

Hawkeyes cruise to victory over Brown

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – After a 16-point loss to Clemson where they were humiliated on their home-floor, the Iowa Hawkeyes regrouped and put together a solid, yet critical 75-54 victory over Brown on Saturday at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Iowa improved to 5-3 with the victory and finished its four-game home-stand with a 2-2 mark.

The story of this game was interior play, as the Hawkeyes looked as impressive inside as they had all season long. Leading the charge was sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe, who broke out of a brutal four-game slump and posted a double-double of 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Even more significant was that unlike the previous four games, Basabe found an early spark, scoring six of Iowa's first 11 points on the afternoon. Afterwards, it looked like a giant weight was lifted off his shoulders.

"Just from dealing with a few rough games, it just makes me appreciate every opportunity," Basabe said. "It makes me want rebounds more and just appreciate every shot and basically just value everything on the court.

"It definitely has me more focused than ever now."

Basabe's effort played a vital role in the Hawkeyes dominating Brown with 44 points in the paint and 21 of their 56 rebounds coming at the offensive end of the court. Junior forward Eric May said establishing that presence inside and fighting for rebounds was a major emphasis in practice during the week.

"We came out really focused on doing that, and guys came out, attacked the boards," May said. "I tried to attack every time I could, and I think I could see a difference."

In addition to Basabe's contributions, Iowa received a solid showing off the bench from sophomore guard Devyn Marble, who played 23 minutes and finished with 11 points (all of which came in the first half) and seven rebounds. He brought up not scoring in the second half and countered with advice he received from assistant coach Sherman Dillard about how he could be a dominant player without contributing with points.

"I just wanted to come out, be aggressive, and get my teammates involved at the same time," Marble said.

After starting out with a 5-4 lead early, the Hawkeyes went on a 18-4 run to move ahead 23-8. From that point forward, Iowa didn't look back. Although Brown managed to trim the deficit down 14 points in the second half, the Bears shot an anemic 4-of-22 from the perimeter and ended up shooting a total of just 21-of-60 from the floor.

"I've seen this team make 12, 11, 10 [3-pointers] a number of times," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said. "It's hard to beat teams they make 10 or more threes. We couldn't allow them to do that, and we didn't."

Now with this win behind them, the Hawkeyes' next three contests make up the annual slate of games against in-state rivals Northern Iowa, Iowa State and Drake. It begins Dec. 6 with Iowa traveling to the McLeod Center in Cedar Falls to face a Panther squad that's 7-1 after defeating Colorado State on Saturday. The Hawkeyes won last year's meeting at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, 51-39.

"These games mean a lot to myself and this team," senior guard Matt Gatens said. "We're going to go out and prepare and try to get the 'W' on Tuesday."