

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Iowa City, Iowa, USA

## Coach Fran McCaffery

### Men's Basketball Press Conference



**Q. Purdue probably gave you guys as much trouble last year as any team you played. They're the only team that beat you twice. What was it that they did in those games that gave you such problems?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: There were a lot of things that they did well that we didn't do well. We didn't execute. Down there was a disaster. We didn't execute at all at either end, so really not much to say about that game.

The game here I thought we fought coming back. I thought we did some good things and some guys played well. But we didn't have a good first half. We got to do a better job rebounding the ball. Got to be a little more physical.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about your press this year. What have you seen of that how effective it's been and what that can do for you going forward?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: It's been good, at times, but it hasn't been good at times. I think that's what's disappointing, it hasn't been consistent.

But you're right. We have gotten some stuff out of it. I thought it was pretty good on Saturday. That's a good sign. That's a really good team.

I think we need success with it moving forward. We got some young guys in there that are figuring it out, but it will be good to us over the course of the rest of the season.

**Q. What do you think defines Purdue's a program?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think a lot of things. They execute really well. They run their stuff; they share the ball; they defend; they rebound; they can play fast; they can play slow; they do a really good job of getting the ball to their good players.

Some years it's bigs; some years it's guards; some years it's both. They usually have a little bit of an inside-outside punch, which they did this year.

So, it's a lot of things.

**Q. Obviously starting Big Ten play you have 20 games scheduled. Curious how the results over the weekend, Rutgers beats Illinois and Northwestern beats Michigan State. You say this every year, it's the best league in the country, but obviously this year it really is. What is it that distinguishes this league this year, do you think?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I pretty much say the same thing every year. It's top to bottom. I don't know why anybody would be surprised about what Rutgers is doing. They did it last year.

I think as it relates to Northwestern, you could see this coming. They were young last year, a couple injuries, good recruiting class and they had some good freshman and sophomores last year, and so now you're year seeing those guys now be sophomores and juniors.

So it's not surprising. They almost beat Michigan State last year.

It's indicative of the quality of players and coaches in this league top to bottom that separates it from other leagues. Other leagues have good teams, but every team in our league is really good.

**Q. Feels like Jordan's 3-pointers, probably had 20 or so go in and out this year. What you do you tell him right now?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I won't tell him anything different. I trust him. Just keep firing. He made seven to beat North Carolina. Tells you what he's made of, and we already knew that.

So I have complete confidence in him. He takes good shots. He's done a good job running the offense. Few more turnovers Saturday than he normally does. Never been a turnover guy at all, and his assist numbers are really good.

So I think the more games he gets under his belt the better he'll play.

**Q. Would you say that your team's defense will be**

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**more important than anything going forward here in Big Ten play?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think rebounding -- I guess they probably go hand in hand, but we have to do a better job on the glass.

**Q. It sounds like that people around the Big Ten were in agreement about playing on Christmas. How did you and your program feel about it?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: We were all in from the beginning. When the discussion first began about playing on Christmas there were a lot of factors, not the least of which is we're trying to stay in a pseudo bubble.

As hard as that is in particular at Christmastime when everybody wants to see their families, trying to limit as much as we can where we go, who we see.

If we're going to be here over the break, then we need to play games. We're locked in now. The games come every couple days. We left some time on the back end in case we have to postpone and reschedule.

We were all in from the beginning going back to June that we want to stay together and we want stay healthy and we're going to be mature about it.

I think every coach in America wants their kids to have the opportunity to be home for Christmas and be with their families. I think every coach wants to be with his family. We won't be.

It's a unique year. But the other thing is for a while it looked like the NBA wasn't going to play and we were going to take those -- that window of opportunity to showcase college basketball. The NBA decided to come back, which is great. That's a tradition, NBA games on television.

But the other networks were anxious for our games as well, so there was no decrease in interest in our games after the NBA decided to come back.

I think everybody was excited to play games in that window, and we all made a decision that we would stay together and stay healthy and limit what we do, where we go, until this season is over.

**Q. I want to ask you about CJ Fredrick going out with two fouls on Saturday; it was like a one-point game and obviously didn't return the rest of the half. When you look back on that, do you understand his importance in stabilizing the team when he's not out**

**there?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, we discussed putting him back in. I feel like we have got enough veteran guys, versatility, that we can survive it. We survived it when Luka got in foul trouble first half of the Iowa State game.

So there are times where we will reevaluate that, but I don't want him to get hamstrung with three fouls and have a difficult time in the second half. I thought his first foul, I thought he was straight up, so that was disappointing.

It's hard enough guarding Suggs who is a really good player. That was his assignment. I wanted him to be able to play most of the second half if he could.

**Q. That was obviously a big stage on Saturday. I'm sure your guys were disappointed. How have they responded to that, or if you haven't been around them much, how do you expect them to respond to that?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yesterday was business as usual. We got home Saturday night. We didn't do anything then, but as a staff we did. We gave the players the rest of that night off.

Yesterday we had a lot of film, shooting, lift, practice, that kind of stuff.

So didn't matter if we won or lost. Just business as usual.

**Q. For guys like Luka and Joe who have been around this league and experiences losses and bouncing back, seems like it's just routine for them. For the younger guys like Patrick and Keegan who are still new to the Big Ten scene, is it difficult for younger players to really move on from the first loss of the season? If so, how have you seen Keegan and Patrick and some of the younger guys respond?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think it's more of a function of how did they perform than whether we won or last.

You want your young guys to develop confidence and continue to play well. If the shots aren't falling, at least play mistake-free basketball.

They both did some good things Saturday. They both made am mistakes playing an experienced, talented team like that. It's just part of the learning process.

They both practiced well yesterday and they'll be ready to go tomorrow.

**Q. Going back to playing on Christmas, will you guys**



**do anything special as a team either on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, whatever? Since the kids won't be able to go home and with be their families, will you do anything as a team?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: We're a very close-knit team. We'll have a nice meal for them. We'll go a little extra on the meal and really celebrate together.

But other than that, when you play on Christmas Day and you're preparing on Christmas Eve, the day before like we normally would, there will be a businesslike side of that approach. I think they understand that.

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