

PTL to only have four teams this summer

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The 2012 Prime Time League will only feature four teams instead of six and that Northern Iowa will not be participating in the league this summer, PTL commissioner Randy Larson said in a release sent Monday afternoon. Prior to the release being sent, KGAN-TV's Jared Aarons [had received confirmation from UNI head coach Ben Jacobson](#) of the team not participating this year.

Larson said the reason behind UNI's decision [is related to NCAA legislation passed last January](#), which allows coaches to spend more hours around their players during the summer. As a result, Jacobson opted to not have his players travel down to the North Liberty Community Center twice a week.

"Coach Ben Jacobson said they were very disappointed to not be able to do it and they hope in future years to return, but this year just couldn't afford the 12 hours or so a week away from campus to do it," Larson said in the release. "We hope they will return next year."

As a result of the four teams, the plan is for each team to feature two current Hawkeye players, one incoming freshman (Iowa has five of them) and two former Hawkeye players. All current scholarship players as well as sophomore walk-on Darius Stokes were listed as participating this summer.

Cedar Rapids native Jarrod Uthoff, who was recently released from his scholarship at Wisconsin after redshirting last season for the Badgers, is also slated to play in the PTL this summer under the condition he receives approval to participate

from whatever school he ends up transferring to.

Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery could not be reached for comment Monday afternoon. However, Larson told *HawkeyeDrive.com* he was informed of Jacobson's decision last week and had a chance to talk with both head coaches about the new format.

"Once they found out Ben had made this decision, they of course were disappointed, but you know, I don't think there's any doubt this has really helped UNI level the playing field during the season," Larson said. "It's fair to say that I don't think it hurts Iowa. They're still playing great players against great players. It's just one of those things where UNI has to do what they think they got to do and it didn't make a difference to Iowa really.

"I don't think they think it's going to make any difference in terms of the level of competition, but I do think it will make a difference that the UNI guys are going to miss being able to compete head-to-head with the Iowa guys. I don't think it's the right decision for UNI, but I got to respect their desire to protect their players' time."

Larson also made clear he never got indication from talking with Jacobson that UNI's decision had any relation [to the new Big Four Classic that will begin next season](#). Iowa will play UNI on Dec. 15 at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines and the two will meet every other year there as opposed to meeting home-and-home on an annual basis as they had been doing prior.

"I think Ben's an honest guy," Larson said. "We've always been great friends and worked together on these things for years and years and years. I have no reason to doubt what he says about why they're not doing it.

"I don't think they think that they're doing this to hurt the league. It just changes the league to being all-Iowa pretty much."

The league will conduct its draft in Iowa City on June 13 and the PTL is scheduled to start the evening of June 19 at the North Liberty Community Center. Games will then take place every Sunday afternoon starting June 24, with the PTL semifinals set for July 22 and the championship game on July 24.