

# COMMENTARY: Assessing 0-6 is a bit complicated (premium)

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – After losing 70-48 to No. 1 Ohio State on Wednesday at Value City Arena, the Iowa Hawkeyes are 0-6 in the Big Ten. Not only that, but Iowa is the lone winless team in conference play.

When it comes to making an honest assessment of why this team is 0-6, the answer ought to seem easy. Former NFL coach Bill Parcells once said “You are what your record says you are.” If that is how Iowa is judged, then 7-11 overall is subpar and 0-6 in the conference is as bad as it could be.

This commentary is not to make excuses for why Iowa has struggled in the Big Ten. There’s no way of sugarcoating the Hawkeyes’ record, and Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery went as far as saying that during his postgame press conference Wednesday evening.

Iowa has six losses, but have you seen who its Big Ten opponents have been so far? Ohio State is one of three unbeaten teams in the country, and accounts for one-third of those conference defeats for the Hawkeyes.

Three other Big Ten teams – No. 14 Purdue, No. 15 Minnesota, and No. 23 Illinois – are all in the AP top 25 and have beaten Iowa this season, with the former two having had the benefit of playing the Hawkeyes at home.

In other words, it isn’t as though Iowa is losing games it shouldn’t be losing. Maybe losses to teams such as South Dakota State, Wake Forest, and Iowa State are examples of

that, but all three of those came in non-conference play.

One major reason I see this team in the position it's in that maybe isn't being thought about has to do with consistency, or in this case, lack of it. Prior to the Hawkeyes' Jan. 16 in Minneapolis against the Golden Gophers, McCaffery stressed the importance of consistency and finding it sooner than later.

Right now, the best guess I can make as it pertains to Iowa exclusively is that too many players have played inconsistency. There is a plethora of evidence to support this. Heck, McCaffery rattled off some recent examples of inconsistency he has witnessed with his players.

Take for instance a player like junior forward Andrew Brommer. On Wednesday, Brommer maybe topped what he said was his best performance as a Hawkeye last month against Iowa State by scoring 12 of Iowa's 48 points against Ohio State. Raise your hand if you thought coming into this game that anyone coming off the bench for Iowa would account for 25 percent of the Hawkeye scoring Wednesday evening, especially after Iowa had a whopping ZERO bench points against Minnesota last weekend? I'm guessing you didn't raise your hand, or you're lying to yourself.

In contrast, look at guys like sophomore forward Eric May and senior center Jarryd Cole. Both players had forgetful performances against Ohio State. May appeared to have broken out of his slump in Minnesota, while Cole showed earlier in the season the role he could play in leading this team.

The only thing consistently bad right now is that the Hawkeyes are 0-6 in league play. The results have ended up the same, but outside of the Big Ten being loaded with other talented teams this year, it isn't as though Iowa is losing every single conference game the exact same way.

Some nights, the Hawkeyes definitely show enough effort. Other nights like Wednesday, they fall far enough behind early on

that they don't recover.

As hard as it might be to win every single game, it's just hard to lose every single game. Eventually, there will be a night this season when everything clicks for Iowa. The Hawkeyes might lack the talent of the six ranked Big Ten teams at the moment, but I think it's way too soon for anyone to suggest 0-18 being a reality.

The answer could become less complicated by the end of the month, as Iowa now plays three games that are all winnable, even though two of them are away from Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Until then, stay tuned.