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# Chris McCullough posts 20 points as Syracuse edges Iowa, 66-63, in 2K Classic at MSG

McCullough also made a game-saving defensive play by crossing the lane to steal a pass into the low post with 10 seconds and an Orange lead that had been 15 but was down to one.

BY [ROGER RUBIN](#) Follow / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Published: Friday, November 21, 2014, 8:47 PM

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Chris McCullough got to feel a win at the Garden. Kaleb Joseph got out from under the finger of blame. It all came one day too late, but that's life for the two freshmen who are filling big holes in No. 23 Syracuse's starting lineup.

After an upset loss to California on Thursday, they helped the Orange rebound with a 66-63 win over Iowa on Friday in the 2K Classic consolation game at the Garden.

No. 10 Texas faced Cal in the late title game without starting point guard Isaiah Taylor, who will be lost for several weeks



ROBERT SABO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**Chris McCullough dunks in the final minutes of the Orange's win.**

after suffering a left wrist injury in Thursday's semifinal win.

McCullough, a 6-10 forward from the Bronx, had 20 points, nine rebounds and three blocked shots. He also made a game-saving defensive play by crossing the lane to steal a pass into the low post with 10 seconds left and the Orange

clinging to a one-point lead after having been up by 15.

"He made a great play and that was the game if he doesn't come across to get that," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said.





ROBERT SABO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

### Things get chippy between Rakeem Christmas and Adam Woodbury in the second half.

Joseph had seven points and eight assists, though he committed four turnovers. After the loss to Cal, Boeheim seemed almost forlorn that after Tyler Ennis' early exit to go pro, he was going to have to be patient with Joseph at point guard. "We got spoiled a little bit last year. ... That's a once in a coach's career that you get a freshman that can play with that kind of understanding of the game," Boeheim said then.

The hype and the No. 23 ranking certainly seem undeserved right now. Syracuse (3-1) looked bad on both ends of the court in the semifinals and then let the 50-35 lead with 12:22 left almost vanish. The Hawkeyes (2-2) cut the margin to one point three times in the last 3:33, the last time one a Adam Woodbury putback with :55 left. McCullough made a pair of free throws to get the lead back to three after he made the steal.

Both Joseph and McCullough said they had an idea that they'd be carrying a lot of responsibility as freshmen after the Orange lost Ennis, Jerami Grant and C.J. Fair off last year's team.

"Initially I felt it, but not anymore," Joseph said. "As long as I stay focused on what is important and the guys in the locker room I don't feel it."



He said that filling in behind Ennis and Michael Carter-Williams before him has served as inspiration. "My team isn't going to be the one that doesn't keep up," he said.

Boeheim said after both games "we have a lot of work to do," and the product on the court right now says he is right. Developing in the face of non-conference games against St. John's, Michigan and Villanova won't make it easier. And neither will facing an ACC schedule for the first time.

Still both Joseph and McCullough are unwavering in

ROBERT SABO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**Syracuse guard Trevor Cooney misses his dunk.**

their belief that all this inexperienced group needs is a little time together before

Syracuse starts rolling.

“We’re young, but I see us get better every day,” McCullough said.

“We’re learning what it takes to be a successful team,” Joseph said. “We’re inexperienced now but we’re already figuring out what it takes to win.”

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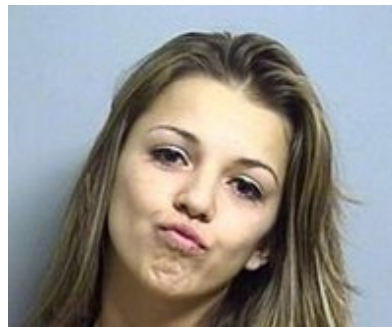
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