

Hawkeyes cruise in opener

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – For the first time in three seasons, the Iowa Hawkeyes are starting the way they intended.

Year Two of the Fran McCaffery era got off to a stellar beginning, as Iowa handled Chicago State with ease Friday night, defeating the Cougars 96-53 inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Friday's game was part of the five-team round-robin Dale Howard Classic.

From the opening tip, the Hawkeyes had their way, jumping out to an early 10-0 lead. It start with a 3-pointer by junior forward Eric May, then the Cougars called a timeout 1:22 in after a 3 from senior guard Matt Gatens made it a 6-0 contest.

"It was exactly how we wanted to get after them," May said. "We talked about it all week. It was really good to see us do that."

Following the first media timeout of the game, it was the play of the Iowa bench that stood out, as it outscored Chicago State's bench 57-4. In fact, Iowa's bench outscored Chicago State, period.

Leading the way was 6-8 freshman forward Aaron White, who had a memorable Hawkeye debut compiling a double-double of 19 points and 10 rebounds while playing 18 minutes Friday evening. He's the first Iowa freshman to have a double-double in his first game since Jess Settles had 13 points and 11 rebounds in his Hawkeye debut back in 1993.

"He's a terrific player," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said. "He's a complete player. I've said this before – when you have a 6-8 player that really understands how to play – dribble,

pass and shoot, post up, he can play in the press and play in the zone – he has got a feel. He doesn't rattle."

White wasn't the only Hawkeye reserve that had a solid evening. Sophomore forward Zach McCabe finished with 13 points and added five rebounds of his own. White said afterwards he's finding a comfort zone playing alongside McCabe as they were two of the first four players to enter the game.

"I don't know if easier would be the word, but I think we do mesh well together," White said. "We both kind of bring the same game, but with nuances that are a little bit different. I think we just mesh well together and bring a lot of energy off the bench like we did tonight."

Also providing double-figures in points were May and sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe. May posted 12 points and a team-high five assists, while Basabe bounced back from a forgetful exhibition showing and came away with 14 points and five rebounds. Not only that, but Basabe was a perfect 8-for-8 from the foul line. As a team, Iowa made 27-of-32 free throw attempts.

One other noteworthy stat from this contest was turnovers, as Iowa forced Chicago State into a total of 27 miscues, including six turnovers on each of its first six possessions. Most of the Cougar mistakes were a result of the Hawkeyes' press that McCaffery wants to use more of this season.

"We need to practice playing that way, because we're going to want to play that way a lot," McCaffery said. "I thought it was pretty good."

The second of four Dale Howard Classic games for Iowa will be the Hawkeyes' next contest, which takes place Nov. 14 against North Carolina A&T at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. Central.