

# COMMENTARY: Hawkeyes step up free-throw shooting (premium)

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*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Three days before Chris Street's death 20 years ago, he had set a school record in a game against Duke for most consecutive free throws made. It's a mark that still stands now.

On the 20th anniversary of his passing, the Iowa Hawkeyes won a game over the Wisconsin Badgers in a manner that only seems fitting – by making free throws down the stretch to preserve the victory.

Iowa got to the free-throw line 29 times Saturday night, sinking 24 of those attempts. To get even more specific, sophomore forward Aaron White finished with a team-high 17 points for the Hawkeyes and was 13-of-15 from the charity stripe. Now consider that Wisconsin went to the foul line 12 times. The entire night.

White alone made more free throws than the Badgers attempted as an entire team.

But it's not just the fact that White made his looks. Again, it was when he made them. He and guards Anthony Clemmons and Devyn Marble, for that matter.

The Hawkeyes scored their final 10 points of the game courtesy of free throws. There were only two attempts during this stretch that were missed.

This was an area that ended up hurting Iowa late in a 62-59 loss to Michigan State last week. It's also something that in many games like Saturday's can make the difference between

winning and losing.

It's not the 24-of-29 that's impressive. It's the clutch free-throw shooting in crunch time, on a night that was pressure packed for the Hawkeyes.

Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said the environment inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena was unlike anything he had ever witnessed prior. When the coach is saying that, you know the pressure was felt by the players. There was no way they wanted to lose this game, on this night.

That extra weight thrown on top of the late game situation was what made the Hawkeyes ability to go the line and nail down free throws during crunch time impressive. Players like White, like Clemmons, like Marble – all of whom have missed late-game free throws in the previous two games Iowa played at home – stepped up in that moment.

Being able to make free throws like the Hawkeyes did, when they did, is something that could potentially bode well for a team playing four of its next five away from home. Should Iowa continue to find success at the free-throw line, it's going to be a team that at the very least is discussed for a possible at-large NCAA tournament berth come March.

It's little things like making free throws that make a huge difference. Saturday night, it made a huge difference in Iowa being able to take down a team that entered alone in first place of the Big Ten.

Given the circumstances on this night, it was appropriate.