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Championship Rounds presented by Continental Tire
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'Cuse Fends Off Iowa, 66-63

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NEW YORK – Freshman Chris McCullough had a career-best 20 points and a key steal late in the game to help #23/24 Syracuse (3-1) past Iowa (2-2), 66-63, at Madison Square Garden. The victory gave the Orange third place in the 2K Classic benefitting The Wounded Warrior Project.

Graduate student Rakeem Christmas contributed 18 points and six rebounds and redshirt junior Trevor Cooney rounded out double-digit scorers for the Orange with 14. He had a squad-best three 3-point baskets and had four assists and three steals. Jarrod Uthoff had 20 points to lead Iowa.

A 3-pointer by Iowa's Mike Gesell put the Hawkeyes ahead, 24-21, with 7:41 left in the opening half. The Orange regrouped and outscored Iowa 13-5 before the break and entered the intermission with a 34-29 advantage. Christmas had five points in the run.

Syracuse continued to build its margin early in the second half, opening the period with an 18-8 stretch that had the Orange ahead, 52-37, with 11:34 left in the contest. McCullough had seven of those points.

Iowa's press gave Syracuse problems and seven Orange turnovers over the next eight minutes helped the Hawkeyes shave the margin to 59-58. McCullough asserted himself again, dunking to put Syracuse up 61-48 and then stealing an errant Iowa pass with 10 seconds left to help secure the victory. McCullough made the two subsequent free throws and grabbed an important board with two seconds left.

Freshman guard Kaleb Joseph had seven points and eight assists and junior Micheal Gbinije had seven rebounds off the bench for the Orange.