

Hawkeyes leave Lincoln victorious

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

LINCOLN, Neb. – The Iowa Hawkeyes knew picking up their first road win in nearly two months would prove difficult, even against a Nebraska squad sitting in the cellar of the Big Ten.

Following an ugly first half of basketball, Iowa found a rhythm shooting in the second half that led to the Hawkeyes leaving the Devaney Center with a 62-53 win over the Cornhuskers on Wednesday. Iowa sits alone in seventh place of the Big Ten at 8-9 and now possesses a 16-14 overall mark, guaranteeing the Hawkeyes they enter next week's Big Ten tournament with a winning record for the first time in five seasons.

After a first half where both Iowa and Nebraska combined to shoot 17-of-52 from the floor, including just 2-of-18 from 3-point range, both teams began to get the scoring going in the second half.

From the Hawkeyes' perspective, it began with freshman guard Josh Oglesby draining a pair of 3-pointers three nights after a nine-point performance against Illinois where all of his scoring came in the second half.

Oglesby said the encouragement both Wednesday and in the previous contest against the Fighting Illini last weekend came from being chewed out at halftime by head coach Fran McCaffery.

"He says I need to be a scorer out there," Oglesby said. "At halftime, he chewed me out in both the games. I just came out

and tried to do what I could do, take the open shot when it was there. My wrist is bothering me, but I just have to play through it.”

Nebraska would cut its deficit down to 31-30, then the next 16 Iowa points came from guards Matt Gatens and Devyn Marble. Both players knocked down a pair of 3-pointers and sparked a 15-3 run capped by a jumper from senior guard Bryce Cartwright.

The duo combined for 22 of Iowa’s 39 second half points.

“I wasn’t being as aggressive as I normally am and that’s something I’m still working on,” said Marble, who scored all 11 of his points in the second half. “But once I got into the flow of the game in the second half, I was feeling pretty good.”

Cartwright then proceeded to make another bucket to end a 5-0 Cornhusker run, then nailed a clutch 3-pointer to put the Hawkeyes ahead 54-45 late in the second half. The 6-1 guard finished with 11 points in what was only his third game back from a high ankle sprain suffered earlier this month.

“I really thought he was getting better, but he was really gimpy [Tuesday] night at practice,” McCaffery said. “He has worked really diligently to get that ankle better and really, I thought this game, that was as explosive as he has been since he had turned it.

“Clearly, the difference in the game. No question.”

While Cartwright continues his road back from injury, Aaron White hurt his left thumb in the first few minutes of the game. He played through the pain and came away with eight points and five rebounds, but was wearing a splint on his left arm afterwards. White said the thumb would be X-rayed Thursday in Iowa City.

Iowa returns home to play its regular season finale on March 3 against Northwestern. Tip-off from Carver-Hawkeye Arena is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Central and the game will air nationally on the Big Ten Network. It will also be the Hawkeyes' Senior Day as they'll honor Gatens, Cartwright, and forwards Andrew Brommer and Devon Archie.

If Iowa defeats Northwestern this weekend, the Hawkeyes will clinch the No. 7 seed in next week's Big Ten Tournament and face either Minnesota or Nebraska. However, if Iowa were to lose, the Hawkeyes would face Illinois in the 8-9 match-up with seeding to be determined.

"We needed this win and now on Saturday, we need that win," Gatens said. "We know Northwestern needs it, but we got them in our home place. Hopefully the place is rocking, get all the fans there, get a sellout. It would be an awesome environment.

"There's going to be a lot of emotion, but hopefully we can keep it under control and get a win."