

# 6/15 PTL notebook: Basabe shines in Prime Time debut

By Brendan Stiles

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NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa – He may not have won his Prime Time League debut Tuesday night, but Iowa incoming freshman Melsahn Basabe put on a performance that excited many on hand inside the North Liberty Community Center.

Despite his Culver's of Coralville squad losing 100-84 to L.L. Pelling Company, the Glen Cove, N.Y., native put on a show, leading all scorers with 36 points and hauling in nine rebounds.

But even with this solid first impression on Hawkeye fans, Basabe would be the first to say he needs to work on getting better.

"It was a good experience, but I got the loss. That isn't impressive to me," he said. "There are a few things I know I can do, but that will come once I'm in better shape."

Iowa sophomore Eric May led the way for L.L. Pelling with 27 points and nine rebounds of his own. Also contributing in the victory was incoming freshman Zach McCabe, who finished with 12 points and six boards.

But the talk afterwards was all about Basabe, a 6-7 forward who did everything from posterizing defenders in the paint to knocking down mid-range jump shots and 3-pointers.

Originally a commit to Fran McCaffery at Siena, Basabe found himself having a change of heart shortly after McCaffery took over as Iowa's new head coach in March.

He said even though Iowa was a different setting from what he was accustomed to back East, having both McCaffery and assistant Andrew Francis, who was an assistant at Siena under McCaffery and followed him to Iowa, provided a definite comfort level.

“Knowing them, I didn’t feel like I was so alienated,” Basabe said describing the role they played in his visit to Iowa in late April.

It hasn’t even been two weeks since Basabe and the other incoming freshmen arrived on campus, and he has already placed an impression on his new teammates.

“I think he’s going to be a crucial part,” sophomore Cully Payne said about his new Hawkeye teammate. “He runs the floor great, has great hands. He’s going to be a big part to us next year.”

As for Basabe, he made clear he hasn’t set any long-term goals for himself, but that he also wasn’t going to accept losing, even if it happens in a Prime Time League game like it did on Tuesday.

“If I give 100 percent, I know in the long term that it will help me to stay focused,” Basabe said.

### **Gatens puts up a triple-double**

Melsahn Basabe may have placed the biggest impression on fans Tuesday, but junior Matt Gatens had the top performance of the night.

The Iowa City native posted a triple-double in Jill Armstrong of Lepic-Kroeger Realtors’ 107-94 win over Goodfellow Printing/Iowa City Ready Mix, finishing with 26 points, 11 assists, and 10 rebounds.

Meanwhile, Goodfellow/Ready Mix got a couple of strong contributions in defeat. Sophomore Brennan Cougill, who was

the first overall pick in last week's draft, had 17 points and nine assists, while incoming freshman Devyn Marble had 25 points.

### **Payne wins battle of point guards**

The nightcap on Tuesday featured two stellar point guards – a Hawkeye looking to build off a strong end to his freshman season, and a former Northern Iowa Panther that highlighted a Cinderella run to the Sweet 16 last March.

It would be Iowa sophomore Cully Payne and his McCurrys/Mike Gatens Real Estate squad getting the best of Ali Farokhmanesh and Vinton Merchants, winning 104-91.

Payne finished with 17 points and 12 assists in the win, while Farokhmanesh had 18 points and 10 assists in defeat.

The next set of Prime Time League games take place on June 20, with the first game taking place at 3 p.m. inside the New Gym between McCurrys/Gatens and L.L. Pelling. That game can be listened to on KRUI 89.7 FM in Iowa City, with Rob Miller and former PTL participant Robbie Lehman on the call.