

# Hawkeyes secure Big Apple ticket

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

In a season where the road had been unkind to the Iowa Hawkeyes, it was away from home that it picked up a monumental win Wednesday night.

Facing a Virginia squad that had won 19 straight at home, the Hawkeyes left John Paul Jones Arena in Charlottesville, Va., with a 75-64 NIT quarterfinal win over the Cavaliers and will now play Maryland in the NIT semifinals on April 2 in New York City.

“Obviously, we needed to have a signature road win. We’ve come so close so many different times,” Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said during a postgame interview with the Hawkeye Radio Network. “To be able to go on the road and beat a team with that kind of winning streak, who already had 23 wins, went undefeated at home in the ACC and to score 75, is a great statement.

“I wanted our team to make a statement as to what our capabilities are on the road and for it to be an example of how we’ve grown as a team.”

It began with Iowa falling behind 6-4 early before putting together a 17-5 run to go up 21-11 midway through the first half. Setting the tone for the Hawkeyes was guards Devyn Marble and Mike Gesell. Marble finished with a game-high 24 points while Gesell had seven points during Iowa’s first half fury before an injury forced him out of the entire second half.

Virginia would trim the Hawkeye lead down to 31-28 at halftime and even took the lead early in the second half. But after the Cavaliers made six 3-pointers in the first half, they only made two of them during the last 20 minutes.

Iowa would regain a lead it wouldn't relinquish when Marble hit a go-ahead 3-pointer to make it 42-41. His bucket sparked an 8-0 run to make it 47-41 that also featured a made 3-pointer from sophomore guard Josh Oglesby.

Also playing a key role during the second half for the Hawkeyes on Wednesday was freshman Adam Woodbury. Despite dealing with foul trouble, the 7-1 center was able to use his height to an advantage and finished with 10 points and eight rebounds.

Just as Virginia crept back into the game and got within three points, Iowa would separate itself again. Woodbury got a lay-up to build the Hawkeye lead to seven points and then Iowa sunk a pair of clutch 3-pointers – one from junior forward Zach McCabe (who finished with 10 points) and the other from senior forward Eric May.

Meanwhile, Iowa was locked in defensively during this stretch, holding Virginia to just three points over 4:57.

"We've been tested throughout this whole year," Woodbury said during a postgame interview with the Hawkeye Radio Network. "We've played great teams every night out and I think it's starting to show in this postseason play.

"We're coming to play every night and our defense has been holding us up through these tough games."

The Hawkeyes then used clutch free-throw shooting at the end to seal the win. After only shooting one free throw over the first 37 minutes of play, Iowa scored its last 14 points off free throws in the last three minutes and finished a perfect 15-of-15 from the charity stripe.

While in the bonus, the Hawkeyes were 6-of-6. Freshman guard Anthony Clemmons made two free throws and then Marble made the last four.

“They had two fouls to give when they thought about starting to foul, so we had to make front ends of 1-and-1s three times before we got to the 10th,” McCaffery said. “Those six that got us to that point were huge.”

Iowa’s next contest against Maryland will take place April 2 from Madison Square Garden. It will be the second semifinal of the evening, as it is scheduled for 8 p.m. Central. The game will be televised nationally on ESPN2.

***\*Be sure to visit [HawkeyeDrive.com](http://HawkeyeDrive.com) for complete coverage of Iowa’s NIT Semifinal game against Maryland from Madison Square Garden.***