

# Hawkeye comeback not enough in Columbus

By Brendan Stiles

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Trailing by as many as 24 points in the second half, the Iowa Hawkeyes showed fight down the stretch against No. 14 Ohio State on Tuesday, but came up short in a 72-63 loss to the Buckeyes at Value City Arena in Columbus. The loss snapped a two-game winning streak for Iowa and puts it at 2-4 in the Big Ten and 13-6 overall.

Early on, the Hawkeyes looked like they would go toe-to-toe with Ohio State and were ahead 11-10 with 11:40 left in the first half. Despite starting the game just 3-of-14 shooting, Iowa led thanks in large part to attacking the offensive glass and junior forward Melsahn Basabe hauling in seven of his team-high 10 rebounds.

But the poor shooting would continue and Iowa ended up shooting 22-of-62 for the entire game, including 8-of-32 in the first half. Conversely, the Buckeyes began to click offensively and took a 34-22 lead into their locker room at halftime.

A key moment during Ohio State's late first-half fury came in the final minute. After a missed shot by sophomore forward Aaron White with 20 seconds remaining, the Buckeyes managed to score four points at the other end to push their lead to double digits.

"Early on in particular, we weren't locked in offensively," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said in a postgame interview with the Hawkeye Radio Network. "We were not screening, whether it was our motion or our sets. We have other action

and we weren't screening, and with their quickness and their length, as I say, 'the X is on the O.' They're going to be on you."

The momentum Ohio State had carried over into the second half and the Buckeyes looked as though they would bury the Hawkeyes, much like Michigan did in a game back on Jan. 6. But unlike that game against the Wolverines, Iowa found itself down 53-29, but began to battle its way back.

The Hawkeye comeback began with a 12-1 run to dwindle Ohio State's lead to 54-41. During this stretch, Iowa got eight of its 12 points from junior forward Zach McCabe.

A 3-pointer by freshman guard Anthony Clemmons would cut the Buckeye advantage to 57-49 and eventually, Iowa got to within 63-59 with 1:18 remaining. But three nights after going 24-of-29 from the foul line in its 70-66 win over Wisconsin, the Hawkeyes could only make 13 of their 26 free-throw attempts Tuesday. Ohio State would then score nine points down the stretch off lay-ups and free throws to preserve its win.

"We knew we had to come in with the deficit we had and we just knew that we had to keep fighting to give ourselves a chance," McCabe said in a postgame radio interview with the Hawkeye Radio Network. "Everyone played as hard as we could, but we can't just wait until the second half to get going."

White was the lone Hawkeye in double-figures scoring with 13 points and also hauled in seven rebounds in his first collegiate game back in his home state. Iowa ended up out-rebounding the Buckeyes 40-34, with 22 of those 40 boards coming at the offensive end. Basabe finished with seven points in addition to his 10 rebounds.

Iowa goes back on the road for its next game Jan. 27 against Purdue. Tip-off from Mackey Arena is set for 2:30 p.m. Central, with the game televised nationally on the Big Ten Network. Be sure to visit *HawkeyeDrive.com* afterwards for

complete coverage Sunday from West Lafayette, Ind.