

7/10/2011 – PTL Notebook: Underdogs prevail in North Liberty

By Brendan Stiles

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NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa – Anthony Hubbard and his Coach's Corner/Two Rivers Bank & Trust squad secured the top seed in next week's Prime Time League playoffs, but not in the manner they all anticipated doing so.

After losing its PTL opener to Corner/Rivers on June 19, Jill Armstrong of Lepic-Kroeger Realtors returned the favor Sunday afternoon at the North Liberty Community Center, dealing Corner/Rivers its first loss of the summer, 107-96. Despite falling to 5-1, Corner/Rivers secured the No. 1 seed and a first-round bye given the rest of Sunday's action. Meanwhile, Jill Armstrong now sits in a three-way tie for second place at 3-3.

Leading the way for Jill Armstrong was former UNI guard Ali Farokhmanesh, who had a game-high 32 points and eight assists. Sophomore forward Zach McCabe also played a major role in the win, finishing with 26 points and nine rebounds.

"It helps us with our confidence a little bit going in, and we're pretty excited about it," McCabe said afterwards.

As for Hubbard, he put together a fine stat line Sunday finishing with 19 points on 7-of-14 shooting, 12 rebounds, and six assists in defeat.

**Iowa City Ready Mix/Vinton Merchants 84, Falbo Bros
Pizza/Culver's of Coralville 59**

In what was perhaps the most surprising outcome of the afternoon, Ready Mix/Merchants not only defeated Falbo/Culver's, but did so in convincing fashion.

Even though this was its second win over Falbo/Culver's this summer, both teams were short-handed in their first meeting on June 19. This time around, everyone who wasn't on hand the last time these teams met played Sunday. Ready Mix/Merchants was sparked by a 15-0 run in the first half that put it ahead 20-8 and managed to hold off Falbo/Culver's the rest of the way.

Freshman forward Gabe Olaseni built off a strong outing last week by finishing this contest one rebound shy of his first double-double, coming away with 11 points and nine rebounds. In fact, the only shot he missed all afternoon was one of his four free-throw attempts, as he was a perfect 4-for-4 from the floor. Senior guard Bryce Cartwright finished this game with 15 points on 6-of-17 shooting, and also had eight assists for Ready Mix/Merchants, who now has won two straight games and sits at 3-3 this summer.

For Falbo/Culver's, this was its second straight loss after losing in overtime to Corner/Rivers on July 5, and it fell to 3-3. Sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe led the way with 23 points on 9-of-21 shooting. Freshman forward Aaron White, who was the only Iowa player represented on either team to play in the contest on June 19, recorded a double-double Sunday finishing with 13 points and 10 rebounds. Senior guard Matt Gatens had a shooting performance he would just as soon forget, coming away with 10 points while shooting a mere 3-of-16 from the floor.

"I think we guarded today, and we actually made shots," Cartwright said. "We let Mel do what he wanted to do. Matt didn't have the best of shots, and I think that was part of our defense. It's a great win."

Monica's/L.L. Pelling Company 83, McCurry's/Mike Gatens Real Estate 76

Although things looked bleak for Monica's/Pelling early in the second half, it overcame a 13-point deficit and snapped its four-game losing streak on Sunday with an 83-76 win over McCurry's/Gatens. Coincidentally, Monica's/Pelling's only other victory this summer came on June 19 against this same McCurry's/Gatens squad.

McCurry's/Gatens was ahead 38-35 at halftime, and immediately jumped out to a 10-0 run to make it 48-35 when Monica's/Pelling called timeout. From that point forward, however, Monica's/Pelling would be in control and would ultimately seize momentum once it moved back ahead. Both teams now sit tied for fifth place right now at 2-4.

Monica's/Pelling received a 20-point performance from sophomore guard Devyn Marble, who shot 9-of-27 from the floor. It also received a boost in the form of senior forward Devon Archie. After sitting out July 5 to rehab from shin splints suffered earlier this summer, Archie, who was the third overall pick in the PTL draft this summer, shot 4-of-7 from the floor and finished Sunday's game with nine points and nine rebounds.

"I think it was less one-on-one in this game, and I think we played together a little bit more," Archie said. "The energy was up. Some shots weren't falling for us, but I think we made up for it in the end."

In defeat, McCurry's/Gatens' Hawkeye trio of junior Eric May, senior Andrew Brommer, and freshman Josh Oglesby all managed to crack double-figures in scoring on Sunday. Of these three, May scored the most with 18 points, and also had six rebounds and six assists. Brommer, who played in second game back following offseason knee surgery, finished with 13 points. Oglesby shot 5-of-14 from the floor and had 12 points and five

rebounds.

Former Hawkeyes on hand

Sunday's action drew the biggest crowd to see any PTL games this summer. A big part of that was the result of a group of former Hawkeyes being on hand. Among those in attendance at the North Liberty Community Center Sunday included Bobby Hansen, Jeff Horner, Adam Haluska, Greg Brunner, Ryan Luehrsmann, Wade Lookingbill, Luke Recker, Cyrus Tate, J.R. Angle and Jarryd Cole, who was a senior on last year's squad.

It was something plenty of the current players managed to take notice of while playing their games.

"It's a big family, a fraternity if you will, just to know you were a part of Iowa," Cartwright said. "Once you put on the jersey at one point in time, that means we are all linked together. That's a good feeling."

For players originally from Iowa such as Matt Gatens and McCabe, seeing some of the players they grew up watching being on hand to watch them play in the Prime Time League is something that took them aback.

"It's good to see the interest and them coming back, and it means a lot to have them show up and support us," said Gatens, who is an Iowa City native. "We hope they're proud and we want to make them proud, both on the court and off the court."

The Prime Time League resumes from the North Liberty Community Center on July 12, with two games taking place at 6 p.m. and one at 7:30 p.m.