

Hawkeyes cap off Northwestern sweep

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – If the Iowa Hawkeyes were going to make that season-changing turnaround, they took a step in the right direction Saturday afternoon.

Iowa completed a 4-game, 10-day stretch by garnering its second victory this season over Northwestern. The 71-57 win at Carver-Hawkeye Arena puts the Hawkeyes in a tie with the Wildcats for eighth place at 4-7 in Big Ten play and Iowa also improved to 15-9 overall.

Providing the energy boost for Iowa right away was junior guard Devyn Marble. Coming off a pair of lackluster showings against Minnesota and Wisconsin earlier this week, Marble scored five of the Hawkeyes' first seven points Saturday. The first field goal came on a dunk, then he nailed his first 3-point attempt from the corner.

"I could feel it," Marble said. "Coach [Kirk] Speraw was in my ear throughout the game, Coach Andrew [Francis] was just telling me to keep after it and I'd be fine."

Marble went on to shoot 8-of-13 from the floor and finished with a game-high 21 points to lead Iowa. His performance validated head coach Fran McCaffery's non-hesitation Friday to keep the 6-6 guard in his starting lineup.

"The key for him is to shoot open shots," McCaffery said. "Play your game, mix it. Jumpers, drives, pull-ups, plays for other people. He was spectacular today. There's no question about that."

The Hawkeyes had their moments of efficient offensive play in the first half. Iowa made 13 shots with assists on 11 of them and only committed one turnover. However, the Hawkeyes were only ahead 29-25 at halftime thanks in large part to Northwestern dominating the glass. The Wildcats held a 19-13 rebounding edge with eight offensive boards and compiled eight second-chance points to stay with Iowa.

Northwestern's dominance in those areas during the first stanza would be more limited in the final 20 minutes though, as the Hawkeyes ended up out-rebounding the Wildcats 34-31. McCaffery said afterwards Northwestern having to go small following injuries to both Alex Olah and Jared Swopshire played a role in Iowa being able to control the glass in the second half, but that the Hawkeyes also did their part in ensuring the issue wouldn't remain ongoing.

"They were aggressive with the boards and we knew that coming in," senior forward Eric May said. "That was big for us to kind of lock that up and make sure they only get one [shot] because they could put you on defense for awhile."

As the Wildcats crept back into the game, Iowa would continue to make plays at crucial moments. Leading by three points, May made his first appearance of the second half and made a steal that led to him dunking at the other end. Later, Northwestern could cut Iowa's lead to 40-38 when sophomore guard Josh Oglesby buried a 3-pointer from the corner after freshman guard Anthony Clemmons cut through the Wildcats' 1-3-1 zone and passed the ball to Marble, who then found Oglesby open.

"That's the good thing about our guards and what Marble brings to the table," Oglesby said. "He can drive and score, he can drive and pull up. He's a good passer."

"We were tense with the 1-3-1 when they came out with it, but once we settled down, we settled in."

Oglesby drained another 3-pointer to extend Iowa's lead to

50-38 and finished the contest with 10 points. Coincidentally, it was the Cedar Rapids native's first double-digit scoring outing since Iowa's first meeting with Northwestern this season back on Jan. 13.

McCaffery said he would give his players these next two days off after playing four games over the last 10 days. Then the Hawkeyes will shift their attention towards their next game Feb. 14 at Penn State. Tip-off from the Bryce Jordan Center in State College, Pa., is scheduled for 8 p.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on ESPNU. Iowa won its first meeting with Penn State 76-67 on Jan. 31 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.