

Hawkeyes suffocate Quincy in exhibition

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – All throughout the offseason, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery made clear one of his biggest objectives for this season was for the Hawkeyes to become a better team at the defensive end of the floor. With the amount of depth Iowa possesses, McCaffery previously said he wanted to become more aggressive defensively with using the full-court press.

On Sunday, the Hawkeyes got to put that press on display in front of a paid attendance of 12,551 spectators inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Yes, it was an only an exhibition game Iowa won 100-54 over Quincy on Sunday. But it was more than a win. What mattered was that the improvements being made have shown dividends.

“I think guys take it personally. They personally get upset if they get beat on defense and that’s the way it needs to be,” senior forward Eric May said. “If I let my man score, I want to get upset about that.

“Last year, we maybe let our guy score, get the ball, whatever. We’re really starting to take pride in our defense and that’s a big step for us.”

To say Iowa set an early tone would be an understatement, even for an exhibition. The Hawkeyes had scored 22 points in 6:49 before Quincy finally knocked down a pair of free throws. And that wasn’t even the biggest run of unanswered points on the afternoon. Iowa also had a 25-0 run in the second half that was sparked by the five players in its 10-deep rotation who came off the bench Sunday.

This was a game where everyone involved played a role in the outcome. Iowa forced Quincy into 31 turnovers and scored 41 points off those turnovers.

“We didn’t let them get rhythm,” McCaffery said, adding that his one concern was that his team’s play offensively could’ve been more efficient.

In the first half, the Hawkeyes used nine different player rotations from a group of 10 players. Iowa’s starting five featured guards Mike Gesell and Devyn Marble, forwards Aaron White and Zach McCabe and center Adam Woodbury. Coming off the bench to play significant minutes were guards Anthony Clemmons and Josh Oglesby, May and Melsahn Basabe and center Gabe Olaseni.

Gesell led Iowa in scoring with 18 points, while May dropped 15 points and tallied a team-high four steals. Both players had three assists. McCabe pulled down a team-high eight rebounds, while Woodbury and Olaseni each had six boards, four of which came at the offensive end of the floor for both centers.

“We played real well and had a lot of offensive options,” McCabe said. “We just got to eliminate turnovers, just like last year.”

Two other freshmen – Patrick Ingram and Kyle Meyer – saw playing time in the game’s final 9:54, as did walk-on Darius Stokes. In the final minutes, walk-ons Kyle Denning and Christopher Rickert both saw the court. McCaffery said he would make a decision on a redshirt soon and that it would likely only be one player getting redshirted. The only player on the roster not allowed to participate in Sunday’s exhibition was Jarrod Uthoff, who has to sit out this season after transferring from Wisconsin.

With the exceptions of Denning and Rickert, everyone else who played was on the floor no fewer than 10 minutes, but also no

more than 20 minutes either.

If there was another story from this exhibition, it was the individual spurts of dominance Iowa was getting from numerous players. At the game's start, it was White scoring seven of Iowa's first 13 points while rotating between the 3- and 4-positions with McCabe. Then when May first entered the game, he was the one energizing the crowd with dunks and 3-pointers.

In the second half, Clemmons played less tentative and was the catalyst as Iowa began to separate itself from Quincy. Putting the finishing touches on the blowout victory was Oglesby, who suddenly got hot from 3-point range and ended up finishing with 15 points while shooting 3-of-6 from behind the arc.

But make no mistake. The story of the day was defense, defense and more defense. Something Iowa knows it needs to keep getting better at with each day, each practice, each game.

"We did a good job of pushing the tempo and playing real hard. That's what we've got to continue to do," Gesell said. "We've got to be one of the hardest working teams in the Big Ten if we want to go far."

Iowa stat leaders:

Points – Mike Gesell, 18 points

Rebounds – Zach McCabe, 8 rebounds

Assists – Anthony Clemmons, Mike Gesell, Eric May all with 3 assists

Postgame video:

[Fran McCaffery](#)

[Melsahn Basabe](#)

[Aaron White](#)

Zach McCabe

Mike Gesell

Eric May