

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery

Men's Basketball Press Conference



Q. Joe Wieskamp getting Player of the Week yesterday, could you talk about what he's been doing not just in the last week but in the last, I don't know how many games.

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: I'm really proud of Joe and how he continues to improve. He's been a terrific player from the day he showed up on campus. But he just keeps growing. You see it in his confidence, his physicality.

He's just making big shot after big shot. His defense I think has really taken a huge step. He's making steals and he's always been a phenomenal rebounder. And you don't always get that from your small forward position, and I've been playing him a lot at 2-guard with CJ out. He's still rebounding at a very high level. Playing him a lot of minutes and he's in phenomenal physical condition. Any time you've got a guy who is playing like he's playing and he gets recognized for it. It's a great feeling.

Q. With how the defenses have been playing Garza, is it almost absolutely essential that Joe has been doing what he's been doing?

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, especially without CJ, but he needs help, too. We for the most part have gotten great productivity off the bench. I forget exactly which became it was where we didn't, might have been the Indiana game on the road, we didn't get as much.

But normally, we're getting less offense off the bench because you no longer have Keegan Murray coming off the bench. He's in the starting lineup. He hits two threes to start the game. Connor, of course, played great Michigan State game, and that was big.

But we are fortunate to have that kind of team where different people can come up huge on different nights. Wieskamp is a guy that you sort of expect him to be at that all-conference level, and that's what he's doing.

Q. I meant to ask you this the other night after the Michigan State game, but that was a game where you

only had five turnovers again as a team. You've done that twice this year, both against Michigan State. Can you talk to how difficult that is, especially the pace you guys want to play at and how are you able to do that?

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: I really think it comes down to the players that we have. And you're right, we play fast, so that might increase your turnover numbers. We played a team on Saturday that's very physical so sometimes that affects you.

But I think to a man, we have a group that understands it. I don't look at our team and say, okay, we have -- we don't have any bad ball handlers. We don't have anybody who doesn't understand the game and what the game plan is.

So we talk about ball movement and cutting and screening and getting people open, and throwing the ball to open people. It's getting a group that understands that, and understands that in particular, when you're playing really athletic teams, which pretty much everybody in our league is, live ball turnovers where you're driving into packs of people, turning it over, or which is equally bad, taking a horrendous shot that leads to a long rebound. You know, those turn into buckets for the other team.

So understanding the value of the basketball is something that we stress, but I'm not going to take credit for it. I'm going to tell you that we have smart, talented guys that truly understand that and understand the impact that that has on a team's ability to win.

Q. What do you see from Wisconsin so far this year? Really veteran club. A lot of guys back from last year.

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, a really talented group. They have got a lot of different weapons. Multiple three-point shooters. Like you said, veteran guys. So they aren't a big mistake club, never have been. Always a low turnover group. Starts with Trice as a veteran point guard. He's already in his fifth year. It starts with him.

But their big guys are equally comfortable in the post or on the perimeter. They run what they run. They are a very good defensive team, so a team that you have to play really well to beat.

Q. I don't necessarily want you to be able to speak for

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Luka, but with him approaching Roy's scoring record, can you speak to just how rare this really is, especially with what the -- with what Roy's record was and what Luka has done in his four years? You coached Devyn for four years and you got to know Roy in your time at Iowa.

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, it was one of those records that you knew it would eventually get broken but it was going to be really hard, especially now with people leaving early. But any time you can score over 2,000 points, that's an incredible accomplishment. I coached against Roy and, of course, like you said, I got to know him, which was really special for me.

But to watch Luka just keep grinding, we had Aaron White, he came close, but you're going to have to be an incredibly productive player for four years to score over 2,000 points and stay on the floor. I'm so proud of Luka, and as I said before, I just wish Roy was here to see it and be a part of it.

Devyn Marble was truly one of my favorite players I've ever coached. I've said that many times and I mean it, because not only was he great, he is one of the smartest players I've ever had. Played multiple positions and just competed like his dad.

Q. I've actually got three questions. With Iowa, Nebraska not scheduled yet, seems like it would make sense mid-next week. Are you surprised it has not been scheduled? Do you think it will be in that window?

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: It's going to be rescheduled. There's been a lot of talk about it but as we come down the stretch here, across the board, there could be other changes, as well in terms of you're playing this day instead of that day. We're just going to have to roll with it.

You can look and say, it didn't make sense that you play here. We might, but we also might not. But it will happen.

Q. I don't think we asked but CJ after the game. He was optimistic the previous game. Did he have a setback or is it a day-to-day deal?

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: He was terrific, you're right, against Rutgers, and he felt good. He didn't feel so good the next day or the next day. So he was not ready to go. I guess you're right. That's the definition of day-to-day. Boy, he felt great and then he didn't feel great. Well, then he's not going to play. We're not going to run him out there. It's just not fair.

And I say this over and over, he's been really diligent with his rehab and treatment and being in the training room, and hopefully we'll get this thing figured out.

Q. Jordan goes back to the Kohl Center this week. How big that shot four years ago, was that a big moment for the program? A big moment for him in your mind to win in the Kohl Center like that?

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: I guess he looks at it -- I didn't really look at it that way but the fact that he had two brothers play there. Probably grew up going to games there, right. That's probably what you're referring to.

But in terms of how I looked at that time and how I looked at him was you know, we're playing a really good team on the road and just do what you do. That kid's a gamer. He's always been a gamer. We're down -- we're down two. Ran a play for Peter Jok who led the league in scoring, and he missed it. Cordell rebounded, threw it to J-Bo and he buried it and we went down and got a stop.

It was an awesome night for a young team, that was a very young team on our way to 19 wins. Because we didn't really know what to expect from that team. J-Bo was a freshman started at point. Tyler Cook was a freshman. And had some great moments in the league, that group. But that was a big shot for a freshman, especially with his entire family there. So I understand what you're saying.

Q. Wondering about the development of Kris Murray and Josh Ogundele, how have they developed in practice?

COACH FRAN McCAFFERY: They both have been great. It's hard. We're playing 11 -- not 11 if somebody is out, but we've kind of rotated 11 guys. But I feel comfortable with both of them.

Kris is ahead of Josh. Josh will get there. Kris can really play. He's just behind some guys right now you know with his brother and with Patrick and Jack and Luka and Connor and Wieskamp. But it will open up for him. He's gaining valuable experience in practice. He's different. He does a lot of things his brother does but he's different in a lot of ways, too. He's going to be a really good player here.

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