

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Coach Fran McCaffery Men's Basketball Press Conference



Q. Have you guys done what you wanted to do? How do you approach a week like this when you've got some time off?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, obviously we're a little banged up, so that helps in that regard. I want the guys focusing on finals. When we do practice, we make sure everybody is here and we have a regular practice, so it's not like come in and try to get some shots up. We're locking in for the next game. We'll practice today, regular practice. Tomorrow -- yesterday we were off, the day before we practiced.

The guys are in a good mindset, preparing for I think what is a really good team, and the guys that need to be rehabbing or getting treatment are doing that.

Q. Any update on Ahron? I know he didn't play the other night.

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's making progress. Yeah, we'll see what he can do today.

Q. With Kris, it's just rest is the best thing he can do?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, exactly. He just needs to be off it for a while, and then heal up and he'll come back.

Q. Dasonte is getting an opportunity now with Ahron working his way back from injury; just what have you seen from him in practices?

FRAN McCAFFERY: He's been very good. He's very professional in his approach, very mature, really wants to learn, wants to get better, really accepts coaching. He's really delightful in that sense. He's a really good player. He's just going to keep getting better and better.

Q. When could you sense that about him during the recruiting process?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, we offered him when he was young, he was a sophomore, so he had a very mature game then, but he's always been -- to talk to on the phone,

to talk to in person, just really mature, great family. You kind of expect -- if you met his parents, you would expect him to be that way. I mean, he's a gamer. He's just going to keep grinding. He doesn't get too high and too low.

Q. How do you feel after that six-game stretch you just had?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, it was I think what we all expected it to be. It wasn't easy. We did some really good things and we did some things we need to work on. That's what the early part of the season is. You want to learn and get better. We have some guys stepping up, and some guys have had some opportunity because of injury. So you don't want guys to be hurt, but it's an opportunity for guys to grow and we'll need everybody as we go through the rest of the season.

Q. We're seeing reports now of players opting to transfer, NIL promises that weren't kept. What's the key to keeping a locker room together? It seems like there's really no -- guys have great chemistry, but you're seeing the stories across the country. What are your thoughts about everything going on?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, I think all of us don't really know exactly what's going on. I only know what's going on here, and I'm trying to do the best I can to compensate our guys in the right way. They've been great.

I think it's been a positive for them the way they've had to interact with the business community and the way they've had to do community service type work for that compensation. I think it's been great.

We try to refrain from promises, but we can at least talk about where we think we're headed in terms of with our guys. We'll just keep doing it that way.

But you're right; it's changed the entire landscape across the board.

Q. There are some schools that don't refrain from promises; how much harder does that make it for people like you that have a certain way you want to do name, image, and likeness because you're not supposed to do it to induce them to come, it's supposed to reward them when they get there, but you

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

know that's not happening.

FRAN McCAFFERY: Right. You know, and that was poor foresight by the NCAA. They blew it, bottom line. You can't put the portal and NIL together and say it's not going to become pay for play. Who didn't see that coming? Anybody in this room, anybody on planet earth saw that coming, okay.

This is where we are. It's not the players' fault. They want a piece of the pie. They can read. The incredible dollars that are generated by their performance, so they need to be compensated.

Is there a right way to do it? Probably. Can everybody agree to that? Probably not. But we'll see where we end up because we're not in a very good place right now.

But I can tell you this: Our guys are locked in. They're making some money. Nobody is getting rich, but they're understanding the importance of what NIL was supposed to be, as you pointed out. It was supposed to be opportunity to grow in the business world. I keep saying this, but one of the positives of it all is it really requires your student-athletes to be great citizens or else they're not going to make any money.

We have great kids. They'll represent companies well if they hire them. I encourage companies to reach out and engage in communication and hire our guys, and I want our guys to know and understand and appreciate those opportunities that are coming their way.

Q. Patrick's shooting percentages are up. What has impressed you about his development?

FRAN McCAFFERY: Well, you know, I think we all -- maybe expected but certainly hoped another year of maturity -- he had a really good year last year. I thought he had a good year the year before coming off the bench. Last year he moves into the starting position. This year I think we all expected more from him. He expected more from himself.

I think that's really the critical factor. We can all want it for him or think it's coming, but what are his expectations for himself; did he put the time in in the spring and summer to be in a position to have those numbers go up, and he did. Anytime you have one of your players do that, it makes you proud, and you talk to him about it at the end of the year, these are the things you need to work on, this is what you have to do; they go out and do it, and that's kind of how it's supposed to work.

Q. Has he added a specific thing to his game or is it

just overall confidence?

FRAN McCAFFERY: No. Well, one of the things, we try to get him to play off two feet a little bit more. He's done that. That's a fine line because sometimes you're just got to go and you've got to attack, and if you're always playing off two feet, you're not always attacking the basket.

But he is, I think, making good decisions in terms of when to go, when not to go, go, it shuts down, find somebody else, make a play for somebody else. He's never been a big turnover guy, and he's very unselfish. That's what we want from him, and that's how we want to play.

Q. If you could pinpoint one or two things specifically that you want to see the guys take a step forward this week, what would those one or two things be?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think the only thing you want to do is see consistent play out of each and every player in terms of effort and execution. You don't want to see sloppy play. We play fast, so we always say we don't want to just run up and down and turn it into a run game. We want to push the ball, make good decisions, defensively be connected and compete, compete on the glass, move and share the ball. These are things that every coach says, but that's going to be critical moving forward to continue to do that.

Q. Turnovers have been up the last couple games. Has that got to do as much with the competition, or have there been other factors?

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think there's a little bit of that. It's a fine line; you want to be aggressive, so sometimes you go and it doesn't work out. I think our numbers throughout the course of the season will be good in that area. We have good decision makers. We have unselfish guys. But again, as you pointed out, we're playing good teams.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

