

# COMMENTARY: Looking back and looking ahead (premium)

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*HawkeyeDrive.com*

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. – With the Iowa Hawkeyes playing in the NIT Championship Game, the finality of the 2012-13 season was set for Thursday. No matter what occurred, senior forward Eric May was playing his last game as a Hawkeye and Iowa will have gone as far as a team unable to qualify for the NCAA Tournament could possibly go.

The Hawkeyes weren't able to accomplish what they've set out to do for the last three weeks. They had a vision of leaving Madison Square Garden with some hardware Thursday night, but instead got shellacked 74-54 by Baylor and saw its season end in a rather embarrassing fashion.

As far as Thursday's game was concerned there were two things that stood out. First, Iowa's inability to make shots. The most startling aspect of the Hawkeyes' loss was that they actually hauled in 20 offensive rebounds, yet only made 18 shots for the entire game.

Again, 20 offensive rebounds and only 18 made buckets. That stat alone tells most of the story. The effort and fight were there most of the evening, but Iowa simply couldn't get anything going.

And because of that, the Bears began to click in the second half. Baylor shot 15-of-23 in the game's final 20 minutes (or 65 percent) to pad its advantage to a point where the Hawkeyes had no chance of coming back.

Yes, Iowa got beat thoroughly by an athletic team that head

coach Fran McCaffery even admitted after the Hawkeyes beat Maryland in the NIT semifinals was going to pose challenges to his squad. Keep in mind though that Baylor was an Elite Eight squad last season and when playing at its best like it did Thursday, is capable of beating anyone in the country.

As bad as Iowa looked in its season finale, that shouldn't completely diminish this season as a whole. The Hawkeyes won 25 games, something that hadn't been done in seven seasons. Their play at the defensive end of the floor was lightyears ahead of what it was at the end of last season. They were on the cusp of an NCAA tournament appearance, but didn't have a strong enough résumé to get in and had to settle for another NIT berth, one that could end up benefiting them in the long haul.

May's career ended in a manner he wasn't envisioning, by fouling out of a game that his team lost by 20 points. But to see the standing ovation he got as he returned to the bench and the chants of his name from Iowa fans stood out. To see the strides May made to become the player he was at the end of his career was a testament to both him and the Iowa coaching staff.

Now looking forward, the Hawkeyes bring everyone else back, including their leading scorer in Devyn Marble. He, along with Melsahn Basabe and Zach McCabe will be senior leaders taking on that void May's leaving behind. Aaron White becomes an upperclassman. Freshmen like Mike Gesell, Adam Woodbury and Anthony Clemmons all have a year under their belt now.

All this, plus three more additions will be made to the roster with Kyle Meyer and Jarrod Uthoff completing their redshirts and Peter Jok coming on board as a true freshman.

The future of this program is bright, and a lot of the reason why could be attributed to the progress it made from where it was a year ago to what it is now.