

# Hawkeyes remain winless in Big Ten after tough loss to Gophers

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MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Basketball is a game of runs, and unfortunately for the Iowa Hawkeyes, they gave up one too many on Sunday.

Although the effort on the defensive end of the floor improved immensely from its 90-71 loss to Northwestern on Jan. 12, Iowa still found itself falling short against Minnesota to the tune of 69-59 at Williams Arena. The loss drops the 7-10 Hawkeyes to 0-5 in the Big Ten, and they now sit alone in the conference cellar.

“I think we knew what we were walking into tonight, and they defended us,” Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said. “We lost to a real good team, but we also got better tonight.”

Paving the way for Iowa in the losing effort was freshman forward Melsahn Basabe, who posted his second double-double in four contests with a game-high 20 points on 8-of-12 shooting from the field, and 13 rebounds to boot. Meanwhile, the man he spent most of the night guarding was Minnesota’s Trevor Mbakwe. While Mbakwe didn’t start for the Golden Gophers, he did play 35 minutes and led Minnesota with a double-double himself consisting of 16 points and 12 rebounds.

“I wasn’t really bothered,” Basabe said about facing the bigs from Minnesota. “It wasn’t really that bad for the height difference. I thought Mbakwe was shorter than me almost, and [Ralph] Sampson wasn’t as big as I thought he was. Not to take

anything away from them, but I wouldn't say they affected me today."

Basabe was one of only four Hawkeye players to score the entire night, with the others being sophomore forward Eric May with 16 points and junior guards Bryce Cartwright and Matt Gatens with 10 and 13 points respectively.

May's efforts were significant, as he had struggled over the last two contests with a combined three points in those defeats.

"I was feeling comfortable with my shot, I was doing what the coaches told me," May said about his bounce-back performance. "They said I really need to start getting out to passing lanes and being aggressive on defense. Getting a couple of steals really helped me get started off."

Two things proved killer for the Hawkeyes in this contest. First was the rebounding. Basabe had his 13 boards, but it was the Golden Gophers dominating the glass with a 38-28 rebounding edge. Even worse for the Hawkeyes was that 13 of those 38 Minnesota rebounds came at the offensive end.

"We knew that the offensive rebounding would be an issue," McCaffery said. "I do think as the game wore on, it became more of a problem maybe than it was early."

The other critical difference was a combination of a sluggish first half, followed by a key Golden Gopher run after Iowa climbed back in the second half to tie the game at 42-42.

At the start, the Hawkeyes came out with energy and held a 6-5 lead at the first official timeout. But from there, points proved hard to come by, as only 13 more of them would be scored by Iowa during the final 15:06 of the period. Trailing 30-19 at halftime, the Hawkeyes had shot just 8-of-25 from the floor.

As for Minnesota, it took advantage of the opportunities presented to it in the first half. The Golden Gophers also shot 37 free throws on the evening to just 11 for Iowa.

The Hawkeyes began the second half with a 16-4 run that gave them a 35-34 advantage, stunning the 14,625 on hand at "The Barn." But once the game was tied at 42-42, Minnesota took the lead inside the 13-minute mark on a 3-point play from reserve guard Austin Hollins. From there, it grew to a 60-46 margin.

Iowa would hit three 3-pointers and get it to within 65-59 in the final minute before Minnesota secured the victory.

Things don't get any easier for the Hawkeyes, as they head back on the road this week to play Ohio State on Jan. 19 at Value City Arena in Columbus, Ohio. Tip-off is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Central and the game will be aired nationally on the Big Ten Network.

Iowa played Ohio State to the wire in Iowa City on Jan. 4, but lost 73-68. This time around, however, the Buckeyes will be ranked No. 1 nationally after winning games against Michigan and Penn State last week.

"It's very rare you get a chance to play the No. 1 team, even on the road," Gatens said. "It's going to be a fun time. It will be a lot of fun preparing for because it's an opportunity you don't get very often, and we have to take advantage of it."