

# Hawkeyes defeat Huskers, secure No. 6 seed

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – When the final horn sounded Saturday afternoon inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena, Iowa walked off the hardwood with a 74-60 win over Nebraska. It also walked off having compiled a laundry list of accomplishments.

The victory was Iowa's 20th this season, marking the first time in seven seasons Iowa has reached that plateau. The Hawkeyes also finished their Big Ten slate with a 9-9 mark, good enough to finish sixth, in the top half, of what many consider the toughest conference in college basketball this season.

Iowa's win, coupled with Minnesota's 89-73 loss to Purdue earlier in the day, also secured the No. 6 seed for the Hawkeyes at next week's Big Ten Tournament in Chicago.

"This is a great league and to be able to ... when they're going to show the league standings and we're in the top half of the league, it's going to be a great feeling," sophomore forward Aaron White said.

The day started with senior forward Eric May and walk-on Chris Rickert being honored as part of Iowa's Senior Day ceremony. From there, the energy carried over into the start of the game, as Iowa jumped out to a 10-1 lead.

"It was emotional, but then you go out, put it in your back pocket and go play some ball," May said. "We've had some emotional games this year, so we've been good at getting over that."

In a game the Hawkeyes never trailed, they had the most success inside the paint against Nebraska, where they scored over half of their points. White led the charge with 19 points and six rebounds, while freshman center Adam Woodbury tallied 12 points on a perfect 6-for-6 shooting.

Iowa also received an 11-point, 13-rebound effort from junior forward Melsahn Basabe and the five post-players who played accounted for 20-of-25 shooting on the afternoon.

“We put a lot of pressure on them,” Woodbury said. “They’re not a very deep team and we got them into some foul trouble and stuff and kept running on them. I think it helped us out in the end.”

After taking a 32-23 lead into halftime, things started to get chippy as Nebraska’s Andre Almeida was called for an intentional foul on White. Shortly after White made a pair of free throws, the teams exchanged runs and Nebraska got within two points of the Hawkeyes.

Iowa would counteract however with a 15-0 run to widen its lead to 61-44 and managed to cruise from there. In the second half, Iowa shot 73 percent from the floor, going 16-of-22. Sparking this run was freshman guard Anthony Clemmons, who played 23 minutes off the bench – with 16 of those minutes coming in the second half – and finished the game with 11 points.

“He really pushed the tempo offensively, played really good D on [Dylan] Talley, which was a key to the game,” said junior guard Devyn Marble, who became the 41st Hawkeye to reach 1,000 career points during the first half. “He did a really good job of scoring the ball and making sure we got into our plays, our sets, towards the end so we could get quality shots to finish the game.”

Looking ahead to the Big Ten Tournament, Iowa will play 11th-seeded Northwestern in the first round on March 14, with the

winner meeting the No. 3 seed (which will be determined Sunday as four different teams could land in this spot) in the quarterfinals. The Hawkeyes' match-up with the Wildcats will be the final first round game of the day and will tip off approximately 25 minutes after the 7-10 game scheduled to start at 5:30 p.m. Central. It will also be televised nationally on ESPN2.

Iowa won both of its regular season meetings against Northwestern this season. The first contest was held Jan. 13 at Welsh-Ryan Arena in Evanston, Ill., which the Hawkeyes won 70-50. Iowa then won the rematch between the two teams 71-57 back on Feb. 9 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

"I think the important thing is we realize this is just a step," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said. "I'm happy for Eric to be the captain of a 20-win team. I'm happy for our team to have accomplished this. But we're not done and you never want to be satisfied."