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Where Does Iowa Go After Falling In 2K Classic In NYC?

By [Thomas Beindit](#) @tbeindit on Nov 24 2014, 8:00a ±



Jim O'Connor-USA TODAY Sports

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The Hawkeyes had two disappointing losses in New York. What now?

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The Hawkeyes had a rough trip to the Big Apple. In fact, Iowa went 0-2 in the 2K Classic. For a Hawkeye team hoping to secure a quality non-conference win on their trip, this was a result fans did not want to see. Not only did Iowa get matched up against a quality opponent in Texas, but they also got a chance to take down perennial power Syracuse. Either of those would have been a good win to take back home. Unfortunately, that's not how things worked out for Iowa.

The question for this Iowa team becomes, what now? This has become a reoccurring theme for this team over the last few years and fans are looking for a different result. Iowa competes with a top team - or a team perceived by most to be a top team - but ends up falling just short. Certainly, Iowa

has scored some big wins over the last few years. For example, they beat Ohio State on the road and Xavier on a neutral court last season, but this has become a narrative for the team the last few years.

Just look at the end of last season. Iowa ended the season with a 4 game losing streak and in total, lost 7 of the team's final 8 games. That's not the kind of stretch you see out of many NCAA Tournament teams. What's even more bizarre, is that it's not that crazy when you look at how they lost the games. All 7 of those losses came by 10 points or less, 3 of the losses came by 5 points or less, and one of the losses came in overtime. Regardless of your thoughts on Iowa's team, that's a razor thin margin and ultimately, the thing that took a lot of the steam out of their season.

Now, it appears to have carried over to this year. After easily jumping out to a 2-0 record against two overmatched opponents, Iowa followed it up with 2 disappointing losses. Now, the Hawkeyes sit at 2-2 with no impressive wins and no chances at a quality win for the next 3 games.

But first, let's talk about those two losses.

The boxscore won't tell this, but Iowa was in pretty solid position in both of those games. To start, against Texas, Iowa led at halftime and with 18:39 minutes remaining, Iowa was at least tied. Now, things certainly did not go as well following that opening segment, but they were still within 2 points with 13:16 remaining and within 4 points with 12:12 remaining. Now, I am not trying to use revisionist history to pretend like Iowa almost beat Texas. The Longhorns absolutely deserved to win that game, but my point here is that it was competitive until the final 10 minutes and even then, it was not really over until the final 7 minutes. Maybe Iowa just wasn't good enough to close the deal, but when you are right there for three quarters of the game, you have to think you at least had a shot.

Against Syracuse, Iowa got down big, but gradually closed the gap in the 2nd Half and particularly in the final 10 minutes and ended up within a final possession in the last few minutes. Similar to the Texas loss, this is another game that largely depends on perception. Either Iowa was lucky to have been able to get back in this game or they were simply regressing back toward their regular play and simply could not overcome a bad start to close the deal. Still, regardless of that distinction, this was another disappointing loss where Iowa was in position to close the deal.

So what now? Whether bad luck or not, Iowa still needs to move on from this game. Considering that the team is just 4 games into the year, Iowa needs to move forward, but how?

The first thing that Iowa has to do is regroup and take care of business. Close losses can be particularly troubling and considering that the team faces three opponents in a row that are 100+ according to KenPom, a let down could be in the works. I certainly am not predicting Iowa to fall in any of its next three games, but staying focused is a must. This is where you hope some of the older members of the team like Mike Gesell and Aaron White to continue to make an impact for the team.

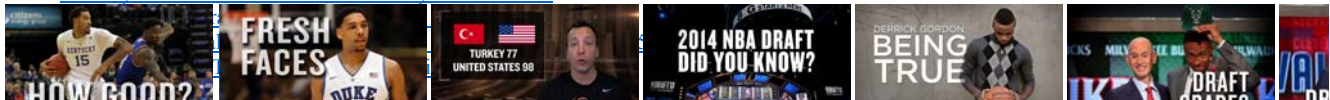
The other big thing that Iowa must do in the non-conference slate is secure a marquee win. If the Hawkeyes enter Big Ten play without a big win, that's going to pose a major challenge for the team's season goals. Scoring conference wins is a big challenge and far from a guarantee. The big two games here are Iowa State and North Carolina. Iowa gets the Cyclones at home, but will have to travel to UNC. Iowa is currently projected to go 1-1 in those two games and that would certainly be big, but making sure they get a win there will be big. Iowa will need role players like Trey Dickerson and Peter Jok to play better if they're going to pull off a win in one of these games.

Overall, Iowa needs to find a way to move on from two disappointing losses in New York. In terms of pursuing Iowa's overall goal of reaching the postseason, it has to be avoiding a let down in the next three games and making sure to grab at least one marquee win in the non-conference slate. If the team can do this, it would go a long way toward moving forward after some disappointing losses.



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