

Hawkeyes bury Huskies to move to 3-0

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – For the first time since Fran McCaffery took over as head coach in 2010, the Iowa Hawkeyes have now won three straight games after defeating Northern Illinois on Thursday at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, 88-55. The 3-0 start is the first for Iowa since the 2008-09 season when it began 5-0 before finishing 15-17.

This contest didn't get off to the start McCaffery necessarily wanted though. Before the Hawkeyes took complete control, the Huskies did knock down seven of their first eight shots and held an 11-9 lead entering the first media timeout.

A pair of 3s by senior guard Matt Gatens, who finished with 15 points on 5-of-6 shooting just three nights after scoring a career-high 27 points against North Carolina A&T, moved the Hawkeyes ahead by seven when the story of the evening emerged in freshman guard Josh Oglesby.

Although he missed his first 3-point attempt, Oglesby made three straight buckets from behind the arc scored 11 of his team-high 16 points in the first half as the Hawkeyes took a 49-30 advantage into the locker room.

"The players and coaches have had confidence in me," Oglesby said. "I came out tonight, shot the ball, and luckily it went in."

Oglesby finished 6-of-9 shooting from the floor while playing 23 minutes off the bench. In fact, every player sans Andrew Brommer, who was out after re-aggravating a knee injury

against North Carolina A&T, played at least two minutes. Most of the second half was played by the reserves.

One starter who did emerge in the second half however was senior forward Devon Archie, who went from being a non-factor in the first half to bringing the energy McCaffery was hoping for during the final 20 minutes and finished with a team-high seven rebounds.

"The only way he's going to be more consistent is if that energy level you saw in the second half is always there," McCaffery said.

Iowa finished the game shooting 33-of-61 from the court, but what makes this performance all the more impressive is that assists were made on 26 of those 33 field goals made. Senior guard Bryce Cartwright led the way with nine of those 26 assists, seven of which came in the first half.

"That's what I've been noticing in practice and stuff, is how well we pass the ball and make that extra pass," junior forward Eric May said following a 14-point performance. "There's a few times you probably see that guys can take a shot, and they kick it one extra time and get the guy open.

"It makes a huge difference for everybody, getting everybody involved, keeping everybody energized."

The Hawkeyes also held a decisive 28-4 edge in points off turnovers, forcing Northern Illinois into turning the ball over 16 times while the Huskies shot just 19-of-54 from the floor.

Now at 3-0, Iowa shifts its attention to its stiffest test to date on Nov. 20 against Creighton, who is also unbeaten and was tabbed the favorite to win the Missouri Valley Conference entering this season. Making this even more of a challenge is that the game will not be at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, but rather at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. Tip-off is scheduled for 3

p.m. Central and the game will air nationally on the Big Ten Network.

“They’re just going to play their game, and we’re going to have to beat that team,” McCaffery said. “They are not going to beat themselves.”