

# COMMENTARY: An electric feel at Carver (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Having grown up in Iowa City, I have had the great fortune of seeing many situations where the product being offered inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena was good enough to captivate the attention of everyone else.

Fast forwarding to Friday night during Iowa's 75-72 loss to Iowa State, it felt as though the environment I was sitting in covering the game was similar to how I remembered it being as a kid.

Don't get me wrong. I still wouldn't say it's 100 percent exact to how I remembered the atmosphere being. There were still some empty seats above the student section, and some fans were still opting to leave before the final horn sounded.

But with that said, there were times Friday night where I was watching events in this Iowa-Iowa State game unfold, and it felt like being inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena as recently as five years ago.

That is not a misprint. "As recently as five years ago."

That was probably the last time Carver-Hawkeye Arena was ever that loud for a men's basketball game. For one thing, it tells you how far the program had fallen between winning the 2006 Big Ten Tournament and now. At the same time, it also signifies the direction the current team is going, which has to be encouraging.

I understand it was Iowa-Iowa State, so the magnitude of the game is going to give it a completely different vibe compared

to any other men's basketball game the Hawkeyes host this season. But with that being said, it would be nice to see what was on display from the fans on Friday be consistent the rest of the way.

It seemed clear to me how the players thrived off the boost it rarely gets, but did receive on Friday. All one has to do is look at Andrew Brommer's stats, and it's pretty telling that in an environment where the majority are supporting him and his teammates, guys such as Brommer thrived.

In fact, he even went out of his way after the game to thank fans when he was made available for postgame interviews. Brommer wanted to make sure everyone how much of a role the players felt the crowd played.

For players like junior Matt Gatens and senior Jarryd Cole, they both were quick to mention how the Carver-Hawkeye Arena crowd on Friday was as good as they had seen it, saying how only a game two years ago against Michigan State where all UI students were admitted free came close in terms of environment.

In this respect, the Hawkeyes found a silver lining from what could only be described as a gut-wrenching defeat. The fans on hand know the impact and the type of home-court advantage they can create for fans.

That's a great place to start. Because it would really be a shame to watch the basketball on display here, only to not see quite as many people the rest of the way.

Under head coach Fran McCaffery, Iowa has done more right than wrong. Once again, there seems to be passion about this program. The fans are ready to scream from the rafters.

Now it's the Hawkeyes' turn to ensure that fans continue to show up and be entertained by what they see and get. Tonight was a good start.