

Hawkeyes sweep Gophers with late clutch play

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – In a game that looked lost, the Iowa Hawkeyes found a way to put together a resilient performance that resulted in victory.

On this night, clutch play in the final minutes proved to be the difference as Iowa secured its second win of the season over Minnesota, defeating the Golden Gophers 63-59 on Wednesday at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. It marked the 12th victory of the season for a program that had won 11 games last season and 10 the season prior. More importantly for the Hawkeyes, it puts them in a tie at 4-6 with Minnesota, with Iowa holding the tiebreaker in the Big Ten standings.

“It’s a big step for us to beat a team of this caliber twice, a team that is that athletic and has been playing that well,” Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said.

After relinquishing 103 points to Indiana just three nights earlier, the Hawkeyes came out Wednesday focused at the defensive end of the floor and in the first eight minutes held a 15-3 lead on the Golden Gophers.

But Minnesota would respond right back. After trimming the deficit down to 20-19, the Golden Gophers eventually took a 27-24 lead into their locker room at halftime despite committing more turnovers.

Iowa found itself trailing 45-35 in the second half before scoring nine unanswered points to trim the deficit to one, which proved to be the starting point for this comeback

victory.

"We knew this was a must win, and we didn't want to be denied," senior guard Bryce Cartwright said after finishing with six points and four assists. "Even when we got down double digits, we kept fighting."

Sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe would sink a pair of free throws to give Iowa a 51-50 lead with 5:12 remaining before Minnesota went on a 9-3 run to move ahead 59-54.

Then sophomore guard Devyn Marble took over.

It began with Marble knocking down a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to two points. The following possession after a rebound by freshman forward Aaron White led to Marble driving inside and slamming one down over Minnesota's Ralph Sampson III to tie the game at 59-59.

"As soon as I saw the lane, I knew I was going to do that," Marble said about his game-tying dunk. "He was blocking my shot in the first half and I was getting upset.

"I had a business meeting tonight, and I was taking care of business."

Cartwright forced a turnover with the game tied and drew a foul in the lane. He'd knock down a pair of free throws to put Iowa ahead 61-59. After a Golden Gopher missed shot was rebounded by senior guard Matt Gatens, the ball went back into Marble's hands with a difference of six seconds on the shot clock.

With the shot clock winding down, he began to drive to the lane, only this time around, he threw it inside to an open Gatens for a lay-up that made it a four-point game.

"It just shows what kind of player he is," Gatens said. "He read it, made a great play, made a great decision. I think my guy maybe stepped up and he saw me wide open and made a great

dish instead of forcing something up.”

Gatens finished with a game-high 18 points to lead Iowa while Marble had 12 points and sophomore forward Zach McCabe had eight points and 10 rebounds.

The Hawkeyes look to make it two straight on Feb. 4 with a 2 p.m. Central contest against Penn State, the first of two meetings with the Nittany Lions over a span of 12 days. The game will be aired nationally on ESPNU. Iowa will wear throwback uniforms honoring the 1986-87 squad coached by Tom Davis that went to the Elite Eight. Members of that team, including Davis, will be on hand to sign autographs for fans starting at 12:30 p.m. when doors open.