

Hawkeyes slay Knights, move to 10-1

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – It wasn't a complete 40-minute effort given by the No. 23 Iowa Hawkeyes on Monday. But after spotting Fairleigh Dickinson the game's first six points, Iowa went on a 19-0 run of its own and imposed its will en route to a 92-59 win over the Knights at Carver-Hawkeye Arena and moving to 10-1 on the season.

Fairleigh Dickinson opened with a 6-0 lead and had to leave those on hand wondering if maybe the Hawkeyes were overlooking their opponent given the game later this week. But any doubts about Iowa's focus were quickly erased, as the Hawkeyes scored 19 unanswered points.

The bulk of the points during this first-half run came courtesy of Iowa's bench, which featured a pair of players posting double-doubles in junior center Gabe Olaseni (a team-high 14 points, 10 rebounds) and sophomore forward Jarrod Uthoff (10 points, 10 rebounds).

"You know coming into the season that Coach is going to play a lot of guys," Olaseni said. "You understand Coach's philosophy. He's going to play a lot of guys because everybody plays hard."

"Whether you come off the bench, whether you start or whether you parachute off the ceiling, you're going to get your minutes. So you just have to be productive with your minutes and understand it's a team game. You just have to bring energy regardless."

In addition to the efforts of Uthoff and Olaseni, Iowa also received production off the bench from senior forward Zach McCabe and freshman guard Peter Jok, who scored in double figures for the second consecutive game as he tallied 11 points in the winning cause.

“I think when you play teams like this, your bench – when you do come out – has to take that next step,” senior guard Devyn Marble said. “They did that today and I was very proud of those guys.”

Iowa continued pouring it on Fairleigh Dickinson, taking a 47-26 with it into halftime and then being able to empty its bench with 4:37 remaining. Before doing so however, head coach Fran McCaffery used a rotation that consisted of both his centers – Olaseni and sophomore Adam Woodbury – being on the floor together at the same time. McCaffery said he was simply looking to get Woodbury more minutes and line-ups with both of them together have been used before in practice. But not before in a game until Monday.

“When he looked at me and told me I was still in, I was kind of surprised,” Olaseni said. “I was ready to go to the bench. But playing with him is always good. It’s always good to have a big, strong defender out there.”

For all the talk about the Hawkeyes’ bench play Monday, one starter who was able to build off of a 15-point, 8-rebound performance against Drake two nights earlier was senior forward Melsahn Basabe. Like Uthoff and Olaseni, Basabe also had a double-double with 12 points and a team-high 11 rebounds.

This marked the first time since 1993 that Iowa had three players put together double-doubles consisting specifically of points and rebounds in the same game.

“He’s obviously capable, but when he’s playing with energy like that, it makes a big difference in our team,” McCaffery

said of Basabe.

Now the Hawkeyes can set their sights on a night many in the state have long anticipated. When Iowa meets No. 17 Iowa State inside Hilton Coliseum on Dec. 13 in Ames, it will mark the first time since 1987 where both the Hawkeyes and Cyclones entered a game against one another ranked in the top 25. Iowa State is coming off an overtime victory over UNI last weekend at the Big Four Classic, one where the Cyclones had to overcome an 18-point deficit in the second half.

Friday's contest is slated to tip off from Hilton Coliseum at 8:30 p.m. CT and it will be televised nationally on ESPNU.