

# 2/2/2014: Iowa plus-minus data and observations (premium)

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Prior to the start of Big Ten play, I [assembled a post looking at plus-minus data](#) not only for individual Iowa basketball players, but plus-minus data for each lineup used in games this season by Fran McCaffery and his coaching staff.

Two follow-ups – [after three Big Ten games](#) and [after six Big Ten games](#) – have since been published and with the 15th-ranked Hawkeyes now at the halfway point of their conference schedule, now is a good time to publish the third part in our six-part series between now and next month's Big Ten Tournament.

Prior to the Hawkeyes' game at Northwestern, they had used a total of 129 different lineups through 19 contests. That number has continued to rise since and is now at 143 different lineups through 22 games, so 14 new lineups have been introduced just in the last week. There have also been quite a few lineups re-introduced for the first time in conference play.

The one observation with these 14 new looks Iowa has given teams is that none of them really proved to be effective, regardless of how much time was spent on the court. This leads to the question of whether the Hawkeyes have reached the point where they should just stick with certain lineups in certain situations, especially now that they're 22 games into the season. It'll be interesting to see how much longer Iowa can go with providing new looks – especially in rematches of

previous games – before reaching a saturation point.

Before getting into individual plus-minus, below are what proved to be the most effective and least effective lineups for Iowa in its previous three games against Northwestern, Michigan State and Illinois.

**Northwestern (1/25/2014):**

**Best lineup:** Marble-Oglesby-Uthoff-McCabe-Olaseni (20-6) (+14)

**Time on court together** – 7:20 (13:18-10:17 first half; 13:19-9:00 second half)

*Just as much as the bench played a role in Iowa losing to Michigan back on Jan. 22, its role in this following game against Northwestern was just as big in the Hawkeyes winning here. This is around the time Marble started to get it going and as evident in the individual plus-minuses below, the four reserves he was out there with all contributed heavily to Iowa gaining separation from Northwestern. In the second half alone, this group was a +11.*

**Worst lineup:** Five different lineups were each (-2)

**Time on court together** – (15:53-13:18, 9:26-9:11, 4:32-4:03, 4:03-3:30 first half; 14:22-13:19 second half)

*None of these lineups were even on the floor together for three minutes. A few interesting things of note though. One is that four of these five were in the first half and all five came before Iowa pulled away in the second half with the lineup above that proved most effective. The Hawkeyes did have four consecutive lineups out there in the first half that failed to produce any points and the two used between the 4:32-3:30 marks were involved. At 4:32, Uthoff came in for Basabe and played alongside the other four starters. At 4:03, Oglesby came in for Gesell. The scoring drought ended once McCabe and Olaseni checked in at the 3:30 mark. Uthoff was*

*involved in all five lineups that were -2 and Gesell in four of the five.*

**Michigan State (1/28/2014):**

**Best lineup:** Clemmons-Oglesby-White-McCabe-Olaseni **(4-0) (+4)**

**Time on court together – 1:54 (11:11-9:17; first half)**

*At this point in the first half, Iowa was down 13-8 and during this stretch got back within one point at 13-12. The only starter on the floor here was White and as the plus-minuses panned out, this was one of two lineups that featured Iowa's 3 players in the plus on the night. The other came in the final 12 seconds of overtime with a lineup that had the second best plus-minus at +3. Those three guys were White, Oglesby and Clemmons.*

**Worst lineup:** Clemmons-Oglesby-Uthoff-McCabe-Olaseni **(7-11) (-4)**

**Time on court together – 5:35 (13:14-11:11 first half; 11:25-7:53 second half)**

*A few things of note here. One, the damage done against this group was more in the second half and the 11:25 mark was actually the under-16 timeout because there was no stoppage in play during the timeframe that usually takes place. That said, this was only the second time all season since Oglesby returned from his foot injury that this "Second Line" was used in both halves of a game and the other occurrence was against Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Oglesby's first game back. This is also the group used in the first half that led to White re-entering the game and being part of what ended up being the best lineup Iowa used. This group was a -3 in the second half. Iowa was ahead 47-43 at that under-16 timeout and by the time the under-8 timeout occurred, the lead was trimmed down to 52-51. Actually, Michigan State went ahead and Clemmons knocked down a pair of free throws to put Iowa back up before being taken*

out.

