

# COMMENTARY:                      Compiling signature wins (premium)

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – In college basketball (really, in any sport, but especially college basketball), there are wins and there are signature wins.

Make no mistake. The Iowa Hawkeyes picked up a signature win – and a needed one at that – on Sunday in routing Minnesota 72-51 Sunday afternoon at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

The Golden Gophers came in a good team and still are a good team. They probably won't win either of their next two games against Ohio State or Indiana, but their last three contests are all fairly winnable. Winning those puts them at 9-9 in the Big Ten and 21-10 overall going into the Big Ten Tournament. Their one non-conference loss was to Duke on a neutral floor.

It's one thing to pick up wins. Iowa has done that, having won every game it has been favored in this season. Sunday marked only the second time all year when the Hawkeyes won a game they entered as an underdog. Also considering that Minnesota was a ranked team for most of the year and just came off a huge win of its own over No. 20 Wisconsin just three nights earlier, this was a signature win for Iowa.

For all the talk of NCAA tourney résumés taking place now and over the course of the next month, it's wins like the one Iowa got Sunday that will make the selection committee take notice. Obviously, the Hawkeyes have to continue winning the games they're favored in like they have. But when discussions about Iowa take place now, this victory will be mentioned.

The other thing too is this wasn't a fluke. For approximately 33 of the 40 minutes played, Iowa picked apart the Golden Gophers like a doctor performing surgery on a patient. The Hawkeyes were thorough with everything they did. When a big play was needed, they got it, and it wasn't as though one player willed this team to win. There were contributions aplenty.

Consider that Iowa had four players score in double figures. Sophomore forward Aaron White remained aggressive offensively and found himself either scoring or drawing contact and getting to the line. When he wasn't doing that, freshman guard Mike Gesell was knocking down shots.

When junior guard Devyn Marble wasn't putting on a clinic, it was the play of senior forward Eric May that made an enormous difference. The Hawkeyes looked like a team and played like a team while the Golden Gophers looked flabbergasted by everything being thrown their way.

As far as the big picture is concerned, Iowa remains far from a lock to be among the 68 teams dancing next month. The Hawkeyes should be able to win both their games against Nebraska and beat Purdue at home, which would give them at worst a 9-9 record in Big Ten play. But it's those other two games against Illinois and No. 1 Indiana, along with whatever happens in Chicago at the Big Ten Tournament, that will be telling as to whether Iowa belongs.

Those such games are the remaining opportunities for the Hawkeyes as far as signature wins go. They got a big one Sunday. Now they have to show they're capable of getting at least 1-2 more.