

# Hawkeyes stave off Broncos for third straight win

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – For the first time all season, the Iowa Hawkeyes found themselves in a slugfest Thursday that went to the wire and required the mental fortitude needed to throw that one last swing at the opposition.

On this night, it was Iowa that stood standing, as the Hawkeyes concluded non-conference play with an 81-72 win over Boise State at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. For Iowa, this was its third straight victory, and the first game (win or lose) that was decided by single digits.

“We needed a test tonight,” Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said. “We needed somebody to come in here, you hit them, they hit you back, you hit them, they hit you back.

“We had to gut one out. We had a close game. We had to make our free throws, not turn it over, get a couple of stops against good players when we needed them, and that’s what we did.”

Once again leading the way for the Hawkeyes were sophomore guard Devyn Marble and freshman forward Aaron White. Marble made his fifth consecutive start at point guard and finished Thursday’s contest with the following stat line – 18 points, eight rebounds, five assists, three steals and three blocks.

He also made a pair of shots late in the game that Boise State head coach Leon Rice described as backbreaking to his Bronco squad.

“I felt like I earned everything I got tonight,” Marble said.

Meanwhile, White played 27 minutes off the bench and scored 10 of Iowa's first 17 points after initially being subbed in for sophomore forward Zach McCabe after he picked up two quick fouls. He said his stamina has gotten better thanks in part to knowing more about what to expect defensively.

"When you hit a bucket, you feel energized, but once you get back on defense, you're like, 'Oh, I'm tired. My legs hurt,'" White said. "I just got to stay with it."

Also contributing in a key way for the Hawkeyes was sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe. The Glen Cove, N.Y., native had a double-double consisting of 14 points and 11 rebounds, but Basabe also led the team in blocks Thursday night, swatting away four Boise State shots.

"He's much more comfortable," McCaffery said about Basabe, who shot 6-of-9 from the floor.

The game itself had a back-and-forth feel to it, even though Boise State never led again after Iowa turned an early 6-3 deficit into an 11-6 advantage in its favor in the first half. But every time the Broncos found themselves bouncing back in the game, the Hawkeyes found ways to answer right back and eventually built enough a lead that proved insurmountable to Boise State.

One way Iowa did this was by getting to the free-throw line and sinking 25-of-31 attempts.

With the non-conference slate complete, Iowa now shifts its attention to the start of Big Ten play. The Hawkeyes open their conference schedule Dec. 28 hosting a Purdue squad it defeated in their home finale last season. Tip-off that evening is set for 8:30 p.m. Central, and the game will be televised nationally on the Big Ten Network.

As far as what is being anticipated against the Boilermakers and going forward, Basabe said Thursday's game against Boise

State was an example of what he believes the Hawkeyes can expect over the next 18 games.

“That’s what every Big Ten game is – a night like tonight where it’s ‘Who’s going to last the longest?’” Basabe said. “It’s a heavyweight match. That’s how it’s going to be.”