### **Illinois (2/1/2014):**

**Best lineup:** Clemmons-Marble-White-McCabe-Olaseni (8-1) (+7);  
Gesell-Oglesby-Marble-White-Olaseni (11-4) (+7)

**Time on court together** – 1:27 (11:01-9:34; first half); 4:24 (4:24-0:00; second half)

*The first lineup allowed Iowa to build its first half lead up to double digits and features the Hawkeyes' top four players during this game in the individual +/- category. It was also the first time since the Notre Dame game last December that those five guys were on the court together. The second lineup is the more significant of the two because it's the group that finished the game and closed out what was a much needed win for Iowa after what happened prior against Michigan State. Also if you recall, this is the same lineup that proved most effective against Wisconsin last month.*

**Worst lineup:** Clemmons-Gesell-Jok-Basabe-Olaseni (2-8) (-6)

**Time on court together** – 2:06 (2:06-0:00; first half)

*This group allowed Illinois to cut Iowa's lead down to single digits during the final two minutes of the first half. What made this even more unusual is that the only other time this lineup had even been used by Iowa was during a non-conference game against Penn and it was for only 39 seconds in that game.*

### **INDIVIDUAL PLUS-MINUS:**

I have the following listed with each player here – the number of different lineups they've been part of thus far in 2013-14, their plus-minus and minutes played for the entire season, their plus-minus and minutes played through Big Ten play, and plus-minus and minutes played in the last three games played.

A few observations with this data: First, there's the minutes

distribution. Basabe has now played more minutes than Uthoff, Woodbury's minutes have increased to the point where he has now played more than McCabe, and sometime in the near future here, Oglesby will surpass Jok in minutes played. It's really only a matter of time now.

With the plus-minus data, a couple of interesting things are worth pointing out. Marble's -2 against Michigan State was only the second time all season he fell in the minus category. As for the bench, notice how McCabe is a +73 during Big Ten play. Only Marble and White have proven more effective. This might sound surprising to some fans, but his plus-minus is among the evidence for why he has seen the minutes he has, even though they've started to dwindle a little as of late.

Two other reserves that should be mentioned here are Oglesby and Clemmons because they (along with White) are the only guys who were pluses in Iowa's overtime loss to Michigan State. Oglesby has played 10 games since returning from his foot injury and has been a plus in eight of them. Clemmons hasn't seen much playing time as a result, but his minutes have gone up over the last week and what the three pluses tell me is that's he starting to regain confidence in his game. This is something McCaffery said he wanted to see and something Clemmons said he has started to do again during practice. Even in minimal playing time, it's starting to show right now.

**Devyn Marble:** 71/143 rotations

**Season:** 1,312-1,019 (+293) (618:54)

**Big Ten play:** 577-469 (+108) (285:11)

**Last 3 games:** 184-152 (+32) (97:43)

– *at Northwestern:* 52-31 (+21) (25:05)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 55-57 (-2) (36:50)

– *at Illinois:* 77-64 (+13) (35:48)

**Aaron White:** 69/143 rotations

**Season:** 1,209-935 (+274) (574:00)

**Big Ten play:** 547-439 (+108) (271:29)

**Last 3 games:** 157-124 (+33) (84:48)

– *at Northwestern:* 43-30 (+13) (23:13)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 59-57 (+2) (37:27)

– *at Illinois:* 55-37 (+18) (24:08)

**Mike Gesell:** 72/143 rotations

**Season:** 995-815 (+180) (494:41)

**Big Ten play:** 424-404 (+20) (227:10)

**Last 3 games:** 121-118 (+3) (71:49)

– *at Northwestern:* 45-37 (+8) (25:39)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 36-39 (-3) (25:02)

