

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Monday, November 15, 2021

Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Coach Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball Press Conference



FRAN McCAFFERY: (Joined In progress.) What they're supposed to go, especially with everybody kind of being in a new situation.

But I thought you look at like Payton Sandfort, I thought he played good. He didn't play like a freshman. Our guys that didn't play as much last year I thought played like veteran guys, which they should have, because they were here for a year. But they were out there with fans, and so it was different for them.

So I'm overall really pleased.

Q. Joe seemed to play fast but under control.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, he impacts the game in so many different ways. He's probably had a couple turnovers he would probably like to have back, but he's been cognizant of that, not forcing anything.

And that's a tough spot to be in sometimes because we want him to be aggressive. That's what makes him special. But then there are times when he might have a turnover or two that you would like to have back.

But I think he's really playing with a maturity that we knew he could get to, and we're happy for him.

Q. You've talked about all the guys in different roles. Especially on the defensive end, communication can be such a big deal when it comes to new guys in new roles. It seems like they were really attacking it defensively over the first couple...

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think you're right, when you talk about communication, that means there are five guys that are together. Whether it's ball screen action or action on one side of the floor versus another, whether it's in transition and you're trying to put it together, you have to look out for each other. You have to play together.

I think a lot of people have the misconception I'm guarding my man. We're guarding them. We have to be together,

and if we're switching, we're switching; if we're not, we're not. If we're fighting over, you know, are we pressing? Well then, we got to be in the right place. Are we trapping? Then we have got to rotate, because if there is two on one then there is four on three.

So you got rotate and close out correctly, and the other guys has to know that his teammate is going to be where he's supposed to be or else they're reluctant to go where they're supposed to go. So it's a connected. We always talk about being connected defensively, and that's what it means.

Q. I watched some games these this weekend, and some of these team are completely revamped, their rosters. You have one new player you're breaking in. How much easier stability-wise is it being familiar with the roster?

FRAN McCAFFERY: You think about the team we're playing tomorrow. That's a team with winning DNA. It's hard to do what LeVelle has done there: multiple championships, multiple NCAA tournament appearances, yet he's got nine transfers and only a couple guys back. We played them a year ago.

That's the world we live in. We talked about it. So you're right. For us, we have veteran guys coming back, we have veteran guys in the second unit that are impactful for those guys that are coming off the bench and playing significant minutes and have significant roles.

Q. Not to denigrate any of the first six opponents, but what do you want it to be or ideally where would you like to be by Game 7 when have that four game stretch that's pretty imposing?

FRAN McCAFFERY: When you are playing games this time of year, regardless of who you're playing against, you just want to get better. You want to get better collectively, individually, you want to build confidence, and you want to settle down into what we want to accomplish.

Are we running motion? Are we running sets? How is our zone defense? What's our press look like? What's the motion offense look like? Are guys reading each other properly?



You have to continue to get better and you got continue to grow, especially when you have some young guys trying to step up.

Q. In terms of players who just recently signed, what can you say about Dasonte Bowen and Josh Dix, what interested you about them as players? What do you think they'll add?

FRAN McCAFFERY: They're both terrific players. Starting with Dasonte, we've been watching him for a long time. We've watched him grow. He's really creative, he's versatile, he's got size, length. He's got the ability to get in the lane. He can score. He's got great feel and he's a competitor.

Josh, kind of the same way. He's a little bit bigger than Dasonte, but just really, really good sense of how to play the game. He's really tough. He's smart. He can score. He can run the point. He can play different positions defensively.

Those guys are really good players.

Q. They could obviously play together, right?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah.

Q. Is that done for this recruiting class or are you still evaluating?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Never done. We could sign another one potentially, but it all depends on the rest of our roster, who comes back, who doesn't.

Q. Josh adds another in-state prospect. You spoke about this at media day. What can you say about him adding into that pipeline of in-state players?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, we try to evaluate as best we can in-state prospects. We don't always get it right. We try to. We're pretty thorough with not only watching these guys as they approach the time when they might sign, but way before that, when they're young kids, eighth grade, ninth grade, tenth grade.

So we see a lot of them on the AAU circuit, see them in their high school atmosphere, and then trying to project them because. Sometimes they're not ready when they're in ninth grade or tenth grade, but they when they are in 12th grade.

Our staff understands that we want to make sure that we know all these guys and we evaluate them properly, we develop a relationship with them, invite them on campus as

youngsters. Do they fit our style of play? Do they fit a need that we have? We have done really well with in-state guys that have I think in many ways wanted to wear the Hawkeye jersey, but wore it with great pride and were incredibly successful.

Q. In the game notes for tomorrow's game, it mentions you're the only team in the nation with two sets of brothers. What does that do for a team and for the brothers?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, obviously I can speak a little bit differently with regard to Patrick and Connor. I mean, they have a special bond. They've been best buddies since they were little. You'd think, I bet they used to fight all the time. They really didn't, which is rare. They won a state championship together. They played together for two years.

Patrick really wanted to come here and play with his brother again, so they're impact players for our team; they're great teammates.

Kris and Keegan are a little bit different because they're twins. They came in together. They're always together. It's a little bit different. Connor and Patrick are two years apart.

But Kris and Keegan really push each other. They constantly challenge each other in a very unique way.

But all four of them are so much fun to coach. They're smart, tough, they care about each other, about their teammates, produce on the floor.

So as far as where I'm from, you know, it's just a joy to see them and coach them every day.

Q. I think about a lot of younger players that you've had over the years. Payton Sandfort came in, started firing right away. Payton has kind of struck me as a really aggressive player, but it's not always the case when guys come into a program that they're comfortable being that aggressive. What do you say to them throughout the recruiting process to allow them to feel the freedom to be aggressive as they have been?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Basically tell them that, that very thing. Not only it's how we play, but this is what I expect from you. So I would being more apt to criticize them if they turned shots down. You recruit Peyton Sandfort, he's a tremendous shooter. Why would you criticize him for taking a shot? Doesn't make any sense.

That said, I know him well enough. He's a smart player. He's not going to shoot contested threes on a regular basis that have no chance to go in. Like he doesn't take bad shots.

But occasionally a really good shooter or a guy that you want to be aggressive might take a bad shot. That's when you have to be careful and say -- don't say anything. I don't. I used to have that problem with Isaiah Moss all the time. I'd say, why didn't you shoot that? Keep shooting. He eventually did it and I was proud of him when he did that.

That's what I want from our guys.

Q. What kind of role does Filip Rebraca play for this team coming from last year being in that North Dakota leading the team in points to come in here how.

FRAN McCAFFERY: He was really good the other night. He was special. He provides a veteran guy with the ability on the play with physicality. He's skilled. He's got a variety of skills that really manifest themselves in different ways. Because he can dribble it, shoot it, score inside; he can give it up easy.

He really guards ball screens well. He slides his feet. I think you're seeing him just continue to improve game after game.

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