

# Hawkeyes outpace Irish

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Déjà vu appeared to be unfolding inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Tuesday. Much like in its overtime loss to Villanova three nights earlier at the Battle 4 Atlantis, the No. 23 Iowa Hawkeyes saw a 9-point halftime lead evaporate and found themselves trailing Notre Dame at home 57-55 with 15:45 remaining.

Except unlike that Villanova defeat down in the Bahamas, the Hawkeyes found a way to respond back and instead of losing by five points, they won by five points – 98-93 – over the Fighting Irish. This victory was Iowa's first in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge since 2005 when it beat North Carolina State. It also moved the Hawkeyes to 8-1 on the season.

But perhaps the most impressive aspect of Iowa's win Tuesday was that it was the fourth game played over a six-day span that also included a nightmarish trip home from the Bahamas that included an unexpected delay in Atlanta.

"We showed a lot of fight," sophomore guard Mike Gesell said. "I mean, four games in six days. Some of the top teams in the nation. It was big time to come out of that with three of four.

"Everybody took care of their bodies and did what we needed to do to get prepared for Notre Dame."

So what happened during this final 15:45 that ended up propelling Iowa to a win Tuesday? Two things – senior guard Devyn Marble and head coach Fran McCaffery opting to play the majority of the second half with a smaller, yet still relatively long, lineup on the floor. The decision to go with

a lineup where both of his centers – Adam Woodbury and Gabe Olaseni – stayed on the bench was influenced by the play of Notre Dame center Garrick Sherman, who scored 18 of his 29 points in the first half.

“I went small because we were zone. If we had stayed in man, I mean, Sherman was really hurting us, obviously,” McCaffery said. “We felt like if we could keep them under 10 3s, we’d win the game. It didn’t look like a great theory for a while there, but I was just afraid to double down. I mean, he’s a really good passer and they’ve got four shooters now when they go small.

“I’m just really proud of our guys and how they maintained their composure.”

At this particular juncture in the game, McCaffery had a lineup consisting of Marble, sophomore guard Anthony Clemmons, sophomore forward Jarrod Uthoff, junior forward Aaron White and senior forward Zach McCabe. While this quintet of players was on the court, Marble caught fire. The Southfield, Mich., native scored the Hawkeyes’ next 13 points and when McCaffery opted to take Clemmons out in favor of Gesell, Iowa was ahead 68-64.

“I just saw memories of the Villanova game and I didn’t want that to happen again,” Marble said. “You got to learn from games like the Villanova game and we did. As you can see, it helped us here tonight to be able to win a game like this.

“Everything’s a learning process and you’ve got to learn not to make the same mistake twice. That’s what we’re doing right now and so far, we’re successful in making those adjustments.”

Other than a two-minute stretch where sophomore center Adam Woodbury saw the floor and a one-minute stretch very late in the game where senior forward Melsahn Basabe came in, McCaffery stuck with the smaller lineup to combat the smaller lineup Mike Brey had on the hardwood for Notre Dame.

Following Marble's run of points were a few key plays from White and Uthoff. White had a pair of dunks (one of which resulted in a 3-point play) to put Iowa up 73-71. Then Uthoff drained a 3-pointer to extend the Hawkeye lead to 76-71 and from there, Iowa remained ahead.

The Hawkeyes ended up with five players in double-figures scoring. White actually led the team in scoring (20 points on 7-of-9 shooting), rebounding (seven boards) and assists (seven dimes). Marble and Uthoff both tallied 17 points, and both Gesell and McCabe came away with 10 points each in the winning cause. Uthoff finished with six points in the closing minutes, four of which came at the free-throw line.

"In the Bahamas, I wasn't too comfortable," Uthoff said. "At home, I got comfortable. On the road, I wasn't really aggressive. I wasn't really looking for my shot. I wasn't playing with any feel out there.

"I come back here and I think I feel more comfortable in front of the home crowd."

Iowa returns to action on Dec. 7 when it plays Drake in the second annual Big Four Classic taking place at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. It's the second game of a double-header taking place that day (the first game features No. 17 Iowa State playing Northern Iowa) and it's scheduled to tip-off at 7:30 p.m. Central. The game will be televised state-wide on Mediacom Connections Channel 22 and can be streamed live online on BTN's digital network.