

Hawkeyes torched by hot Wildcat shooting

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The Iowa Hawkeyes came into Wednesday's contest against Northwestern looking to right all the problems that arose in a 23-point shellacking at Purdue last weekend. What happened instead was a performance to forget.

The Wildcats were white hot from beyond the arc early and blew the game so wide open that Northwestern defeated Iowa in convincing fashion inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena, 90-71. It was the second straight victory for the Wildcats, and the second straight contest Northwestern scored in the 90s.

As for Iowa, the Hawkeyes now sit alone with Indiana at the bottom of the Big Ten cellar at 0-4 in league play, and 7-9 overall. In addition, they were left befuddled as to how a second straight defeat got so lopsided.

Northwestern would finish the game shooting 33-of-62 from the field, and more specifically, 14-of-28 from the perimeter. Like many teams that have had success against Iowa this season, the Wildcats took advantage of the looks they received from 3-point range.

This trend is something Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery has recognized, and wasn't shy voicing his displeasure about.

"That's the disconcerting thing for us," McCaffery said before listing off games such as South Dakota State, Iowa State and Purdue among others as contests where 3-point shooting hurt the Hawkeyes. "I don't know that I have an explanation, other than we have talked about it."

Of the 14 3-point baskets made by Northwestern, 10 of them came in the first half, and the Wildcats' first 21 points came courtesy of the 3-pointer. In fact, Northwestern went on a quick 9-0 run after Iowa scored the first four points of the contest.

"It was impeccable," senior center Jarryd Cole said about the Wildcats' shooting. "You can't give that kind of offensive firepower to a team that's shooting really good 3-pointers like that. It's hard to win when a team makes 10 3-pointers in a game, and we gave them 14. It was pretty impossible to overcome that feat."

While Northwestern had four starters score in double figures, it was the backcourt duo of junior guards Bryce Cartwright and Matt Gatens doing most of the scoring damage for the Hawkeyes. Cartwright finished with 25 points on 9-of-16 shooting, while Gatens had 20 points, shooting 6-of-10 from the field.

For Cartwright, it was a bounce back game after a brutal performance on Jan. 9 against Purdue, where he only shot 2-of-10. He credited the improvement to having better rhythm in his jump-shooting.

"I had a lot of contested lay-ups in that Purdue game, and that didn't translate to easy buckets, and we got down early," Cartwright said. "When stuff happens like that, we need to have more offensive rebounding."

While guard play proved more effective on Wednesday for the Hawkeyes, that was about the only area Iowa looked good. Cole dealt with foul trouble throughout the night and only posted three points and four rebounds. Freshman forward Melsahn Basabe finished with a team-high 12 rebounds, but only came away with six points himself. Sophomore guard Eric May was held scoreless.

Off the bench, Iowa's biggest contribution came from junior guard Jordan Stoermer, who had eight points.

“Not a lot really can be said at this point,” Basabe said. “Obviously, it’s a lot of technical stuff, but the basic message is everybody needs to take accountability. It’s pretty simple. It’s not rocket science.

“Guys need to take accountability, play hard, and not let the other team do what they want. That’s going to take an effort from all of us.”

Iowa now plays four of its next five on the road, with the next contest coming on Jan. 16 at Minnesota. Tip-off from Williams Arena in Minneapolis, Minn., is set for 5 p.m. Central, and once again, the game will be aired nationally on the Big Ten Network.