– *at Illinois:* 40-42 (-2) (21:08)

**Melsahn Basabe:** 59/143 rotations

**Season:** 848-714 (+134) (432:44)

**Big Ten play:** 365-339 (+26) (200:03)

**Last 3 games:** 100-106 (-6) (67:24)

– *at Northwestern:* 25-18 (+7) (16:01)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 40-42 (-2) (28:54)

– *at Illinois:* 35-46 (-11) (22:29)

**Jarrold Uthoff:** 76/143 rotations

**Season:** 909-735 (+174) (430:23)

**Big Ten play:** 286-279 (+7) (157:25)

**Last 3 games:** 87-82 (+5) (45:36)

– *at Northwestern:* 31-24 (+7) (15:42)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 26-27 (-1) (14:18)

– *at Illinois:* 30-31 (-1) (15:36)

**Adam Woodbury:** 48/143 rotations

**Season:** 718-563 (+155) (361:05)

**Big Ten play:** 260-229 (+31) (145:03)

**Last 3 games:** 82-75 (+7) (52:57)

– *at Northwestern:* 35-26 (+9) (21:40)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 23-25 (-2) (17:30)

– *at Illinois:* 24-24 (0) (13:47)

**Zach McCabe:** 55/143 rotations

**Season:** 818-573 (+245) (357:45)

**Big Ten play:** 297-224 (+73) (142:11)

**Last 3 games:** 97-63 (+34) (45:26)

– *at Northwestern:* 51-28 (+23) (22:06)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 21-23 (-2) (15:20)

– *at Illinois:* 25-12 (+13) (8:00)

**Gabe Olaseni:** 49/143 rotations

**Season:** 725-556 (+169) (348:20)

**Big Ten play:** 262-253 (+9) (137:54)

**Last 3 games:** 123-102 (+21) (58:57)

– at Northwestern: 41-24 (+17) (17:29)

– vs. Michigan State: 25-28 (-3) (15:15)

– at Illinois: 57-50 (+7) (26:13)

**Anthony Clemmons:** 62/143 rotations

**Season:** 669-509 (+160) (316:28)

**Big Ten play:** 129-137 (-8) (77:26)

**Last 3 games:** 52-43 (+9) (29:44)

– at Northwestern: 8-3 (+5) (6:22)

– vs. Michigan State: 18-17 (+1) (10:11)

– at Illinois: 26-23 (+3) (13:11)

**Peter Jok:** 53/143 rotations

**Season:** 426-317 (+109) (202:40)

**Big Ten play:** 28-32 (-4) (18:57)

**Last 3 games:** 4-8 (-4) (4:24)

– at Northwestern: 2-0 (+2) (2:07)

– vs. Michigan State: DNP

– at Illinois: 2-8 (-6) (2:17)

**Josh Oglesby:** 51/143 rotations

**Season:** 364-299 (+65) (176:31)

**Big Ten play:** 321-264 (+57) (155:40)



**Last 3 games:** 119-100 (+19) (61:32)

– *at Northwestern:* 45-29 (+16) (19:56)

– *vs. Michigan State:* 40-38 (+2) (24:13)

– *at Illinois:* 34-33 (+1) (17:23)

**Kyle Meyer:** 17/143 rotations

**Season:** 73-89 (-16) (48:55)

**Big Ten play:** 2-4 (-2) (2:10)

**Last 3 games:** 0-0 (0) (0:51)

– *at Northwestern:* 0-0 (0) (0:51)

– *vs. Michigan State:* DNP

– *at Illinois:* DNP

**Darius Stokes:** 14/143 rotations

**Season:** 62-78 (-16) (39:38)

**Big Ten play:** 4-4 (0) (3:26)

**Last 3 games:** 2-0 (+2) (2:07)

– *at Northwestern:* 2-0 (+2) (2:07)

– *vs. Michigan State:* DNP

– *at Illinois:* DNP

**Kyle Denning:** 13/143 rotations

**Season:** 70-76 (-6) (41:04)

**Big Ten play:** 0-0 (0) (0:51)

**Last 3 games:** 0-0 (0) (0:51)

- *at Northwestern: 0-0 (0) (0:51)*
- *vs. Michigan State: DNP*
- *at Illinois: DNP*

