshmen, do you expect some inconsistency? These guys aren't finished products yet and are going through the Big Ten the first time.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: What I expect is not perfect execution. But I expect consistency of effort. So I didn't feel like we got consistency of effort on a few

possessions early. They didn't fight to get to the front, didn't sprint back, turn and wall off their speed. So, that's what I addressed at halftime. We were much better in the second half at that.

Q. When you kind of struggled to score early in the second half, how helpful was it to get some turnovers and get some easy baskets?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Well, it's absolutely crucial that you create some offense with your defense, because you're stifling their offense a little bit, because they were cooking there for a while. And then you get some easy baskets and then the lead shrinks and everybody settles down and then you can grind it. You look up there and you're down three or four, it's a lot different than when you're down nine.