

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Fran McCaffery

Men's Basketball Press Conference



FRAN McCAFFERY: I've been really impressed with them. They're deep, and I think Trayce is playing at an all-American level.

Veteran group; they have some new guys, but they have guys that have been there. They're all playing well. A lot of different guys on any given day can hurt you.

Q. How different is their style with Coach Woodson?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I don't know if it that much different. Obviously he put his stamp on it. It's a team that really competes defensively. Offensively, they're focused a lot on Trayce, but there is a lot of other guys, they have a lot other weapons. Stewart can hit threes, Kopp is a veteran guy, Johnson, Phinisee, you can keep going, Galloway.

Race Thompson is playing at a whole 'nother level. You saw that last year with Race. He really took a big step, became one of the better players in our league, playing great.

So they attack you. They have athletes. They legitimately go 12-deep.

Q. What did you focus on during the break you have had?

FRAN McCAFFERY: We kind of focused on ourselves a little bit more. You have a week off, you're not really jumping to the next game. You're trying to get better at some of the things we thought we didn't do well. We didn't defend or rebound as well as we would've liked, so worked on that.

Q. How would you assess your team's defensive progress this year?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It's been good at times. It's not been as consistent as it needs to be.

Q. Keegan took that hard fall. How has he progressed in the last week or so?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think it was good for him to have a couple days where he could get in the training room. I think he's feeling a lot better.

Q. Safe to say the rest of the team is near full health?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, that's safe to say, yeah.

Q. How can you guys be a better rebounding team? You got guys that are capable of it.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think it's a collective situation. A lot of the rebounds we're not getting are the long -- you know, teams shooting a lot of threes, balls bouncing funny, our guards have to rebound better, our wings have to rebound better.

Yeah, we have to be more physical at times, but when you're struggling rebounding the ball it's not just four and five man, it's everybody. We have to be better collectively, which is only going to help us on offense as well.

Q. Going back to the several-day stretch between the games, during the last stretch the team came out and went on a winning streak. Do you anticipate a similar type of energy, sense of urgency?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think there is no question about it, that you have couple days off, you need to come out with energy and play better than we did in the last game. I think we're smart enough to know and understand that.

And practice has been good. I expect that to continue.

Q. How do you assess Filip's play as he's kind of gotten used to Big Ten Basketball?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think he's been playing really well. The last game of course he was in foul trouble the whole time so didn't play much, but when he's been able to stay out on the floor he's been effective, both on the glass, defensively. You see his offense coming a little bit more and more, and I think that will continue as well for him.

Q. I realize this is out of your control and not likely to change any so you just deal with it, but the Big Ten schedule, do you like the way it's constructed? What



would you like to see in a perfect world?

FRAN McCAFFERY: You know, there is a lot of factors going into that which is what I think your point was. TV kind of drives it. How do you figure out who the single plays, double plays, home and road, it's never consistent. It's not going to be, so it's not worth complaining about.

There are a lot of things you would like to see done differently. Everybody wants Saturday home games. Can't always get them.

The time of the games, you know, it's pretty well set. 6:00 and 8:00 and they're 7:00 to 9:00 in the east. So odd times on Sundays. That's been a relatively recent development the last 10 years.

So if you have a weekend game, you would rather play on Saturday, but we'll play whenever the game is scheduled. We'll show up and play it.

Q. You have another 8 p.m. on Thursday, and seems like that's a real problem time for your fans. Is it frustrating to not see the arena as full as it could be because of factors beyond your control?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, but I think it's like you said, that's when the games are, so you can't complain about it. It would be really foolish of me to complain about that.

Like you said, I don't have any control over whether the fans can show up or not. You know, 8 p.m. on a Thursday night is tough for someone who wants to drive over from Des Moines. We all recognize that. We wish they could be better, but that's when the games are.

Q. I think Jordan commands a lot attention. People look sometimes and say he's not being aggressive. Seems like with the attention, commands all the attention, so how do you maybe get him going maybe more so earlier in this games?

FRAN McCAFFERY: We put the ball in his hands a little bit more in the last game; that helped.

And I appreciate him because he's not hunting shots. He's never been a guy that took bad shots, so I certainly want him to shoot more. We're trying to run stuff for him. We will keep going to him.

He's got the ultimate green light. Again, put the ball in his hands a little more might help.

Q. Men's and women's programs here both have been leading in the nation, which I think mathematically is

almost impossible, but it's true. Have you had much of a chance to watch Caitlin? And if so, what did you think of her game?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Her game is next level. It always has been. I watched her in high school, watched her when she got here. She does things on the floor in terms of what she sees is stuff you don't see all the time. When you see it, it's special.

She's somebody that could very definitely be the first pick in the draft whenever she decides to come out, in my opinion.

She doesn't really have any weaknesses in her game that I've seen. I think her energy level is infectious on top of the fact that her skillset is so incredibly complete.

Q. Realizing they play differently, different positions, have different roles, are their personalities, similarities you see between her and Keegan?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think they're different. They play different positions, like you said. I think their personalities are different.

But they're effectiveness is pretty much the same.

Q. How has Keegan dealt with the increased potential? Seems pretty grounded.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, you wouldn't even know it to be around him. Businesslike approach. I just always want to make sure he's still having fun; he seems to be.

Q. Do you think that extra year of prep school really helped Keegan growing into the role quicker than maybe some people anticipated?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It definitely did, because I think they played like 40 some games, and Iowa high schools you only play 21, 22. So you're playing 40 plus games, playing against junior college teams, playing against other prep schools, other guys that are 20 years old.

But more importantly, it was an opportunity for him to just kind of be the man, which he was on that team. It was a good team. It wasn't like they didn't have other guys that could play. That's the kind of place that is.

But I remember the one weekend tournament, a lot of really good teams, he was the MVP and everybody was surprised because they didn't know who he was.

But that's how he is. He went and dominated the whole



weekend. I'm getting calls from friends of mine that are at the game.

But it wasn't surprising because I had gone down there, Billy and I went down there to see him, see both of them. You could see where it was headed pretty easily.

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