

Wieskamp scores 15, Iowa beats UMKC

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — It wasn't all pretty, but it was a pretty impressive collegiate debut for Iowa's Joe Wieskamp.

The true freshman from Muscatine, Iowa scored 15 points, to lead the Hawkeyes (1-0) in a 77-63 season-opening win over UMKC on Thursday night.

"I think it's kind of what we expect," Iowa coach Fran McCaffery said. "He's very confident in himself and the game comes easy to him. He plays at both ends of the floor, and played really good defense tonight. He's tough. I'm just really thrilled for him and satisfied presently for what he's done. You can tell he's going to be special.

"In the first half he was the only one hitting."

For his part, Wieskamp wasn't surprised by his debut, having been with the team since June and working out daily to get his game college-ready.

The former Mr. Basketball for the state of Iowa preached confidence as the reason for his steadiness in the opener.

"Any time you make your first shot, you know it's going to be a good game," Wieskamp said. "My teammates and coaches have the utmost confidence in me, and so that confidence carries over. I know I can score the ball and do a lot of things to help this team win, and that's what I tried to do."

The Hawkeyes got 12 points from Jordan Bohannon, as well as 12 points, eight rebounds and five assists from Tyler Cook.

Iowa had a 34-26 lead at halftime after shooting just 32 percent from the field and 29.4 percent from 3-point range against a UMKC squad that lost 76-45 to Loyola-Chicago in its opener. McCaffery said it was shot selection in particular that frustrated him as far as his team's offense. Despite a definite size advantage, the Hawkeyes took more 3-pointers than 2-pointers.

"In the first half we took 17 3s and eight 2-point shots," McCaffery said. "I was really disappointed in that aspect. I felt like we had an advantage in the post offensively, and I wanted to try to exploit that, and we were jacking 3s. That said, we had good shooters shooting 3s that didn't go."

The Hawkeyes bounced back with 59.1-percent shooting in the second half.

Maishe Dailey added 11 points for Iowa.

The Kangaroos (0-2) were led by Brandon McKissic and Xavier Bishop, who had 14 points apiece.

BIG PICTURE

Iowa: The Hawkeyes announced Thursday they would redshirt sophomore Jack Nunge for this season. The forward was a regular in Iowa's rotation last year, but with a glut of forwards again this season, his taking a year to develop opens up this year's rotation and the returning cast of big men.

UMKC: The Kangaroos gave the Hawkeyes a fight, especially in the first half, in the second leg of a three-game gauntlet to open the season against high-level opponents. Their opener came against Loyola-Chicago (a Final Four team last season) and next up is UConn.

THE FEELING IS MUTUAL

On Jack Nunge's decision to redshirt, McCaffery said he tries as a head coach to never force a player into a redshirt situation, and was happy with how Nunge came to his choice this season.

With a clogged rotation and an ability to improve greatly over the next year, McCaffery said he's excited about what the possibilities are with this buffer season.

"I support him," McCaffery said. "I think it makes a lot of sense. We tried last year to squeeze six guys into four spots and it didn't work. I think Jack saw that. I think Jack Nunge has a chance to be special — really special.

"He struggled at times (last year), and you're going to see a guy come back next year probably in the 245 (pound) range. He's going to go to work right now."

NO DOUBT

Wieskamp's debut wasn't a surprise to him, and it wasn't a surprise to his teammates either. When asked about the freshman's game, Dailey gave a laugh before being succinct in his assessment.

"He's been doing that since he got on campus, so it was nothing new for us," Dailey said.

UP NEXT

Iowa hosts Green Bay on Sunday at Carver-Hawkeye Arena in the Hawkeyes' second preliminary game for the 2K Empire Classic.

UMKC heads to Storrs, Connecticut, to face UConn on Sunday, marking the Kangaroos' third consecutive road game to start the season.