

7/23/2012: PTL Championship preview

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2012 Prime Time League Championship Game:

No. 4 Culver's/Iowa City Ready Mix (1-5) vs. No. 3 Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (4-2)

When: *Tuesday, July 24, 9 p.m. CT*

Where: *Jones Gym, North Liberty Community Center*

How Culver's/Ready Mix got to this point: *Despite losing five straight PTL games, it managed to pick up its first victory of the summer in the semifinal round Sunday, defeating top-seeded Vinton Merchants/Mike Gatens Real Estate, 100-93. Coming up big in the victory were sophomore forward Aaron White, who had 22 points and eight rebounds, and senior forward Eric May, who tallied 24 points and seven rebounds. Also featured on Culver's/Ready Mix are a pair of incoming freshmen – guard Anthony Clemmons and forward Kyle Meyer, who was originally drafted by Armstrong/Skogman before switching teams due to an injury to Dain Swetalla.*

"We needed one for our morale. We couldn't go with a goose egg out," May said. "This might be my last Prime Time, you never know. You couldn't end it with that. It was good. Everyone played really well."

How Armstrong/Skogman got to this point: *Armstrong/Skogman went 3-2 during league play and defeated second-seeded L.L. Pelling Company/McCurry's 99-93 in the second semifinal game played on July 22. Stepping up big in the win were junior forward Melsahn Basabe and former Iowa center Jarryd Cole.*

Both players finished with 34 points, while Basabe pulled down 19 rebounds and Cole had 12 boards. This team is led by incoming freshman guard Mike Gesell, who recorded a double-double of 14 points and 12 assists in the semifinals, as well as sophomore forward Darius Stokes. Gesell currently leads the PTL with an average of 8.5 assists per game.

How they've fared against each other: Armstrong/Skogman has defeated Culver's/Ready Mix twice already this summer. In its [109-94 win on July 1](#), Armstrong/Skogman received a 32-point, nine-rebound effort from Basabe and Gesell finished with 25 points. This was also Meyer's first game playing for Culver's/Ready Mix and he finished with 14 points and 12 rebounds. White also had a double-double that day, tallying 19 points and 17 rebounds.

Armstrong/Skogman won the second meeting [103-96 on July 15](#) thanks in large part to Basabe and Gesell both posting double-doubles – Basabe with 22 points and 11 rebounds and Gesell with 20 points and 11 assists. Cole also had 24 points along with eight rebounds and Stokes played his best game of the summer, finishing with nine points and six boards. In defeat, White led the way for Culver's/Ready Mix with 27 points and 13 rebounds. May also compiled a double-double of 12 points and 18 rebounds and Clemmons played his best game of the entire summer finishing with 20 points.

What to watch for: This championship game will feature two noteworthy match-ups. The first is the point guard battle between Gesell and Clemmons. While Gesell is more likely to be starting for the Hawkeyes in 2012-13, both are true freshmen and as mentioned, Clemmons played very well the last time they went head-to-head in the PTL. The other key match-up features Basabe going head-to-head with White after both were teammates on the team that won last year's championship game.

"I won this thing last year, and I want to win it again," White said. "It's going to be a fun game and I'm looking

forward to it.”

In that game, [White made a lay-up in the final seconds to win it, 100-99](#). Through six games, White has averaged 28.5 points and 12.8 rebounds, both of which lead the PTL this summer. Meanwhile, Basabe’s current PTL averages are 24.2 points and 11.7 rebounds per game. Head-to-head, Basabe has averaged four more points, but White five more boards.

“I got to destroy him,” Basabe said. “Of course, I love him. But I got to destroy him.”

Possible X-factors: For Culver’s/Ready Mix, it would be May. In his last two PTL games, the Dubuque native has averaged 18 points and 12.5 rebounds per contest. He too has also played on a team that has won the PTL, [doing so back in 2010](#).

As for Armstrong/Skogman, it would be Cole. Although he no longer plays at Iowa, Cole only got to participate in the PTL twice during his Hawkeye career due to a torn ACL suffered his freshman season and having his knee scoped prior to his senior year. His one previous PTL championship appearance came back in 2007 in a game where Cole’s team lost after a 3-point shot from former Hawkeye guard Darryl Moore that was released after time expired still ended up counting, something he hasn’t forgotten about five years later.

“You can’t take away the past, so I’m here right now to redeem that,” Cole said. “I just want to come out, do my best and hopefully get this championship. It means very little in the grand scheme of things, but that grand scheme is very big to me.

“It’s all about pride.”