

Hawkeyes execute enormous win over Cyclones



The score says it all.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Before the Iowa Hawkeyes took to their Carver-Hawkeye Arena hardwood Friday night, they had lost two games this season where head coach Fran McCaffery believed they showed fight.

In its biggest game to date and on its biggest stage yet, Iowa did more than show fight. It delivered for its home crowd with an 80-71 victory over Iowa State that not only puts Iowa at 8-2, but perhaps more importantly, gives the Hawkeyes a marquee non-conference win they can refer back to down the road.

“We executed much better at critical points of the game than we have so far this season,” McCaffery said, later adding this was his team’s best performance through 10 games. “In our losses against Virginia Tech and Wichita State, we didn’t do that. No disrespect to them. I think we fought in both games, but we didn’t execute.

“Tonight, we executed.”

This was a game where the Hawkeyes came out firing from the opening tip, jumping out to a quick 8-0 lead early on. One key to Iowa's fast start was forcing turnovers, as Iowa State had six of them before the first under-16 timeout. The Cyclones ended up committing 19 turnovers on the night, which led to 22 points for the Hawkeyes.

Woodbury quote

One other major factor that proved critical for Iowa in winning was with rebounding, where it finished with a 37-35 edge over an Iowa State team that led the nation in that category entering Friday's game. Of those 37 boards for the Hawkeyes, 15 of them came at the offensive end of the floor.

"That was part of the game plan and we came out successful," freshman guard Anthony Clemmons said. "Coach said in the locker room, 'All this talking and all this stuff that we're doing in the scouting reports, it doesn't mean nothing if you don't go do it.' I think we came out and we stopped them, didn't give them that many second shots."

Clemmons had another memorable evening in what was only his third career start. In addition to scoring 14 points, the Lansing, Mich., native also had his second straight outing with eight assists and only committed one turnover in 29 minutes played.

"He doesn't surprise me anymore," freshman center Adam Woodbury said. "Playing with him so much right now, I know the things he's capable of doing. He's a hell of a player."

Sophomore forward Aaron White got it going for the Hawkeyes early on, scoring six of Iowa's first eight points to catapult it to an 8-0 lead out of the gate. The 6-8 forward finished with game-highs of 18 points and seven rebounds, with 14 of those points coming in the first half.

Iowa would be up by as much as 10 points before the Cyclones

ended the first half with a 15-4 run to go ahead 36-35 at halftime. But the Hawkeyes would start the second half much like it did the first. Not only were they scoring, but they were also starting to capitalize again like they did early on off Iowa State turnovers.

After only getting six points from its bench the entire first half, Iowa had a stretch as it extended its advantage where it received 12 unanswered points from reserves. Eight of those points came from sophomore guard Josh Oglesby, who played 20 minutes off the bench and hit a pair of 3s at one of those crucial points McCaffery described.

"The character on this team is great," Oglesby said. "The subs that come in are going to give it their all. The whole team played well."

Iowa State would get within five points with just over five minutes remaining, but managed to only come away with nine 3-point field goals on 28 attempts from behind the arc. Freshman guard Mike Gesell would seal the win for the Hawkeyes with free throws in the closing minutes.

Iowa now has a week off for final examinations before heading to Des Moines on Dec. 15 to play Northern Iowa in the inaugural Big Four Classic at Wells Fargo Arena. Tip-off is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on the Big Ten Network.