

# COMMENTARY: Daniels, Binns lead the way (premium)

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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – With the hopes of winning the Legends Division all but evaporated and no games remaining on the schedule at Kinnick Stadium, one had to wonder what Iowa team would show up at Ross-Ade Stadium on Saturday.

The Hawkeyes were 6-4, coming off its first home defeat of the year at the hands of division champion Michigan State. It was facing a Purdue squad coming off a thrilling overtime win over Ohio State that put the Boilermakers in position, on their Senior Day no less, to secure bowl-eligibility.

But even with all the intangibles seemingly stacked against them, the leadership Iowa had counted on all season was in full display for those on hand to watch the Hawkeyes defeat Purdue, 31-21, for their first road win of the season and seventh overall.

A lot will be made of players such as Marvin McNutt, who seems to break a new record every week now, and C.J. Fiedorowicz, who has evolved into a go-to target (especially on third down) the last few weeks since becoming a starter. But there were two performances that truly defined how this game was going to go, and they both came along the defensive line.

Defensive tackle Mike Daniels and defensive end Broderick Binns, two senior mainstays along that defensive line, gave Iowa the 1-2 punch it needed to keep the Boilermaker offense in check. It didn't matter if Purdue had Caleb TerBush or Robert Marve was taking snaps. Daniels and Binns both manhandled whoever blocked them and disrupted whatever rhythm

the Boilermakers tried to develop.

Daniels finished with team-highs in tackles (8), solo tackles (6), tackles for loss (4) and sacks (2). Not that he hasn't had a good season (a lot of teams have started keying on him like they did Adrian Clayborn last year), but Saturday was by far his best performance of the fall. Statistically speaking, Binns maybe didn't have his best output, but he finished with seven tackles (five solo) and a sack himself. So between the two defensive linemen, they accounted for 15 tackles and three sacks.

When it comes to Iowa's defense, everything starts with the front four. Daniels and Binns set the tone for the rest of the defense on Saturday, something both head coach Kirk Ferentz and sophomore free safety Tanner Miller (who had two interceptions against Purdue) acknowledged after the game.

Ferentz commented on the energy level Daniels and Binns played with and how they practiced well during this past week. Miller said when the team made the internal decision to continue fighting even without a division crown to play for, it was Daniels and Binns who set the tone in practices making sure other defensive players gave 100 percent.

"They did an awesome job all day, and all week," Miller said.

Looking ahead to next week's game at Nebraska, this is perhaps the most encouraging sign for Iowa before heading to Lincoln, Neb. All season long, the defensive line was a question mark. The answer may not be completely answered, but it hasn't been a secret where the leadership up front is.

It was on full display at a time the Hawkeyes needed it to be.