

Hawkeyes outlasted in overtime by Boilers

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – In a conference like the Big Ten, survival is key. Any victory, especially one on the road, is valuable. Any loss will have the same sting.

Despite both an atrocious display of shooting in the first half and an 11-point second-half deficit, the Iowa Hawkeyes came close to getting that valuable road win Sunday afternoon. But a three-point lead evaporated in the final 2:14 of regulation and following a five-minute overtime period, Iowa left Mackey Arena stung yet again, losing to Purdue 65-62.

With this defeat, the Hawkeyes now find themselves tied with Illinois for ninth place at 2-5 in the Big Ten and sit at 13-7 overall.

“We’re not clicking offensive right now,” head coach Fran McCaffery said. “I think you have to give Purdue credit for that – and Ohio State [the game prior], two very good defensive teams the last two games we played.

“They were really good defenders. They were locked into our guys and what they do and they made it hard. But, we had shots that we could have and should have made.”

It began ugly for Iowa, as the Boilermakers were able to jump out to a quick 10-2 lead. Not only did the Hawkeyes trail, but practically nothing was falling for them. Iowa finished the first half shooting 4-of-26 from the floor. However, Purdue was as sluggish offensively when the Hawkeyes switched to zone defense and the Boilermakers only led 19-16 at halftime.

In the second half, Purdue held a 45-34 lead with exactly eight minutes remaining before Iowa stormed back. Leading the Hawkeye charge was freshman guard Mike Gesell, who tallied a game-high 18 points and made six of Iowa's 19 field goals for the entire game.

"My shots started falling, so I wanted to stay aggressive and keep shooting," Gesell said. "Coach called a few plays for me to come off screens and guys set good screens to get me open and I was able to knock them down."

With Iowa down 50-45, sophomore forward Aaron White – who at this juncture had just one point – proceeded to score eight unanswered points to give the Hawkeyes that 53-50 lead. He first knocked down a 3-pointer, then converted on a 3-point play to give Iowa its first lead of the entire game with 2:57 left, and finally knocked down a jumper to make it a three-point game.

Following a Purdue bucket, junior guard Devyn Marble went to the free-throw line and made one of his two attempts. The Boilermakers would tie the game with 33.3 seconds showing as Terone Johnson made a lay-up. Iowa called timeout, and head coach Fran McCaffery drew up a play for Marble.

"They had Terone on Mike, so they had Ronnie [Johnson] on him and he's a smaller guy," McCaffery said. "I knew Dev would shoot over him and he did."

Marble ran the clock down and took what ended up being a contested shot. Junior forward Melsahn Basabe attempted to get a put back as time expired, but couldn't get it to drop and the contest proceeded to overtime.

"When I shot it, I knew it was a little longer but still thought it was going to go in," Marble said. "I thought somebody was rotating over, which is why I shot it in the first place. But I probably should've just laid it up because nobody was coming over. I was anticipating that, so that's why

I shot the floater.”

Basabe scored five straight points for Iowa and the game was tied at 59-59. After Purdue went back ahead, White had a chance to knock down a pair of free throws to tie it again, but missed both attempts.

“If you look at it, two games ago I was 13-of-15,” White said. “It’s definitely mental with free throws for me. If I ever go on a little streak, it’s always going to be mental when I miss them.”

The Hawkeyes would get one more look at tying the game late, but a 3-point attempt by junior forward Zach McCabe was off the mark and the Boilermakers were able to seal the game with free throws.

Now back at three games under .500 in league play, Iowa finds itself in desperation mode. The Hawkeyes will attempt to end their current losing streak on Jan. 31 when they play host to Penn State. Tip-off from Carver-Hawkeye Arena is set for 7 p.m. Central with the game being televised nationally on ESPNU.

“We can’t make excuses. We can’t put our head down,” Basabe said. “All you can do is go out and get wins and address what’s going on. It’s as simple as that. We have to win.”