

On Street's night, Hawkeyes deliver

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa's scouting report for its game Saturday against Wisconsin featured one key to victory that stood apart from everything else written. It was to play with the same passion as the late Chris Street.

On a night where the 6-8 forward who died exactly 20 years ago was honored in numerous ways – from current players wearing T-shirts with his name on it during pregame warm-ups, to his jersey having a separate spot on the Iowa bench and having a halftime video tribute – Iowa didn't just play with his passion. It also managed to win and head coach Fran McCaffery said afterwards "there was no doubt in his mind" the atmosphere made the difference.

In a game the Hawkeyes never trailed, they took down first-place Wisconsin 70-66 on an emotion-filled evening inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena. Iowa has now won two straight and sits at 2-3 in the Big Ten, 13-5 overall.

"We were playing for a cause tonight, not just for ourselves," junior guard Devyn Marble said. "I think it really helped us out."

Playing in front of a sellout crowd, Iowa fed off the energy from the start by quickly jumping out to a 7-2 lead. That lead would balloon up to as many as 20 points in the first half. A lot of that had to do with two things – the Hawkeyes only committing two turnovers during that first stanza and the Badgers shooting an ice-cold 6-of-26 from the floor.

"We took them out of their stuff tonight," sophomore forward Aaron White said. "We rebounded the ball pretty well and pushed it in transition. That's really something that really feeds this team."

"The better we play defensively, the better we're going to play offensively. We get stops, we get rebounds and we're able to push it quicker."

Iowa would spent most of the second half remaining ahead by double digits, but Wisconsin managed to cut the Hawkeye advantage all the way down to a single possession in the final minute.

With Iowa ahead 57-51, Marble – who McCaffery said was limited in practice throughout the week with the ankle injury that sidelined him against Michigan State – nailed a step-back 3-pointer to put Iowa ahead by nine points.

"It was a really good release," Marble said. "Came in rhythm over the crossover. I had a good thinking it was good, and it was."

From there, the Hawkeyes' final 10 points of the night came from the charity stripe. At the forefront of this was White. The 6-8 forward had team-highs of 17 points and seven rebounds, with 13 of those points coming at the free-throw line.

In fact, Iowa ended up making 24 of its 29 free-throw attempts on the evening and forced both Ryan Evans and Mike Bruesewitz to foul out of the game late for the Wisconsin.

"Our game plan was to drive the ball, throw it inside and attack them," McCaffery said. "They don't play a lot of guys typically and you don't want to settle for jumper after jumper. You want to attack and you want to put them in a position where they foul you, and they did."

Iowa now starts a stretch where it plays four of its next five games away from Carver-Hawkeye Arena, with the first road game on the docket coming Jan. 22 at No. 11 Ohio State. The Buckeyes enter with a 4-2 Big Ten mark after losing 59-55 on Saturday to No. 18 Michigan State in East Lansing, Mich. Tip-off from Value City Arena in Columbus is set for 5:30 p.m. Central, with the game airing nationally on the Big Ten Network.