

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Coach Fran McCaffery

Men's Basketball Press Conference



Iowa, 70 - Purdue, 55

Q. Fran, you guys yesterday were hammering home the points of rebounding, hustle, and defensive effort. What did you like out of your guys tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It was by far our best effort on the glass and defensively.

I thought we were pretty good -- really good actually -- against Carolina. We were locked in.

But we out-rebounded them. Which is hard to do. Purdue is always a terrific rebounding team. They run a lot of stuff and they execute extremely well. Always have.

So we had to stay connected and we had to keep the effort and intensity. So I think you look at what the game plan was coming in, you know, it was defense and rebounding, and it was probably our best effort of the year.

Then we turn around and have 21 assists on 24 field goals, so that was also impressive.

Q. What especially did you like about Joe Wieskamp tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I thought in the first half seven rebounds when we really needed, I thought he was relative on the glass.

I thought he moved without the ball extremely well. Seemed like he was always open, cutting hard and finishing and getting fouled.

He had a really good game Saturday offensively; defensively not so much. And I'm not blaming him because everybody else wasn't so good either.

But I think what this game shows is the character of Joe Wieskamp. We said, okay, we didn't do some things we should have done on Saturday that we have to correct and learn from that and make the necessary changes, and they

did.

And Joe was right at the forefront of all that. Very proud of him.

Q. I don't know how much stock you put in the plus/minus stat, but CJ Fredrick was a plus 25. Overwhelmingly the leader there. What would you take away from his game tonight?

FRAN McCAFFERY: You know, CJ is a complete player, so his defense was spectacular. Okay? So it starts with that. And then he makes shots. He moves without the ball. He makes plays off the dribble. He recognizes when teams are flying at him or when they're overplaying him.

Essentially, he's always in the right place and always making the right decision. From the first time I started watching him play he's never been a mistake guy. And I use this a lot, but a lot of guys aren't.

They make mistakes, they make bad decisions, put their heads down and drive into traffic, and he just constantly makes the right decision and he always puts winning first.

Q. Joe Toussaint only played 11 minutes tonight; only one shot. How important is it for somebody like him to come in and lead the bench with that unselfish play?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I thought we got great play off the bench across the board. He was terrific, but the beautiful part of this team is that when we go to the bench, we get production.

Jack Nunge, Keegan Murray, Joe Toussaint, Patrick, and as I keep saying, I can go deeper if I have to. I have confidence in those other guys.

Q. As Luka continues to keep climbing up the career points board at Iowa, just curious, with all the players that you've coached in your career, how does Luka separate himself from the rest of the pack with just his consistency and always I guess finding ways to get better like saw this summer and it doesn't matter who he's playing?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think as I look at some of the guys I've coached over the years, and I've coached so the really

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good ones. The thing that I'm impressed with Luka the most is who he's doing it against, and recognizing that every team is scheming completely to stop him.

I thought tonight, we had open looks because he loaded people up. In and out. He made good decisions when he shot it. He was really good defensively and on the glass. Sat for a little bit with that third foul, and we got him back in there and he was able to finish.

So he's a guy that he continues to try to perfect his craft. Would've been easy to be satisfied with his freshman and sophomore year. He was terrific. He was good. He wanted to be great. Now he became great. Okay, well, now I've arrived. I want to be first round draft pick.

And that's what you love about this kid.

Q. You talk about that stretch without Luka there. You actually increased your lead by two points. What did you see in that five minutes that really encouraged you?

FRAN McCAFFERY: First of all, great energy. We had activity so we had fresh guys come in, and we got some buckets. Patrick gets a three, Keegan dunks, Joe is pushing the ball, Jack had some buckets.

But defensively he's a presence and he rebounds in traffic, so I like that group. They've been pretty good and solid in every area every time I've put them in.

Q. You mentioned this is your best defensive game of this season, but for 40 minutes this has got to rank as one of the better games you've played defensively in the last two seasons, don't you think?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Probably, because we played a really good team that executes extremely well that has athletes and shooters and post players.

I thought our ball pressure was the best it's been.

Q. I'm curious how the players are feeling in the locker room after that. They feel good about grinding one out?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think they were fairly businesslike and professional. They were obviously happy, because the games come quick now. We play again Friday.

So we played Saturday. You have two days to get ready and play Tuesday, two days to get ready. So the professional side of this, processing a game plan,

executing a game plan, and then kind of flushing it and then starting over and then do it again and again and again, because the games are coming quick.

We left some time at the end of the season in case we have reschedule, so I think a team's ability to be that mature and professional is going to be absolutely critical, and I couldn't be more impressed with how professional they've been the last two days.

Q. No matter win or lose, a lot of teams I would guess would have some sort of emotional hangover after Saturday. Clearly yours did not. Why not?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think it's a couple reasons. Our approach has always been to play the game, analyze the game, be honest with each other, and make some adjustments, make some improvements, and that's collectively and individually.

We had some guys that had some serious defensive breakdowns that shouldn't have had them, and we point it out to them. We don't belittle them, we don't scream and yell, but we show it to them so they can see it and then we drill it and then we put the game plan in.

The really good players and mature guys and intelligent guys understand that and they benefit from that approach.

So that's kind of what we did. We don't let it linger. Let's say make we won the game. Last two days we would've been ranked No. 1, everybody would've been saying how great we are. And we've got to battle Purdue. We know what playing Purdue is like. They kicked us twice last year.

So I think a team's ability to understand that is going to be the key to success for the rest of the season.

Q. How much we've talked about how special this team is, with how impressed you were with how they were able to move on from Saturday, I don't know how to phrase this, would it have been different with any other team? Because we talk about how special to this team and the talent and what we feel this team could do, would it have been different with another team?

FRAN McCAFFERY: It would've been different for other teams. I've had some other team I think could have handled it, but I think you started to see it last year with this group, the core group guys we have. You saw it. They understood how to play on the road, how to play back-to-back. We didn't have the depth we have now last year.

So really a lot fell on the shoulders of Luka and Connor,



CJ, and Joe. We didn't have a lot of depth. We had three guys off to the side with injuries.

So this team is special in that regard. I think we all would've expected them to be. They're veteran guys. They've been through it. It's different. Tonight and Saturday would have been an insane atmosphere. But it wasn't. I think it forces you to have that kind of maturity.

Coming down the stretch we had a 15-point lead and they scored five quick ones and then we missed three or four possessions in a row. You have to go down and get stops or that lead is going to be gone, and we got stops and we didn't panic.

We missed couple in a row. It's not like we're never going to score again. We're going to score. And we did.

So that's I think what these guys know and understand, and that's the approach that they take on a daily basis themselves.

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