

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Coach Fran McCaffery

Men's Basketball Press Conference



Q. The history of the Sioux Falls games, obviously you and the program like going there. Can you talk about how this originated and why you like going back?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, there's a gentleman up there by the name of Paul Seville that's responsible for putting these games together, so we engaged in dialogue a while ago, and as you evaluate MTEs and one-day events like that, you try to figure out what works for you on a number of different levels. Would it be who you're playing, when you're playing, what your schedule looks like other than that particular game. Obviously financial and television situations that make sense for you. You're looking at all of that when you're deciding.

They do a terrific job with how professional they are, with running an event like that. The facility is first-class. The crowds are phenomenal. The people really, I think, enjoy those games and support those games. For us to get up to that part of the country where we have so many fans is something that's important to us.

So yeah, I think when you're evaluating it, it just makes a lot of sense. We're always going to play a really good team. Utah State is really good. We played Colorado, we played Gonzaga, really good teams.

I think it's an opportunity for your guys to experience something like that. We'll go up there fairly frequently I would say over the years. Maybe not every year. We haven't done it every year, but it's something we discuss every year. It'll depend on, as I said, other factors. So maybe you have the Gavitt Games and the Challenge and an MTE, and this year we didn't have the Gavitt Games, so it made perfect sense to go up there. Just like we went to Chicago a couple years ago and played in the United Center. That's something that we'll look at on an individual basis, and that was great for our fans there. Playing Cincinnati, it's a marquee game, it's an opportunity to take your team down there where your fans are, and it's a national TV game. That's what you're looking for on that, as well. So there's a lot of factors involved.

But it starts with the professionalism, with the people that run events up in that facility.

Q. I think I heard on your radio show your team got boosters after the game on Friday?

FRAN McCAFFERY: We had an opportunity -- what we did was we spread it out over a couple of days because it was made available on Friday. We played Thursday. It was made available on Friday. A bunch of guys did it. Some guys wanted to wait through the weekend because they had whatever they had exam-wise or whatever they were doing. So we gave them the flexibility.

By today, everybody is done, yeah.

Q. Doesn't seem to be a -- you guys are all pro it seems like, wanting to be 100 percent.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, it's been like that from the beginning. We've not had any issues. We got our team vaccinated and obviously we're in a great position to do that with the hospital right here and the accessibility. It's been good for us so far. We'll continue to operate that way.

Q. Utah State, new coach, but they seem to just keep playing really well at that level.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it's like anything else. Ryan is a terrific coach. He brought two of his best players with him. The kid, Bean, is as good as anybody we'll face all year long. He's tremendous. So it's a veteran team. They've got some transfers, and they've got some veteran guys. Really share the ball, move the ball. They've got multiple shooters. Everybody understands how to play. Got the transfer, the kid Jones from Utah.

Again, it's like when you schedule a game like this -- well, any game anymore, you really don't know who you're going to face until the season starts. But I think we all knew they would be good. Really good coach, really good players.

It's an excellent program with a great fan base.

Q. How much of this week is an opportunity for you guys to kind of work on what you've seen from your



team this week as opposed to just getting ready for another game?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think that's really critical. It kind of always is. I think if you -- even if we had not lost a couple games in a row, you have eight days off. You're going to kind of get back to, okay, what's worked, what hasn't worked, what do we need to improve on, both collectively and individually. Maybe you have a guy who's struggling a little bit, you try to get him going. Maybe our motion game isn't working or press -- whatever is not working, you try to work on it.

You have time because sometimes when the games come quick, you just focus on the next game plan, okay, we've got to deal with Trevion, we've got to deal with Brockington, whoever, and sometimes you just go back to what do we have to do to be better and get better and build confidence.

Q. What are you seeing at point guard right now? There was a stretch the other day where Jordan was seemingly -- or maybe Tony was, I couldn't tell, but Aaron and Joe both on the bench. With both those guys, big picture --

FRAN McCAFFERY: We have a lot of options at that position. I'm not going to make any changes in terms of who's starting. I'm comfortable with those guys. But as the game goes on, as different things happen, you try different combinations. We did have J-Bo in there at the point for a little. I'm very comfortable with Joe, with Aaron. You put J-Bo in there, it gives you more flexibility to play Tony and Payton, and then we have Connor can play that position, as well.

