

Hawkeyes annihilate 10th-ranked Wolverines

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Energy was something Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said he believed his team lacked earlier in the week when it lost at home to Ohio State. Playing at home again Saturday against No. 10 Michigan, it's safe to say his players got the message.

In front of a revved up Carver-Hawkeye Arena crowd, the 17th-ranked Hawkeyes looked energized from the start and played perhaps their best game of the season to date, downing the Wolverines 85-67 to move to 7-4 in Big Ten play and 18-6 overall.

The tone was set by Iowa's starting five. Perhaps more specifically, it was set by the Hawkeyes' backcourt of senior Devyn Marble and sophomore Mike Gesell. Marble drained each of his first 3-pointers for Iowa's first nine points of the game and scored 22 of his game-high 26 points in the first half. In the process, Marble shot 8-of-17 from the floor, including 6-of-10 from behind the arc.

"He has very high expectations for himself," McCaffery said of his team's leading scorer. "He's a tremendous leader. There's never a hangover with him. If he doesn't play well or if he has an off-night, he just comes right back to work."

Then there was Gesell. Not only did he come away with 10 points on 3-of-5 shooting, but he also tallied team-highs of eight assists and three steals while only turning the ball over once.

"I'm just looking to be aggressive and try and take what the defense is giving me," Gesell said. "I think I've been doing a lot better of a job of getting to the basket lately. I can look for my pull-up jumper, but tonight, I think the basket was a little bit more open."

Iowa led 23-10 at the U-12 timeout, which came at the 9:52 mark. Before McCaffery and his staff came over to give instructions, Marble gave instructions of his own to the five reserves taking the floor at that moment.

"Our bench does a pretty good job of picking us up, but I wanted to make sure they understood the severity of the situation and understood how we got the lead," Marble said. "I told them to play with energy and play like the more desperate team."

The reserves held up, but there was a point where McCaffery had to call timeout as Michigan got within eight points of the Hawkeyes. With the entire starting lineup back on the floor, Marble began heating up again and hit a 3 in the final seconds to put Iowa up 43-29 at halftime.

From there, the Hawkeyes continued curb-stomping the Wolverines. Defensively, they held two of Michigan's best players in check. Nik Stauskas, who had 26 points when these teams met on Jan. 22, was held to just 10 points and also committed four turnovers. Meanwhile, Glenn Robinson III's lone bucket of the entire game came on the Wolverines' opening possession off an alley-oop and he finished 1-of-7 shooting while also turning the ball over four times.

"I thought we did a much better job on ball screen action than when we were up there," McCaffery said. "I think you have to against them. They do so many different things with ball screens and space and dribble-ats."

Iowa continued feeding off the crowd and extended its lead to as many as 27 points. With the Hawkeyes up 61-41, junior

center Gabe Olaseni came away with one of his three blocked shots to fire up the fans. From there, the Hawkeyes went on an 11-4 run to make it 72-45.

The highlight of this stretch came when Marble found sophomore center Adam Woodbury for a dunk in transition. As Woodbury got back on defense to a thunderous roar, he briefly put his index finger over his mouth, which he said was his way of silencing his critics.

“You could take it that way,” Woodbury said about the quieting his doubters. “That was a good play from Dev. It wouldn’t have been possible without him going and getting out on the fast break.”

Iowa now gets a week between games before returning to the court for its final seven regular season games. The Hawkeyes play their next two games – both of which are single-plays – on the road, with the first of those coming at Penn State on Feb. 15. Tip-off from the Bryce Jordan Center in State College, Pa., is scheduled for 12 p.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on ESPNU.