

Hawkeyes cap regular season with upset of sixth-ranked Boilermakers

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – For the Iowa basketball fan that patiently waited for that one little glimmer of hope, Saturday afternoon proved to be a memorable one for the 12,132 on hand at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

What proved to be a rough regular season for the Iowa Hawkeyes ended with them sending shockwaves through the college basketball world, as Iowa defeated No. 6 Purdue, 67-65. Iowa had already clinched the No. 10 seed in next week's Big Ten Tournament earlier in the day, but with this win, the Hawkeyes avoided finishing tied for last place, possessing an 11-19 overall record and 4-14 mark in Big Ten play. The 11 wins surpassed last season's total of 10 victories.

"For us to beat a team that's ranked in the top 10, I need everybody to contribute to their capabilities," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said. "They don't have to play perfect basketball, but they have to play up to their capabilities and contribute in a positive way.

"We made enough shots, got enough seconds, and got enough stops."

Iowa was led by its senior captain, center Jarryd Cole. In his final game at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, Cole had a "Senior Day" to remember, posting a double-double of 16 points and 10 rebounds, both of which were team-highs.

Purdue quickly jumped out to an early lead and led as much as

seven points in the first half. But thanks in large part to Cole's performance, the Hawkeyes managed to stick around.

"He was scoring and rebounding," freshman forward Melsahn Basabe said after coming away with 11 points and eight rebounds of his own. "He kept us in it in the first half."

The game would be tied at halftime, 36-36, before Iowa began playing with the upper-hand.

The Hawkeyes took a 40-38 lead on an alley-oop from freshman guard Devyn Marble to freshman forward Melsahn Basabe, and remained ahead for most of the second half. However, right after that play, junior guard Bryce Cartwright needed help getting off the court after dealing with what he said after the game was an issue with his quads.

Cartwright eventually returned to the game with Iowa remaining ahead, and ended up with 13 points, seven assists and six rebounds on the afternoon.

In fact, Cartwright made one of the biggest plays of the game in the final minute. Following an Iowa timeout with the Hawkeyes ahead 63-61, the Compton, Calif., native took a shot with the shot clock expiring that hit the back of the rim, went up in the air, and went through the hoop.

"He definitely had one of those coming his way," McCaffery said, adding that he didn't initially think Cartwright's shot would fall.

Following a Purdue bucket that trimmed the lead to 65-63, junior guard Matt Gatens was fouled and hit both of his free throws to make it a two-possession. The Boilermakers would score again, but Cartwright would take the final inbound pass and hold the ball as members of the Hawk's Nest stormed the court to celebrate with the team.

"Sometimes, you don't get that chance, and we took advantage

of an opportunity we had today,” Cartwright said. “We still got work to do. This is a good win to lead us into the Big Ten Tournament, and we have to feed off of it.”

Now the Hawkeyes await their first round opponent in the Big Ten Tournament, which will be either Michigan State or Penn State. Iowa will play Penn State if the Nittany Lions lose Sunday at Minnesota. However, should Penn State leave “The Barn” with a win over the Golden Gophers, the Hawkeyes and Spartans will meet for the second time this month.

Regardless of who Iowa’s opponent is, the 7-10 game is scheduled for approximately 4 p.m. Central from Consecro Fieldhouse on March 10, and it will be aired nationally on ESPN2.

As for this game, it’s one this team, and especially Cole, won’t soon forget.

“This is the way I wanted it to go, and very seldom have I gotten things to go the way I wanted them to go here,” Cole said. “This is definitely a blessing and I really appreciate it.

“It was the way to go.”