

# University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

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Iowa City, Iowa, USA

## Coach Fran McCaffery

### Men's Basketball Press Conference



**Q. Several players named to All-Big Ten honors today. How much do you look forward to today every year as a coach, to see your players get those type of awards?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think it's a great feeling as a coach to have your players recognized on a national level in such a prestigious league. You look at the list of players, there's so many good players, and to have our guys recognized, certainly it's well-deserved.

I think as coaches, we know how hard they work and prepare, and you want to know that at the end of it all, there's some recognition when you accomplish some things that those guys did. To have so many guys recognized is also a great feeling.

I think you look at Kris, he decided to come back. He probably would have gone in the second round, and he came back to make a statement. It's hard to be first-team all-league in this conference, and he did that. So really proud of him.

I think Filip, being third-team, is certainly well deserved. His consistency this year was spectacular, as he figured out the conference after going through it for one year.

Then for Connor and Tony, just proud of those two guys, how they fought all year long. To see them get recognized and appreciated for all the things they do to help us win, and certainly Payton, I felt like he would be the guy that would win that award.

I'm very proud of the fact that we've had quite a few with Gabe and Nicholas Baer. That says a lot about your attitude. He was a starter and was willing to come off the bench, and boy, he impacted so many games this year for us.

Then for Patrick to be recognized again in terms of sportsmanship is also a testament to his character and everything he's been through. So very happy for him.

It's a great time; we recognize these guys and then go

back to work.

**Q. What you did last year, and I realize you're dealing with one game, not four, but you showed last year, and it's been shown before, that it's not an unclimbable mountain to win four games in four days, but how did you guys do it, and what are the keys to being capable of doing that?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think you've got to get really good performances from a lot of different people, which we did. You have to be mentally tough, because not only is it grueling physically, but you're processing scouting reports on a daily basis four times against four really good teams, against four really well-coached teams.

It's a great challenge. It's a competitive challenge.

The way we go about preparation is pretty consistent. We've talked about that all the time.

Just get ready for the first time we play, and then turn the page and try to take a very businesslike and professional approach to the next game, and carry out the game plan. As we've also talked many times, sometimes the greatest game plans don't work, so you've got to make game adjustments. That takes incredible maturity, both individually and collectively, so we'll do that. Just get the guys to play as hard as they can.

For a situation like this, it's going to require a lot of people to help. It's going to be hard to play five or six guys, seven guys. We're going to have to play a lot of guys.

**Q. What are some of the challenges from a coaching perspective from you're coaching a tournament like this in terms of rotations and, you want to keep playing, but there are some challenges.**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, you just try to win the next game. You don't worry about it. It's not like, okay, we have to worry about Saturday because we might not play Friday. So you try to win that game, but at the same time, you know you're going to need your bench, so you've got to get those guys in there and be ready to help, because it might be foul trouble, God forbid it's an injury, things like that.

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But I feel like we have a solid bench. I shortened it a little bit recently, going with our veteran guys. You can do that, but it's hard four days in a row.

**Q. Every year we hear about multiple teams can win this thing. We talk about it, but is it even more so this year?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: I think so. You look at the conference standings, and there's so many teams that are very close in terms of record. Some teams maybe match up better with others, and sometimes you look at it doesn't make sense that they beat them twice and they lost to them twice. But that's what this league is. Sometimes it comes down to you didn't make threes. Sometimes it comes down to you didn't make free throws or had more turnovers than usual. Who knows.

This league is so good, and a lot of people say we're going to get 10 teams in. Nobody wants to play 11, 12, 13, 14 in this league.

I think everybody goes down there knowing that everybody has got a shot.

**Q. You talk about expanding your bench come this time of year. What's the biggest piece of advice you can give Josh Dix and Dasonte Bowen since this will be their first real action in the tournament?**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, those two guys are pretty professional as young guys. Obviously I'll say something to Josh Ogundele and Riley Mulvey, too, because a good chance we're going to need those two or at least one of them, but the young kids it's a little different. You're right, it's the first time going through it.

They've watched it on TV before, and it's one thing for the coach to say, hey, stay ready, your time is coming, but those two guys have stayed locked in. They haven't played as much recently, but they are grinding in practice. They're paying attention to the scouting report, and they've been impressive.

I feel confident going to those guys if we have to.

**Q. How much does it help knowing that a lot of your guys were here last year and went through what it takes --**

FRAN McCAFFERY: Yeah, I think that helps. A lot of those guys not only went through it but performed well in that environment. So I think we have an expectation they'll do the same.