We're pretty well stocked at that position, and I trust all those guys. They've all proven that they can do it.

Q. It doesn't seem like you're a person to change starting lineups much. What is your philosophy on starting lineups typically? Seems like you like the consistency?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think those guys have played well. They've played well together. I have more flexibility probably with this team than I've had with some of the other teams in terms of if they're not playing well at a given time and another group clicks, we leave them out there. I've started that other group in the second half. I'm not saying I would never change the starting lineup. It's always a possibility. But it always seems real dramatic, and it's not really that necessary. Everybody puts a lot more emphasis on it than they probably should.

Those guys are all going to play a lot of minutes each, and

they deserve to play a lot of minutes.

Q. How have you diagnosed and/or addressed rebounding?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, obviously it's been addressed. It doesn't take much to diagnose. You just look at the numbers, they're right there in front of you. It's not been good.

There's a challenge to the guys, and again, it's a collective thing. It's not, okay, my 3s, 4s and 5s have to do a better job, which they do, but 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Everyone that's out there has to do a better job rebounding, and we have to make sure we're not leaking because we like to run. How many are they sending to the glass? Some teams will send four, some teams will send one and they'll drop four, they'll drop three. So for us, we just have to keep them all in there until we get the ball back, and then we can run.

Q. You always hear rebounding and effort. Is that fair? Is it always just usually effort, the lack of effort?

FRAN McCAFFERY: There's a little bit of technique involved, but it's more effort than technique. I mean, like John Wooden always said -- he told his guys never to box out; just go get the ball.

Now, he had the best players, so maybe that was not a bad way to go, but at the same time I think boxing out is probably overrated because more teams shoot 30-plus threes in a game now, so the ball is bouncing all over the place. So if you don't get those long rebounds or those long loose balls and the 50/50 balls, that's all reflected in your rebounding numbers.

You might have Filip and Keegan blocking out to perfection and the ball bounces over their head and lands at the top of the key and they scoop it up and shoot a three.

I think the guys have to know and understand that. You still want to get a body on somebody if you can, but at some point you've got to pursue the basketball. The whole idea that I'm going to box out and keep you on my back the entire possession, no. I'm going to get you there and then I'm going to go get the ball. That's what has to be done.

Q. How frustrating can offensive rebounding be on defense?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, very because it keeps you on defense for a very long period of time. Like the old days when I was playing, teams would keep you on defense because there was no shot clock, so you don't want to be on defense for any more than 30 seconds if you don't have

to be. Sometimes you have to be on it for a minute and a half or more, and it's tough, and it increases their ability to score.

A lot of times on the second shot it leads to an easier shot. It might be a put-back, but typically it's a kick-out wide-open three, broken-play three.

Q. I assume you weren't surprised by Rutgers beating Purdue? Is that just how the Big Ten is going to be this year?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, Rutgers has a good team. They had a couple of games where they didn't play well, but Steve is a really good coach. They've got a veteran team. Geo was out -- he's a big part of that team. So they struggled a little bit when he was out. He's back. You've got Harper, you've got McConnell, you've got Mulcahy. Cliff is a really good player. You don't know as much about him because Johnson played most of the time last year, but Cliff was a big-time get, and he's a sophomore and he's coming around. So that team is good.

Really good team in our league wins at home, I don't think anybody is surprised.

Q. How is Keegan progressing with his ankle? Better?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Pretty good. Yeah, he's not there yet, but he's getting closer, yeah.

Q. Do you give him the week off or --

FRAN McCAFFERY: He hasn't done much, no. He hasn't done much. He'll shoot and lift and get treatment. That's another thing. We've got some guys banged up, so that's another important component of this week. Obviously the primary focus is final exams, but I would say final exams and getting healthy more than anything else, and then what Rob said, kind of focus on yourselves and then shift to the next game.

Q. Do you really miss -- Wieskamp was a really good rebounder as a guard. Is that something that you really miss?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Wieskamp was an underrated rebounder. He really was. Even his freshman year, he was a terrific rebounder. Always has been. That's important for a guy who played on the perimeter a lot. So we've been encouraging Patrick. He had four in the last game. You've got to be up in that five, six range. Wieskamp was at seven. I think that helped him when the pros were looking at him. It's like, this guy makes shots but

he also rebounds, and they need that. We all do.

I think encouraging those guys to get those numbers up has been what we've talked about.

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