

# COMMENTARY: Awful defense does Hawkeyes in (premium)

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*HawkeyeDrive.com*

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – At one end of the floor, the Iowa Hawkeyes played about as good a game as anyone could've asked of them inside Assembly Hall on Sunday against No. 16 Indiana. At the other end, well, not so much.

If there really are two sides to every story, then this one's pretty simple. As good as Iowa's offense looked against the Hoosiers, it's the defense (or lack thereof) that will be most remembered in a 103-89 loss that puts the Hawkeyes three games under .500 in the Big Ten and back at .500 overall with an 11-11 record.

The 103 points scored by Indiana was the most ever allowed by an Iowa squad coached by Fran McCaffery, surpassing the previous mark of 95 set earlier this month at Michigan State. But it wasn't just the Hoosiers scoring 103 points that explains the Hawkeyes' atrocious play at the defensive end of the floor, but how Indiana was accumulating all those points.

At one point in the first half, the Hoosiers shot 4-of-7 from 3-point range. They finished 4-of-16, including 0-of-5 in the second half.

So here's where it gets ugly: Indiana finished 37-of-67 shooting from the floor, and more specifically, it was 33-of-51 inside the arc. That means the Hoosiers were scoring nearly twice on every three trips down the court. Now add into this equation the following numbers – 58, 23, and 20. Indiana scored 58 points in the paint, and scored 23 second-chance points while compiling 20 offensive rebounds.

To put this into further context, Indiana's sensational freshman center Cody Zeller had 26 points "shooting" 11-of-12. I say "shooting" in quotations because at least seven of those field goals were slam dunks. As for the rebounding, the Hoosiers' 20 offensive rebounds were out of 37 total for the game. Iowa finished with a combined total of 22 rebounds, so Indiana nearly matched the Hawkeyes in rebounding at the offensive end alone.

As good as Zeller is and as good as the Hoosiers are, at some point a line has to be drawn and the effort given at the defensive end by Iowa deserves to be questioned and scrutinized. Whether the blame is placed on the coaches or players doesn't really matter because this is now an ongoing issue after Nebraska scored 48 second-half points just three nights earlier to steal a win from the Hawkeyes back at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

A collectively atrocious performance defensively overshadows a lot of good that actually came from this game. Iowa actually shot a better percentage from the floor than Indiana and was 19-of-24 in the second half alone. Guards Josh Oglesby and Matt Gatens scored 24 and 20 points, respectively, and both players shot the ball well Sunday. Even freshman center Gabe Olaseni provided a positive contribution playing nine minutes and having to hold his own against Zeller.

But while all that could be encouraging in the long run – especially for freshmen like Oglesby and Olaseni – none of it mattered on this night. In fact, that might be what makes this performance even more painful.

At one end of the floor, Iowa did more than enough to pull off a third win over a top 25 team this season, on the road no less. But the 40-minute debacle at the defensive end of the court is why the Hawkeyes have now lost three straight.

Now this team is at a crossroads, because this week's home

games against Minnesota and Penn State might now be the difference between staying in the middle of the pack as far as league standings are concerned and ending up back in the conference cellar when it's all said and done. Both are winnable games, that is if Iowa's overall team defense doesn't improve dramatically here.

If it doesn't, then things will only get more bleak.