

7/17/2011: PTL Notebook – Playoff games take backseat to Hubbard exit

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NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa – Sometimes it's not what your eyes do see, but what they don't see.

The scene inside the North Liberty Community Center on Sunday afternoon was telling. Although his Prime Time League team earned a first-round bye and thus didn't play Sunday, Anthony Hubbard's absence three days after leaving the Iowa men's basketball program stood out.

Hubbard, a guy who lead his team to the best PTL record this summer, a guy that was quickly becoming a fan favorite, a guy who looked as though he was making the most of a golden opportunity, is gone. The shock stemming from his Hawkeye career ending before ever wearing an Iowa uniform, still resonated Sunday among the teammates he left behind.

What makes Hubbard's departure all the more puzzling was that last week, everything seemed fine. Players who did speak didn't get vibes of him feeling uncomfortable, nor did they sense any sort of issues with team chemistry.

Sophomore forward Melsahn Basabe was Hubbard's roommate when he first arrived on the UI campus last month. He not only said that he didn't express any ill-will towards Hubbard for leaving, but he also referred to his ex-teammate as a good friend.

"Every day I was with him, it seemed like he was enjoying it to the utmost," Basabe said. "I really have no insight on what

happened.”

With Hubbard out of the picture, the one competition that only intensified is one that was significant at last season’s end with sophomore Devyn Marble and junior Eric May vying for a starting spot, one that could have been Hubbard’s given what he was bringing to the team prior to last week.

But Marble never saw it that way. He made clear that while head coach Fran McCaffery envisions him playing some point guard again next year whenever Bryce Cartwright needs a breather, he has also remained motivated to keep a starting spot he swiped away from May near the end of 2010-11.

“It doesn’t change anything,” Marble said. “I’m still going to compete and play hard. Just because he’s gone and the depth dwindles down a little bit doesn’t mean I’m going to stop working hard. That’s not how it goes.”

Cartwright, who had recently been living with Hubbard after he and Basabe swapped roommates, didn’t hold any grudges. He even went as far as to say that if Hubbard’s recruitment could be done all over, nothing would have changed as far as welcoming him in with open arms was concerned.

“I always believe in second chances,” said Cartwright, who like Hubbard played at two different schools before coming to Iowa last year. “If you can play basketball, you can play basketball, period. He was given a chance, and I guess he probably made what he thought was the best decision.

“It’s just a life decision that you have to live with regardless.”

As of now, there’s no telling where Hubbard could end up. The press release sent July 14 citing his exit mentioned [a desire to “perhaps” play closer](#) to his hometown of Woodbridge, Va. There have been recent rumblings of Hubbard [looking into Big Ten counterpart Nebraska](#), the school Iowa beat out for his

services back on April 23. Should Hubbard go there, or any other Big Ten school, Cartwright acknowledged that feelings could be different from a competitive perspective.

"Maybe on the court, I would say you would feel a sense of betrayal, but I wouldn't take it personal at all," Cartwright said.

No. 3 Falbo Bros Pizza/Culver's of Coralville 104, No. 6 McCurry's/Mike Gatens Real Estate 91

As for what did take place on the court Sunday, the first PTL playoff game featured third-seeded Falbo/Culver's emerging victorious over sixth-seeded McCurry's/Gatens 104-91, setting up a semifinal showdown July 19 with No. 2 Iowa City Ready Mix/Vinton Merchants.

Falbo/Culver's struggled early on without the services of Basabe, who arrived late and checked into the game about 9-10 minutes in with McCurry's/Gatens ahead 24-19. It would become a competitive affair before Falbo/Culver's started pulling away in the final minutes of the first half to go ahead 55-45 at halftime.

From the second half on, McCurry's/Gatens found itself in an even bigger hole it couldn't escape from.

Despite arriving late, Basabe still pulled away with a double-double of 17 points and 10 rebounds. Falbo/Culver's also received strong outings from senior guard Matt Gatens and freshman forward Aaron White. Gatens had a team-high 18 points, seven assists and five rebounds, while White recorded a double-double of 16 points and 10 rebounds.

As for McCurry's/Gatens, it was led by May, who had a game-high 23 points and eight rebounds. It also got a 16-point performance from freshman guard Josh Oglesby and senior forward Andrew Brommer had seven points and five rebounds.

No. 5 Jill Armstrong of Lepic-Kroeger Realtors 93, No. 4 Monica's/L.L. Pelling Company 91

In what proved to be a downright battle in the second game of the Sunday doubleheader, fifth-seeded Jill Armstrong held off in the end to defeat fourth-seeded Monica's/Pelling 93-91 and will now play a third contest against No. 1 Coach's Corner/Two Rivers Bank & Trust in the PTL semifinals on July 19.

This contest went down to the wire despite Monica's/Pelling missing the services of Marble, who sprained his ankle on July 12 against Corner/Rivers and was held out of action as a precaution.

Leading the way for Jill Armstrong was sophomore forward Zach McCabe, who posted a double-double of 26 points and 11 rebounds. One notable performance from Monica's/Pelling was senior forward Devon Archie finishing with eight points and 10 rebounds in defeat.

Jill Armstrong went into halftime with a 49-44 lead, then allowed Monica's/Pelling to open the second half on an 8-0 run to move ahead 52-49. From that point on, the game was back-and-forth.

With his team trailing by two in the final seconds, Tennessee freshman Wes Washpun intentionally missed the second of two free throws. Monica's/Pelling got the offensive rebound and had multiple chances to tie the game with a tip-in, only to come up short as the clock expired.

Playoff schedule:

Tuesday, July 19:

6 p.m. – No. 3 Falbo Bros Pizza/Culver's of Coralville vs. No. 2 Iowa City Ready Mix/Vinton Merchants (4-3)

7:30 p.m. – No. 5 Jill Armstrong of Lepic-Kroeger Realtors vs. No. 1 Coach's Corner/Two Rivers Bank & Trust (5-2)

Sunday, July 24:

4:30 p.m. – 2011 Prime Time League Championship Game:
Falbo/Culver's-Ready Mix/Merchants winner vs. Jill Armstrong-Corner/Rivers winner

**All games will be played in the Roberts Gym at the North Liberty Community Center. All times listed are Central Standard (CST).*