**Okey Ukah:** 6/143 rotations

**Season:** 33-46 (-13) (25:43)

**Big Ten play:** 0-0 (0) (0:51)

**Last 3 games:** 0-0 (0) (0:51)

- *at Northwestern: 0-0 (0) (0:51)*
- *vs. Michigan State: DNP*
- *at Illinois: DNP*

### **Looking ahead:**

Iowa's next three Big Ten games are as follows: The Hawkeyes have a pair of home rematches against top 25 teams coming up in No. 24 Ohio State on Feb. 4 and on Feb. 8 against No. 10 Michigan. Then following its second bye, Iowa travels to Penn State on Feb. 15 for its lone regular season game against Penn State this season. Once again, I'll update this data in 3-game increments, so the next plus-minus update will come following Iowa's game in State College in two weeks. Given what is known, here are some things to keep an eye on in each upcoming match-up.

**Feb. 4 vs. No. 24 Ohio State** – Just like last time these teams met in Columbus, I think the difference maker for Iowa in this game will be Basabe because again, he doesn't have a Jared Sullinger or Deshaun Thomas guarding him. Now that said, I would expect the Buckeyes to place more of an emphasis this time around on keeping Basabe in check (he had 11 points and 10 rebounds against Ohio State last month). Iowa's best plus-minus against the Buckeyes came from Uthoff, who was a +17.

What's interesting is that Uthoff has had struggles of late and if you recall that game, it was probably the most aggressive he has been in any Big Ten game this season.

The other reserve to watch is Oglesby, who was a +11 in last month's game and had eight points. That game was also when it became evident the light had gone on for him. As far as lineups go, Iowa's best lineup featured both of those reserves as they played down the stretch. The Hawkeyes also used 18 different lineups against Ohio State and the only time any one of them was out there more than once was when the starting five opened the second half. What I'll be interested to see is if Iowa's approach is to keep Ohio State constantly guessing again.

**Feb. 8 vs. No. 10 Michigan** – Iowa players may have had their toughness called out after losing to Michigan State, but the Hawkeyes' loss at Michigan back on Jan. 22 was their worst showing of the season. Marble and Basabe were the only players who finished as pluses in that game for Iowa.

As far as point production goes, this was one of Basabe's better games this season and with the home crowd this time around, I sense him playing well here in this one. The other name to watch (just like I said before these teams met in Ann Arbor) is Woodbury. He had eight points against the Wolverines and that game really seemed to open the public's eyes to what he is capable of when he has a match-up like this one against an under-sized center in Jordan Morgan. Also like the last time they played each other, I'll say again that Iowa will need a big game from Gesell. He struggled the first time around and I believe it to be one of the reasons why Michigan was able to win. Iowa's chances of winning this rematch go up if he can play to his averages. Getting more than eight bench points would also help the Hawkeyes' cause here because McCaffery found himself playing his starters way more than he wanted to against Michigan the first go-around.

**Feb. 15 at Penn State** – Now this is the the first and only regular season meeting between the Hawkeyes and Nittany Lions this season. Looking back at last year's games between the two, there were four players that were pluses for Iowa both times around. White had the best plus-minus both times and he has always played well against Penn State anyway, so I would expect a big game from him in this one. Another one of these guys was Woodbury and this is another game where his height should play to his advantage.

Then the two guards who fared well were Marble and Clemmons. Marble will need to be big anyway because Penn State's backcourt of Tim Frazier and D.J. Newbill is as good a 1-2 punch as the Big Ten has. Gesell did O.K. against the Nittany Lions last season, but this is a game where Clemmons could be beneficial for Iowa if he stays on his current path. Keep in mind too that the first game between these teams last season was the point when Clemmons was removed from the starting lineup in place of Basabe, so he not only has fared well against Penn State, but has done so playing off the bench.