

# COMMENTARY: With depth comes balance (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – All throughout the offseason, the talk surrounding this 2012-13 version of the Iowa Hawkeyes was the amount of depth up and down the roster. The reasoning for this was justified as Iowa was bringing in one of its better recruiting classes in years and the Hawkeyes have found themselves starting the season with a 10-man rotation.

One of the beneficiaries of head coach Fran McCaffery having such a deep rotation is the ability for his team to have balance. Not just in scoring, but also in terms of when hot hands develop on the court and when guys go on various spurts where they display flashes of brilliance.

As it applies to the Hawkeyes, that balance was on clear display Friday night as Iowa had plenty of it in its 86-55 win over Texas-Pan American in what was its 2012-13 season opener.

The game began with junior forward Zach McCabe catching fire. Between him, sophomore Aaron White and juniors Devyn Marble and Melsahn Basabe, this quartet of players provided the balance for the Hawkeyes throughout the first half. All four players were pretty even in scoring until late in the half when McCabe started catching fire shooting from beyond the arc.

Then in the second half came the individual spurts that only added to the balance. Freshman center Adam Woodbury had his struggles in the first half, but played a lot more dominant in the second half and wound up finishing with 10 points, three rebounds and three blocked shots in his Hawkeye debut.

Once Iowa started padding its lead and got it back up to 57-35, it was senior forward Eric May getting hot, scoring six unanswered points to pad the lead to 63-35. Then came another spurt from White that would make it 70-41 in favor of the Hawkeyes.

This is going to be the beauty of this team, provided it sticks with the current rotation of 10 players it will likely be using here in the immediate future. One minute, it could be a guy like McCabe carrying this team. Another minute, it could be White. Another minute, it could be Woodbury. Another minute, May. And so on and so forth.

Now is this going to be a challenge at times for McCaffery over the course of the season? Absolutely. There might even reach a point where the current 10-man rotation has to get reduced, but that's not something he should worry about now. Plus, he even acknowledged that this was a unique set of circumstances for him as a coach because he had never coached a team this deep prior in his career.

Yes, finding the right combination at the right time isn't always going to be easy, but this depth – and more specifically, this balance – is going to continue to be noticeable late in games when someone re-enters a game off the bench and is playing fresh as opposed to being completely fatigued. Rarely, if ever this season, will there be someone on this team playing more than 30 minutes. Heck, Friday night, the most minutes played by any one player is 24.

If Iowa can continue to get balance from the amount of depth it possesses, it'll be a recipe for success going forward.