

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Fran McCaffery

Men's Basketball Press Conference



Q. Next two games you're going to face two of the biggest centers in the country probably; I'm guessing Filip will be on them, and how do you expect that to go?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: With those guys, you're going to need help no matter who plays them, so you rotate some guys and you give them some help.

Q. Can you use your quickness and stuff in those match-ups to where they can help you?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think you can to a degree. You don't necessarily want to make dramatic changes, but you have a lineup that's a little bit smaller. You're giving up size and you have to deal with that on the defensive end. Well, maybe you can stretch the floor a little bit more, go off the dribble a little bit more, and ultimately maybe make some threes, drive the ball, maybe draw some fouls, that kind of thing.

Q. In a nutshell, what are you up against here Friday night?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Purdue is probably as deep a team as I've seen, and I mean over a long period of time, not just this year. They've had nine different guys start. They have a quality player at every position and a quality backup at every position. All of them can score. They have multiple 3-point shooters. They have a lot of size. They have experience.

So they'll be No. 1 essentially with Duke losing. I thought they were No. 1 already, personally.

It's a great challenge for our team, and it's going to be a great environment. It's one of the places if you've been watching, they've been full. Their fans are excited about that team, and they well should be.

Q. What does it do for your team this early in the season to play a team like Purdue and kind of see where you stack up?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think it's what you come to expect in this league. There's going to be somebody every year, sometimes multiple teams that are top five teams, teams that view themselves and others as well as National Championship contenders.

It's not always the first game out of the conference schedule, but this year it is, and it's not always going to be on the road. It's a great challenge for our team, see how we perform under pressure in that environment against a team that is incredibly talented, but the thing that I think has impressed me is they execute well. They're not a mistake team, and they stay the course and they defend.

Matt Painter's teams have always defended with tremendous intensity, so they're going to challenge your defense, and then they're going to challenge your offense, as well.

Q. For those what haven't seen Ivey or only seen him a time or two, how would you describe him and what separates him from --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I thought as the season went on last year, as a really young player I thought he really came on. Hit the game winner, and from that point forward he was clearly an elite player, not only in our league but in the country. Had a great summer, was on the gold medal team, and I think came into this year with a tremendous amount of confidence.

He has blinding speed, but he also makes plays. He finds people, he hits threes. He's always coming at you. He's an effective attack guy and puts pressure on your defense, especially in transition.

Q. Going back to the Virginia game where the rebounding margin was a lot closer, when you went back and watched it on film, how would you assess how you played in the paint?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I thought we did really well. We had that one stretch where they got -- three times they got second shots. You're on the road, it's a tight game. You get them to miss, you want to give them one if you can, and they got three put-backs, and that's something I think every coach tries to guard against every team. I thought



for the most part we were pretty good, but need to be better. Need to be better on Friday.

Q. How can a road win like you had against Virginia maybe help you on Friday night handling that environment?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I thought our guys handled the environment really well the other night. It was intense in there. A lot of those guys never played in front of anybody on the road, so I think that was good.

They were able to essentially carry out the game plan without getting rattled. Yeah, they made a run, but I thought we executed pretty well. We had some defensive breakdowns. We did. But I thought we were fighting and battling and had a bunch of guys step up.

Q. You said Keegan was fine after the game, but is he still --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I would expect him to play.

Q. I think Keegan said over the off-season he put on about 15-20 pounds. How much more equipped is he to go up against those bigger guys --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah, I think it's one thing to talk about him going up against E.J. Liddell, and it's another thing with Zach Edey or even Trevion. It's two different things, and you prefer to keep him more at the forward position if we can, but we will play him there some.

I haven't noticed a huge difference. He's always been able to hold his ground. He's always been able to score inside and be equally effective on the perimeter. That's what makes him special.

When you're talking about two guys of that size, you do need a little bit of extra girth.

Q. How is Edey different than what Isaac Haas was? I know he's a couple inches taller.

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think he's a little more mobile. Isaac was pretty tough. I had a lot of respect for him. But I think Edey runs the floor, and he moves his feet. He's another guy that's constantly coming at you, and they run stuff for him, so you have to deal with him.

Q. In your match-ups with Purdue and your film study over the years, how have you seen Trevion kind of grow into the role he has now?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I loved him when he was a

freshman. I thought, this guy is really good. So I think it's been more of a sort of methodical improvement because he could always score, he could always rebound, he could always pass. He was a willing passer, always has been. He's a thicker guy but is amazingly nimble on his feet and athletic. I think you're seeing a guy as he matures just gets more and more confident and a little more effective at times.

He's one of the better players in our league I thought the minute he showed up on their campus.

Q. Williams' passing, I saw one last night and it's not the first time --

FRAN MCCAFFERY: He does that all the time. Yeah, he does. Again, it comes down to he's good at it. I think he likes to do it. When you have a guy like that, it's good for the other guys because they cut and they spot up and they know if they're open he's going to find them, so they're working hard to get open all the time.

Q. Going back to the Virginia game and what you said a few minutes ago about how it was a tough game, a tough environment, to have someone like Jordan hit those shots to pace the team, can moments like that represent the biggest aspect of what he brings?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah, he was obviously great at the start of the game, but I thought he showed tremendous maturity throughout a couple big plays coming down the stretch. He has the ability to settle everybody down, and everybody plays better around him when he's out there.

Q. What do you expect Purdue to do to him?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah, I don't think they'll do anything more than what everybody else has been doing. They stay close to him. They might switch out on him and be a little more physical with him off the ball or whatever, make him work.

Q. It was interesting to me talking to Jordan about Joe T at the end of last game. Jordan said Joe did a great job of knowing when to slow the team down or calm them down, but we always applaud Joe for his speed. Is that one of the biggest areas you've seen him grow?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: Yeah, you have to know the difference, when to go, when not to go. We obviously want to go as much as we can and encourage him to do that, but it's not always the smartest thing. Sometimes you've got to pull it back. Time and score. Maybe it's a short run of -- we went through three possessions without scoring, we want to keep him on defense because we're quick

shooting the ball, penetration is something he's really good at. You want him to keep attacking the defense, drawing two, but sometimes you don't want those guys driving into packs of people and spitting it up because there are lay-ups at the other end. So those decisions have to be made quickly, and you have to make a lot of them. He's clearly in a good place with that right now.

Q. With the two highest scoring teams in America, but is there a difference between how you want to play, what kind of tempo you want to establish?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: You know, probably a little bit different. With the weapons that they have, especially inside, they're going to run some sets, but they'll put it up quickly. They'll go. You look at the speed they have in the backcourt, you're not going to limit -- that's not going to limit Jaden Ivey because he wants to run a set. He's going to get it and go. Isaiah is shooting the ball and Stefanovic is shooting the ball, Newman is shooting the ball. So they're going to shoot threes, as well. They're going to get it and go and push that tempo. I haven't even talked about Hunter who started for them for two years coming off the bench.

They've done a really good job, I think, of getting buy-in from guys that probably were expecting to be starters and are not but playing a lot. So there's a lot to be said for that.

Q. With the scheduling with the Big Ten championship game the next day in Indianapolis, do you expect more fans than maybe normal?

FRAN MCCAFFERY: I think that's a logical assumption, but I think the game is sold out, so I'm not sure there's going to be any tickets available.

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