

Hawkeyes clobber Golden Lions, move to 11-2

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – After a week of stewing over what could have been, but wasn't in Ames nine days ago, the No. 25 Iowa Hawkeyes looked like a team ready to take the floor again Sunday.

Playing its final non-conference game of the season against Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Iowa jumped out to an early 9-0 lead. As the first half progressed, the Hawkeyes' lead ballooned from nine to 21, from 21 to 25, from 25 to 29, from 29 to 35, etc., all the way to as much as 41 points in the first half of what ended up being an 86-61 clubbing of the Golden Lions at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. With this win, Iowa sits at 11-2 overall entering Big Ten play next week.

"We knew we were hungry," sophomore center Adam Woodbury said. "We were able to get back to work, even with nine days leading up to this game, and we showed up."

Making his highly-anticipated season debut Sunday was junior guard Josh Oglesby, who missed the first 12 games of the year after breaking his foot two days before the season-opener against UNC-Wilmington. The Cedar Rapids native came in after the under-16 timeout in the first half and proceeded to play a huge role in Iowa stepping on Arkansas-Pine Bluff's throat. He drained each of his first four 3-point attempts, with the fourth putting the Hawkeyes ahead 30-5.

In 20 minutes off the bench, Oglesby tied for a team-high 13 points.

"It felt really good, especially just making my first shot, I could get into the groove of things," Oglesby said about returning to the lineup. "This team is so unselfish. They found me and I knocked down some shots."

Iowa continued separating itself further late in the first half with the five starters back on the floor. The highlight of this stretch came inside the 3:00 mark when Woodbury found junior forward Aaron White for a dunk to make it 44-7. It started with senior forward Melsahn Basabe hauling down a rebound and throwing a cross-court pass in transition to Woodbury. The 7-1 center nearly lost his handle on the ball as he caught it, but once he did, tossed it behind the back to an open White, who was there to finish it and draw contact in the process.

"I gave him a hard time saying he did it on accident, but he claims he did it on purpose," White said. "That was a pretty nice play by him. He lost control of it, but flipped it behind his back and I was able to finish."

Possessing a 52-15 halftime lead, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery opted to start the second half with all five of his starters on the bench. White (who was battling illness), senior guard Devyn Marble and sophomore guard Mike Gesell actually sat out the entire second half of Sunday's game.

That was one reason the Hawkeyes' lead got trimmed down to 25 points when the final horn sounded. Also contributing to the cause was Iowa finishing with a season-high 27 turnovers, 15 of which came in the second half.

"We've just got to play according to the scouting report," Marble said. "It was nothing that can't be easily fixed."

Following a break for the holidays, Iowa will resume team practices Dec. 27 and from there, begin its journey through Big Ten play. The Hawkeyes' conference slate opens with a New Year's Eve tilt against Nebraska, who is 7-4 after beating The

Citadel on Saturday. The game, which will take place at Carver-Hawkeye Arena, is set for 6 p.m. CT that evening and will be televised nationally on the Big Ten Network.

It will also be the lone regular season meeting between the Hawkeyes and Cornhuskers.

"We know what these next 18 are, every one," McCaffery said. "I've got enough experience in that locker room to know what that means in terms of preparation and execution. We'll be ready."