

First-half Cyclone surge dooms Hawkeyes at Hilton

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

AMES, Iowa – The first 20 minutes of Friday's game between Iowa and Iowa State ultimately proved as the difference Friday night at Hilton Coliseum.

The Cyclones took a 21-point lead into halftime and managed to hang on for an 86-76 win over the Hawkeyes. With the loss, Iowa has now lost five of its last seven and sits at 5-5 overall with three non-conference games remaining before Big Ten play begins later this month.

In what proved to be a game of runs, a quick 4-0 Hawkeye lead suddenly became an 8-4 deficit. Then an 11-11 tie turned into a 25-13 Cyclone lead, and eventually, Iowa State established a 48-27 advantage going into the locker room.

Providing the spark for the Cyclones was forward Royce White, who scored Iowa State's first six points and scored 14 of his 17 total points for the game in the first half as a result of shooting a perfect 7-of-7 from the floor. As a team, the Cyclones made 19 first-half field-goals on 32 attempts, including 6-of-11 from behind the arc.

"You can't give 59.5 [percent] in the first half on the road and expect to win," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said.

The Hawkeyes weren't able to complete any sort of comeback during the second half, but they did manage to score 49 points during the final 20 minutes of play. Leading the charge Friday night was sophomore guard Devyn Marble, who had a game-high 21 points and a team-high five assists. Also playing a key role

for Iowa was sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe, who finished with 18 points and nine rebounds.

"In the second half, we just played with more of a sense of urgency," Marble said. "We really wanted to get down and defend, and execute on the offensive end. It really helped us out a lot, but we dug ourselves a big hole."

Marble's numbers came in what was his second straight start at point guard in place of senior Bryce Cartwright, who has been dealing with a hamstring injury. Cartwright did play six minutes off the bench in the first half for the Hawkeyes, but didn't see any playing time during the second half. As a result, Marble ended up playing 37 minutes for the second consecutive game.

"He's just a baller, and I think that's his best attribute," Basabe said. "Devyn is just a great basketball player. He doesn't need to have a system. He can do so many things and he has such an advantage because of his height at his position."

As Iowa seemed to climb its way back into the game, however, Iowa State responded with a key second-half run to keep the game out of reach. While White had the dominating performance in the first half, it was guard Scott Christopherson who had 10 of his 16 points in the second half.

With the UI holding final exams next week, the Hawkeyes won't return to the court again until Dec. 17, when they finish their in-state slate by entertaining Drake at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Dec. 17. Tip-off is scheduled for 8 p.m. Central, and the game will air nationally on the Big Ten Network. Iowa won last season's meeting in Des Moines, 59-52.