

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, December 6, 2018

Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball

Iowa - 98, Iowa State - 84

Q. Was this the response you were looking for after Monday night?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Exactly. You know, we really deviated from the game plan on Monday night, probably because we made -- if you remember, we made some buckets early, quick. You can't go into that building and quick-shoot the ball. We wanted to move it and get something out of our transition. We got nothing out of our transition game on Monday night, nothing. We had 18 points in the second half in the Wisconsin game in transition, and we got nothing up there. We wanted to establish our running game. We wanted to establish our ability to move the ball and get a lot of people involved, and then we had to rebound. We had a few too many turnovers, but that's a credit to them.

Q. It got a little chippy out there --

FRAN McCAFFERY: It was a spirited game from the beginning, and that's what you expect. I have tremendous respect for Steve Prohm, really do. They've got a really good team. They're going to win a lot of games. They've been terrific so far this season. I wish it didn't happen, but it's just competition, and we'll move on.

Q. Coach took you guys off the court at the end --

FRAN McCAFFERY: Whoa, whoa. No. That was the smart thing to do in that situation.

Q. Nicholas Baer really gave you -- when you extended that lead, he gave you a couple threes --

FRAN McCAFFERY: He was tremendous. He got offensive rebounds, put-backs. We were able to play him at the 3 and the 4, incredibly versatile.

Q. Is that Isaiah's best half that he's played, the first half?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I saw him score 19 points in a minute 37, so that's pretty good. But it started for him in the last game. He's got that in him. He's had games like that, and I just told him get your swag back and play that way, and I'm just really proud of him. He's really worked hard.



Q. How much better is the offense when he can just create like that and make shots?

FRAN McCAFFERY: If you think about it, early on we were throwing it inside with great success and then we started jamming it in, had some turnovers, some of them live ball. They're running out on the break. We've got to make shots. We've got to be able to have an inside-outside game, and that's what he gives you because he can also put it on the deck. He's out there with Jordan, Joe, and we've got multiple 3-point shooters. Connor will find him. He really gives us a weapon that we need.

Q. Connor gave you a boost in both halves it seemed like.

FRAN McCAFFERY: He was tremendous. He was plus 12 at halftime, plus 15 for the game when he was on the floor. He knows where to put the ball, knows when to go, when not to go. Coming down the stretch, he attacked. We didn't settle. We were in the bonus and eventually in the double bonus, a lot of it thanks to him, but he'll throw it inside to Tyler Cook, he'll load up our shooters. I couldn't be more proud of him.

Q. When did you know PemsI was going to be able to play for you, and to add on to that, what did he give you guys tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It was phenomenal. This has been an interesting time for him because I think he was thinking he'll have surgery. He started to feel a little better, wanted to give it a shot, so he was cleared to play, to give him a shot. I'm surprised at what his conditioning was, quite frankly. He was tremendous. He ran, he didn't seem to tire, gave us really good minutes as an experienced guy is what you would expect. We'll take it day-to-day from here.

Q. Did you see that coming from Cordell, that you had any chance --

FRAN McCAFFERY: I thought it was a possibility. It was a possibility in New York, it was a possibility when we came back. It's something that he and the doctors and the trainer deal with.

Q. Nicholas continued to hit big shots, especially in the second half. Can you talk about him?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He was absolutely spectacular. He's a guy that helps your team in so many ways,

defensively, on the glass. He's really smart. He executes. If we're going from motion to sets, he knows exactly where to go. He can play more than one spot. He tells other guys where to go, if we have a lineup or odd lineup on the floor, he is shooting the ball with great confidence but also gets on the glass and makes plays. He knows when to go, when not to go, not a mistake guy.

Q. You started three bench players, but how about the bench as a whole?

FRAN McCAFFERY: 36 points -- if you're going to beat a team the caliber of Iowa State, you've got to have depth and you've got to have other people doing things. You can't just count on one, two or three guys, and that's the kind of team we have.

Q. When you look at the way the team was able to respond after two tough losses, does this kind of show growth as a team?

FRAN McCAFFERY: No question, and they made a run at us, which we knew they would. It's a really good team. We have to hold them off, and that's what we did.

Q. Pemsf is still going to have surgery?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Don't know. We'll see.

Q. What did you need to see from him in order to feel comfortable playing Cordell? What were you looking for?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Kind of what you just saw. He was like that in practice yesterday.

Q. As a teammate he's always struck me as a very popular guy with the team --

FRAN McCAFFERY: Incredibly popular, friendly, talkative. If you know him -- you know him, he's a likable guy. He's the kind of guy you root for.

Q. It was a game-time decision, but what have you seen from him tonight and do you have him on a minutes restriction at all?

FRAN McCAFFERY: We did not have him on a minutes restriction. I thought -- quite honestly, I didn't think he'd be able to do what he did. I'm really proud of him. We got good news with the X-rays, so he could play as he was able to tolerate the pain, so at shootaround he did some stuff and still wasn't a go. Came back and did some defensive stuff before the game. He said, I can go, I want to go. I said, all right, let's go.

Q. In addition to the rebounding, what else were you guys able to do to keep them out of transition, which they like to do?

FRAN McCAFFERY: They're really good in transition. I think we made enough shots. You're able to get your

defense back when you're making shots. But it's a point of emphasis. You have to sprint back and get five guys under the ball. They have so many guys that will take it off the glass and go. It's not like, okay, you've got to get under Winston. No, Weiler-Babb will take it, Horton-Tucker will take it, Shayock will take it. You have so many different guys to get it off the glass and they're on top of you quickly. So if you're jogging back alongside the ball, they're going to get to the rim and get you in foul trouble and get and-ones. They got a couple of them, obviously, but if you get everybody back, then you've got a chance to defend them. That's what we did.

Q. It seemed like every time you really needed a hoop and they were making a run, Cook managed to get one, get inside and score.

FRAN McCAFFERY: His energy level was tremendous. Seven offensive rebounds, 26 and 11, and he's a tough cover. He's so quick, strong, and powerful. Steve rotated guys on him, put some bigs, some smalls, tried doubling. He got deep position, too; he was able to go quick, and that's what you've got to do.