

# 6/20/2013: PTL Notebook – Getting re-acclimated

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa – Typically, the Prime Time League constitutes the first acclimation incoming Iowa basketball players have to playing in front of the public and getting a feel for what it will actually be like when first donning a Hawkeye uniform.

Now there is one incoming freshman – guard Peter Jok – who made that debut. But considering how Iowa returns the majority of its roster from a season that ended less than three months ago in the NIT championship game, the vibe of Thursday's PTL action inside the North Liberty Community Center was one of getting re-acclimated.

For some players like junior forward Aaron White and senior guard Devyn Marble, it was a chance to showcase their skills one last time before heading to Colorado Springs, Colo., next week for Team USA's training camp in preparation for the World University Games. But even for someone like Marble, he had to get re-acclimated after spending most of his summer away from campus.

"I've been doing some family stuff and working out back home," the Southfield, Mich., native said. "I just got back a couple of days ago and haven't really spent too much time with the guys yet."

Then there are those like sophomore guard Mike Gesell and junior center Gabe Olaseni, both of whom are coming off stress reaction foot injuries. Olaseni's injury didn't keep him from playing, but had an effect on his off-season conditioning.

"I took about a month off, not really sprinting or dunking the ball – nothing really aggressive," Olaseni said. "It paid off and I feel great right now."

Meanwhile, Gesell found himself getting some much-needed rest away from the court. He said he went over a month without even touching a basketball and believes the rest he was able to provide his foot has been of benefit.

"My legs feel great," Gesell said. "I'm getting back in shape. I think I'm almost there. Workouts have been going great and my foot feels very good."

**Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (navy blue) 104,  
Culver's/McCurry's (light blue) 96**

The evening's first game featured a battle of the league's top two picks, with Gesell and his Armstrong squad pulling away with a 104-96 win over White and Culver's/McCurry's.

Armstrong found itself behind for the majority of the first half, but remained close before going on a flurry midway through the second half en route to the victory. As expected, Gesell led the charge finishing with a double-double of 28 points on 13-of-21 shooting and 11 assists. He also tallied six rebounds in what he said was his first taste of 5-on-5 (of any kind) since last season ended.

"It's all coming back," Gesell said. "I feel like I didn't lose anything sitting out. It felt good being out there."

In addition to Gesell's contributions, Armstrong was also heavily aided by incoming Iowa walk-on Okey Ukah, who held his own against White by posting 20 points on 10-of-14 shooting and a team-high eight rebounds. Ukah will join the Hawkeyes in 2013-14 after having to play at Kirkwood Community College after he was said he was deemed ineligible to play at Iowa shortly after graduating from Iowa City West High School.

In what could potentially be his only PTL game this summer, White also put together a double-double of 29 points on 12-of-28 shooting and 14 rebounds, both of which were team-highs for Culver's/McCurry's. Junior walk-on forward Darius Stokes also tallied 16 points and eight rebounds in the losing effort.

Going through rigorous training between team workouts and additional conditioning in preparation for next week, White said the biggest emphasis of improvement for him over the last 2-3 months has been with his shot.

"I'm really trying to finish high because then that really opens up for my game," White said. "My game is getting into the key, using my athleticism, playing hard on the boards. But in order to get down low, I'm going to have to make shots to open up my pump-fake and make them guard me behind the arc, then I could go by them."

**BlendCard (silver) 111, Comfort Care Medicare/Mike Gatens Real Estate (brown) 106**

What began as very sloppy turned into very entertaining as BlendCard was able to prevail with a 111-106 win over Comfort Care/Gatens.

The start of the game was delayed due to a malfunction with the scoreboard. Once it was fixed, both teams struggled keeping possession of the basketball, let alone lighting up the scoreboard in any manner. But once both teams got into the flow of the game, it was very competitive.

Leading the charge for BlendCard was sophomore forward Jarrod Uthoff, who scored nearly all of his 26 points in the first half. He also tallied a team-high 10 rebounds to finish with a double-double. BlendCard also received a big game from sophomore guard Anthony Clemmons, who had 23 points on 9-of-15 shooting, along with six rebounds and five assists.

Uthoff transferred to Iowa from Wisconsin and not only had to redshirt last season, but also couldn't be on scholarship until now. As a result, he wasn't able to travel with the Hawkeyes for any games played away from Carver-Hawkeye Arena, including the last two NIT games Iowa played at Madison Square Garden last April. Now with all of that behind him, Uthoff said it has become even easier for him to simply fit in with the program.

"I feel at home," Uthoff said following his first time playing basketball in public since Iowa's Black & Gold Blowout last October. "I know all the guys very well since I've been with them for a year, so it's very nice."

While Comfort Care/Gatens might not have prevailed with a win, it received a pair of monster performances Thursday. Sophomore center Adam Woodbury shot 13-of-27 from the floor and had a double-double of 32 points and 16 rebounds. After missing his first two 3-point attempts, the aforementioned Jok started heating up and ended up 13-of-22 shooting (5-of-9 from behind the arc) to finish with a game-high 35 points, the most of anyone playing Thursday night.

Jok said the game speed being more up tempo than he's used to is what jumped out at him Thursday night. He also made mention of wanting to spend the summer improving his defense and his overall speed and agility.

**L.L. Pelling/Hawkeye Report (green) 104, Greater Iowa Financial Group/Vinton Merchants (gold) 92**

Without the services Thursday evening of junior guard Josh Oglesby, who is reportedly dealing with a finger injury, a short-handed Financial/Merchants squad saw itself come up short in a 104-92 loss to Pelling/Report.

While this game never really got out of hand, the outcome wasn't in doubt for Pelling/Report, as it played the majority

of the contest with a lead that ultimately ballooned late following a pair of dunks by Olaseni to seal the deal. Olaseni and senior forward Zach McCabe both put together double-doubles in the winning cause for Pelling/Report. McCabe went 8-of-16 shooting to finish with a team-high 22 points and also had 11 rebounds.

Meanwhile, Olaseni finished with 19 points on 9-of-16 shooting, plus a team-high 12 boards. Not too shabby for someone who, like Gesell, played 5-on-5 for the first time Thursday since last season came to its end.

“I’ve been mainly focusing on offense,” Olaseni said. “I had a good talk with Coach [Fran] McCaffery right after the season ended. He just said I need to be a more viable option offensively this upcoming year, so I just try to work on my offensive game every day.”

As for Financial/Merchants – who only had six players Thursday – Marble scored a game-high 29 points and was one of four players to finish with double figures scoring. His points came on 11-of-26 shooting and he also compiled six rebounds and five assists.

*\*PTL play resumes Sunday afternoon at the North Liberty Community Center, starting at 3 p.m. Central when Financial/Merchants takes on Comfort Care/Gatens. Two games will follow at 4:30 p.m. – Pelling/Report vs. Culver’s/McCurry’s and Armstrong vs. BlendCard. Be sure to visit [HawkeyeDrive.com](http://HawkeyeDrive.com) for ongoing coverage of the PTL this summer.*

## **PLAYER INTERVIEWS:**

***Mike Gesell:***

***Aaron White:***

***Peter Jok:***