

# Hawkeyes escape Assembly Hall with win

By Brendan Stiles

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – The play was called “41.” Bryce Cartwright had a choice, and decided to let it fly. He knew as soon as he released the basketball, it was going in.

That shot gave Iowa a 64-63 lead on Indiana. The Hoosiers had two possessions to win the game late, and couldn't convert. As a result, the Hawkeyes left the Indiana faithful stunned inside Assembly Hall on Saturday, defeating the Hoosiers, 64-63.

The win was Iowa's second straight in conference play, marking the first time this has occurred for the Hawkeyes in four years. They also are now 3-8 in the Big Ten, and 10-13 overall, with the 10 victories matching last season's total.

What tilted this contest in Iowa's favor was its second half play. Although the Hawkeyes only trailed by five points at the half, they were getting torched by Indiana's 3-point shooting and also committed 11 turnovers.

The game was tied at 39-39 when Indiana started to go on a 19-9 run. It was highlighted by a dunk from Will Sheehey where he threw the ball down over freshman forward Melsahn Basabe.

But Basabe wouldn't let that get to him, and he played a key role in the Hawkeye comeback, scoring 15 of his 20 points in the second half and also hauling in 13 rebounds.

“I had five points in the first half, but usually, I go into the locker room and I mentally talk to myself, ask ‘What can I do?’” Basabe said. “By then, now I feel like I have an

advantage because now I know how you're going to play me. Now, I'm going to just come on the court and execute like I know how to do."

With Indiana ahead 58-50, the Iowa run was on when sophomore forward Eric May got a steal and Cartwright got a lay-up in transition to trim the Hoosier lead to six points.

Eventually, the Hawkeyes would tie it up at 58-58 with a bucket from Basabe.

"We changed up the defense a little bit, and we stayed focused," May said. "We didn't come down and jack up a shot when we didn't need it. We just needed to pick up the intensity on defense."

After Indiana's Victor Oladipo made one of two free-throw attempts to put Indiana back up 63-62, the play "41" was called, and it was Cartwright being counted on to deliver.

"It's kind of like if you can get to the hole, you go, but if it's not there, you hit your spot-ups," Cartwright said. "I felt comfortable with the shot, and I knew we needed a big play."

The two teams would then exchange a pair of missed baskets, and Indiana had a chance to win the game on the final possession. The shot from Verdell Jones III hit the rim, but didn't go in, and the Hawkeyes managed to survive after a missed putback.

"You knew he was going to go, so you want to make sure that he makes a contested shot if he's going to beat you," Iowa head coach McCaffery said. "You don't want to foul him. You want him to make a tough shot. We made him make a tough shot, and he missed it."

With this two-game winning streak in place, Iowa returns home for its next two contests, starting with a Feb. 9 showdown

against No. 18 Wisconsin. The game is scheduled to tip off from Carver-Hawkeye Arena at 7:30 p.m. Central, and will be aired nationally on the Big Ten Network.

Even with the Badgers coming to Iowa City nationally ranked, the Hawkeyes have every reason now to feel confident.

“We’re learning how to win,” Basabe said. “We need these wins, and the season’s not over. We still got a bunch of games, and we got teams we can beat.

We need to be coming into these games to win, and we believe in it now.”