

Hawkeyes handle Bearcats in exhibition

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The question entering Iowa's exhibition contest Sunday against Northwest Missouri State was how noticeable would the strides between Years One and Two of the Fran McCaffery era be.

Some bright spots emerged, but the Hawkeyes had their struggles for the first 25 minutes before a 7-0 run in the second half sparked what ended up being a 79-59 victory over the Bearcats on Sunday at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. It wasn't the 111 points Iowa scored in its exhibition last year, but head coach Fran McCaffery acknowledged the competition would be tougher and that some mistakes would show early on.

"It was not going to be an easy game," McCaffery said. "But that's what I wanted for this team. I wanted us to be challenged, and we were in every way."

For Iowa, this was an opportunity to try out various lineups, 13 of them in the first half to be precise, and see what worked. As far as substitutions go, two things were apparent. The first was that in both halves, freshman Aaron White and sophomore Zach McCabe were the first two bench players in for sophomore Melsahn Basabe and senior Devon Archie, respectively.

The other was a consistent sign from last season with foul trouble, where any Iowa player picking up two fouls in the first half rides the bench until halftime. Four Hawkeyes, including senior guard Bryce Cartwright and Basabe, fell in line with this picking up two early fouls. When Cartwright was

called for his second foul, sophomore Devyn Marble ended up playing the point for the final 5:23 of the first half.

Marble ended up playing 20 minutes off the bench on Sunday and finished with six points, six rebounds and four assists.

"That was important for him because you never know when we're going to need him," Cartwright said. "He's going to have to be ready to step up at any time. I think he did well."

As for the positives, two of these stood out. One was free-throw shooting. Iowa shot 25-of-31 from the foul line on Sunday, which is leaps and bounds better than the 67.6 percent the Hawkeyes shot last season.

"We want to be a driving team, we want to be a running team, and if you get to the free-throw line, you got to make them," McCaffery said. "You talk about pressing, if you want to press, then you got to make your free throws."

The other positive came with halftime adjustments. In the first half, Iowa surrendered 10 offensive rebounds to Northwest Missouri State, something that really didn't sit well with McCaffery. The Hawkeyes only gave up four offensive boards in the second half and out-rebounded the Bearcats, 40-34.

"We weren't getting guys, and some guys were leaking the boards," said junior forward Eric May, who led the Hawkeyes in rebounding with seven boards on the afternoon. "I found myself doing that a couple of times where I was leaking out. We just had to stay in there and have five guys crash on defense."

The dress rehearsal might be a thing of the past, but now is when strides need to continue for the Hawkeyes if they are going to build off the 11-20 campaign from one year ago. Now is when a better idea will be made of just how far this team has come and how far it will go in McCaffery's second season at the helm.

Iowa stat leaders:

Points – Matt Gatens, 17 points

Rebounds – Eric May, 7 rebounds

Assists – Eric May and Devyn Marble, 4 assists

Postgame video:

[Fran McCaffery](#)

[Eric May](#)

[Aaron White](#)

[Matt Gatens](#)

[Bryce Cartwright](#)

[Melsahn Basabe](#)