

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Iowa City, Iowa, USA

## Coach Fran McCaffery

### Men's Basketball Press Conference



Iowa 81, Georgia Tech 65

**Q. Chris talked about his struggles and coming into this game with a chip on his shoulder. Did you have any conversations about that or did you expect him to flip it back on once you guys came out?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I mean, he had two double-doubles down in Florida, so I wasn't concerned with how he would respond. No, so I didn't say a word to him.

**Q. There are double-doubles, and then there's a 30-20. What can you say about that?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I thought the really impressive thing about the rebounding with Chris was six offensive rebounds in the first half were a big difference in this game. We were struggling shooting the ball, and he went back and got it six times. The other thing is a lot of guys can get 30, but very few people are going to get 20. Most guys that are getting 30 aren't rebounding. So I think that's impressive.

**Q. You had said that you were expecting Chris to make a jump statistically. Are you surprised it has only taken this short a period of time for him to put up numbers like this?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: No, because I knew he would get the shots and the minutes. He played 38. Probably should have invested another minute or two, but then Filip got his third foul so then I couldn't take him out. You give him the minutes -- and his game has evolved. He's way more comfortable, whether it's making plays off the dribble, whether it's posting up, whether it's playing in transition, whether it's playing against zone, whether it's playing against smaller, quicker guys or bigger, more physical guys. He's been through it now. Last year was a really good year for him. Played a little bit the year before, but his body also grew. He's in a great place.

**Q. Connor had a double-double, as well (indiscernible) right out of the gate.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, he did, and that's kind of what he does, but he settles everybody down. It was kind of a strange game. Some goofy turnovers and missed shots and missed free throws. They're a hard team to guard. They've got multiple guys that are athletic, that go off the dribble, that can make shots. Whether we were in our press or man or zone, you need that one guy out there that's kind of anchoring everything, and that's what Connor does.

Again, four offensive rebounds, six defensive, and no turnovers. Takes care of business for us.

**Q. Down the stretch you had five guys who had a combined I don't know how many years of experience. That's not necessarily common in the college game. What does it mean for you or for any team in general?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think it's important, especially in a game like this. The disappointing thing is I need to get Sandfort more minutes, I need to get Bowen more minutes, I need to get Josh Dix more minutes, I need to get Ogundele more minutes. They play small, so it was going to be a hard game for Josh Ogundele, and he's played well enough to earn playing time. I always struggle with if a guy is playing well enough to earn playing time, I like to give it to them.

I took Payton Sandfort out of the starting lineup, and I hate doing that after a loss because I never want the message to be, oh, let's blame it on Payton. We're taking him out. That's not what it was. I thought it would really help him, and he came in firing, which is what I want him to do, and he was moving without the ball. I needed to get him more minutes, and that's on me. I'll get him more minutes the next game.

**Q. You started out 1 for 10 from three, but you seemed to have some pretty good looks and then you finished up 8 of 16. Was that just a matter of a couple of them going down and then everybody just kind of --**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think when you're in that situation as a coach, all you want to know is your guys are taking good shots. If you're 1 for 10 or 6 for 10, are they good shots. Good shooters taking good shots. We did shoot a couple quick ones, but Payton pulled from deep,



Connor pulled from deep. But I'm okay with that.

I just -- I don't really say much to them. They were changing defenses. They were in a mixture of zones, so you're going to typically in those situations end up with more threes than if they were in man-to-man.

**Q. Looking at Connor, I'm sure it's not very common for somebody to go from a multiyear full-time starter to a full-time bench player. How would you describe the maturity it takes to accept that role? And how is he able to assimilate and play so well with starters and guys off the bench?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, he's the leader of this team, so when he talks people listen whether it's in practice, whether it's on the bus, whether it's in the locker room, whether it's on the bench. It really don't matter whether he starts or not. He's going to affect the game in a very positive way. He's going to settle guys down if they're struggling a little bit, if they get a little sped up. I think he really makes sure that we continue to play at our pace.

**Q. The Sandfort thing, you pretty much wanted him to come off the bench and shoot the ball?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, you know, but I think he was pressing a little bit in the starting lineup. Like I said, I feel really bad. I should have got him more playing time in the second half. But once it got to that one period of the game, I kind of stuck with that group to get home. Sometimes that happens. He'll be fine.

**Q. I know as you mentioned, Georgia Tech switched defenses. How pleased were you with the guards and everybody on the perimeter finding the open man, having the skip passes? Seemed like they were in full control.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think that's a good point. A lot of times, especially when you're shooting a lot of threes, you don't have 21 assists, 27 buckets. I thought we moved it side to side, I thought we pass faked and drove it. We mixed our drives and our in-and-outs, and we were really looking for each other. That's kind of who we are and that's how we have to play.

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