

Hoosiers outlast 20th-ranked Hawkeyes

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

In a six-day span, the 20th-ranked Iowa Hawkeyes have gone from remaining in the thick of the Big Ten title hunt to now fighting to avoid playing in the opening day of the Big Ten Tournament next month.

Much like it did 48 hours earlier in Minneapolis, Iowa gave up over 90 points to Indiana on Thursday. Much like that contest two nights ago at Williams Arena, the Hawkeyes found themselves on the losing end of a 93-86 final to the Hoosiers at Assembly Hall. Now on a three-game losing streak, Iowa sits at 8-7 in Big Ten play and 19-9 overall.

Thursday's make up of an affair originally scheduled for Feb. 18 wasn't completely similar to what happened when the Hawkeyes lost to the Golden Gophers earlier this week. Instead of playing the majority of the game from behind, Iowa found itself exchanging runs back and forth with Indiana.

The Hawkeyes quickly jumped out to a 17-10 lead at the first under-16 timeout of the game before the Hoosiers moved back ahead and ended up leading 43-35 with 5:04 left in the first half. At the 3:14 mark, Iowa trailed 49-43 and proceeded to go on a 9-0 run to take a 52-49 lead at halftime.

Among those leaving their marks early on were seniors Devyn Marble and Melsahn Basabe. Marble finished with a team-high 20 points on 8-of-16 shooting and also had five assists, three rebounds and three steals. Basabe, making his first start since Iowa's 82-70 win over Penn State on Feb. 15, finished with 14 points on 7-of-11 shooting.

Momentum continued to swing toward the Hawkeyes early in the second half, as they maintained a 58-51 advantage. But at this point, Iowa began to completely unravel.

Indiana capitalized on 18 Hawkeye turnovers, 10 of which came in the second half. With three minutes remaining, Iowa only managed to score 21 second-half points.

Also hurting the Hawkeyes on this night was that while Indiana's duo of Yogi Ferrell and Noah Vonleh was held to a combined 12 points, it was Will Sheehey scoring 30 points for the Hoosiers on 13-of-20 shooting.

"What's bugging me is 18 turnovers," Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said in a postgame interview with the Hawkeye Radio Network. "We turned them 17 times. I mean, that should be enough. You know, we really went after Yogi and Vonleh. I mean, we hold those guys to 12 and, you know, that should get the job done.

"But we turn the ball over 18 times, we don't throw the ball inside in the second half and I'm not blaming them. That's my fault. I've got to do a better job there. But we tried to do it all at once."

Iowa looks to end its three-game skid on March 2 when it plays host to Purdue in its only meeting this season with the Boilermakers. Purdue enters the contest in a four-way tie for last place in the league at 5-10 and possesses an overall record of 15-13. Tip-off is scheduled for 1 p.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on the Big Ten Network.

Be sure to visit *HawkeyeDrive.com* afterwards for complete coverage Sunday from Carver-Hawkeye Arena.