

# Hawkeyes unravel again in loss to Gophers

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*HawkeyeDrive.com*

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Another nail-biting finish in an Iowa basketball game, another gut-wrenching loss for the Hawkeyes.

Once again, this is what unfolded Sunday, as Iowa let a four-point lead in the final minutes evaporate and saw itself defeated by No. 23 Minnesota at Williams Arena, 62-59. The Hawkeyes now see themselves 3-6 in the Big Ten at the league's halfway point and 14-8 overall after their fifth loss by less than double digits.

"We obviously blew an opportunity today," head coach Fran McCaffery said. "We had opportunities at the free-throw line, we had opportunities on the break. We didn't execute again. Kept fighting. That's the good thing.

"But when you miss free throws and don't execute, it's hard."

For the third straight game, Iowa fell behind big early on as the Golden Gophers were able to jump out to a 14-2 lead. But thanks in large part to the scoring production from the bench – including eight points from sophomore guard Josh Oglesby – Iowa only trailed 29-28 entering halftime and did so after missing a shot that would've put it ahead. On the afternoon, the bench accounted for 27 of the team's 59 points.

"Guys are looking to be efficient on the floor when they're there," junior forward Zach McCabe said after he scored 10 of those 27 points off the bench. "Our whole main goal is to bring energy and be a tougher team."

The Hawkeyes took their first lead in the second half after a

bucket from freshman center Adam Woodbury put them up 32-31. Iowa continued to get timely plays at the offensive end, perhaps none bigger than the 3-point play coming from senior forward Eric May to extend the Hawkeyes' lead to 59-55 with 2:10 remaining.

Following May's free throw, Minnesota would cut the lead down to 59-57 when junior guard Devyn Marble threw an ill-advised pass that sailed out of bounds and gave the Golden Gophers possession with 36.3 seconds showing on the clock.

Marble entered the game at that 2:10 mark after having sat on the bench for 11:25. Afterwards, McCaffery and Marble both said the issues weren't injury-related.

"It just slipped," Marble said about his turnover, which was the last possession he would play. "It just slipped on me and that was my fault."

Minnesota would take the clock down to 13.6 seconds when it burned its final timeout. Austin Hollins received the inbound pass in the corner and knocked down the go-ahead 3-pointer to put the Golden Gophers up 60-59 with 11.6 seconds on the clock.

"We missed the guy on a play that we have to lock in on," May said. "We lost track of him and that's unacceptable."

After an Iowa timeout, freshman guard Mike Gesell – who finished with a team-high 11 points for the Hawkeyes – had the ball knocked loose from him in the waning seconds and lost it out of bounds with 4.1 left.

"They stripped me," Gesell said. "My first instinct was to dive on it and scream, 'Timeout!' I didn't know how close I was to the sideline. It's just tough when you're in that situation because if I don't dive on it, he could pick up the ball and it's their ball anyway."

The South Sioux City, Neb., native got one last chance to redeem himself at the end, but his 3-point attempt fell short, preserving the Gopher win.

Iowa returns to the road Feb. 6 to play Wisconsin at the Kohl Center in Madison, Wisc. Tip-off is slated for 8 p.m. Central, with the game being televised nationally by the Big Ten Network. The Hawkeyes will be seeking their fourth straight victory over the Badgers after beating them 70-66 on Jan. 19 in Iowa City.