

6/30/2013: PTL Notebook – Marble returns after Team USA cut

By Brendan Stiles

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NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa – Iowa senior guard Devyn Marble and junior forward Aaron White both received invites from USA Basketball to take part in its training camp for the World University Games. One Hawkeye made the final cut over the weekend and leaves for Russia on Monday. The other's trip to Colorado Springs last week was short-lived.

Instead of being able to join White over in Europe, Marble wasn't able to survive the first round of cuts made by Team USA earlier in the week and on Sunday, he returned to the Prime Time League where he played for the first time since June 20, the league's opening night. While there was disappointment on Marble's end about not making the national squad, that disappointment also never became outrage for the 6-5 guard.

"They just wanted to go in another direction," Marble said. "It wasn't that I didn't play well enough to make the team.

"It was more them wanting to create a better team and when we were over there, a lot of guys struggled shooting, even the guys that are so-called 'pure shooters.' The coaches were in a tough position, I think, to take shooters over there and the guys that had the repetition, I think they had the upper hand also."

During his first day of workouts with Team USA, Marble found himself dealing with an injury to his right thumb, one that

still appeared to bother him while playing in the PTL Sunday. He continued to play through it, however.

What made the experience of being in Colorado Springs this past week for Marble was seeing how different the international style of game is from what he has been accustomed to playing at the Division-1 level in the United States.

"It's just a different, different brand of basketball," Marble said. "It's something that you just got to catch onto as fast as possible when you're playing. I struggled the first day, but played well the last two days and did a variety of things."

Now back in Iowa, there remains plenty of time for Marble to refine his game. The Hawkeyes' first regular season game remains a little over four months away, plus they're taking their overseas trip in August to England and France.

Marble also said not making the national team allows him to "live in the weight room" and work on getting stronger this offseason, which he said probably wouldn't have happened had he found himself spending more of his time on the court.

"It's definitely still a positive for me being here," Marble said. "There's still a lot I can work on."

Comfort Care Medicare/Mike Gatens Real Estate 101, Culver's/McCurry's 88

In the first game of the afternoon, Culver's/McCurry's almost pulled off an upset without either White or junior Darius Stokes at its disposal. The key word, however, being almost.

With just under 10 minutes remaining, Comfort Care/Medicare led 78-75 before going on a 9-0 run to move ahead double digits and not look back, en route to a 101-88 victory and a 2-2 record this summer through four games. Meanwhile,

Culver's/McCurry's still finds itself without a victory, now sitting at 0-4.

Freshman guard Peter Jok torched the nets in this one, scoring 32 points on 10-of-15 shooting (including 4-of-5 from behind the arc) for Comfort Care/Gatens. In addition to Jok's performance, Comfort Care/Gatens also received identical 20-point, 9-rebound efforts from both sophomore center Adam Woodbury and redshirt freshman Kyle Meyer, who just came off a 15-point, 15-rebound showing three nights earlier.

Woodbury made the comment following Sunday's game that he senses Meyer becoming more confident on the court. Meyer not only agreed with that remark, but elaborated on the feeling he said he had of evolving from a practice player last season while redshirting to becoming more of a gamer.

"It's just an adrenaline difference," Meyer said. "When you're a practice player, you go out and play hard every single minute of the day. But coming into a game, you got to learn to keep your head into it and see the floor because you don't know how everyone is going to play and you don't know how you're going to play each night, so you've got to learn as you go."

L.L. Pelling/Hawkeye Report 118, Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty 99

For the first 20 minutes, this game lived up to the billing as the one that would be most entertaining. But after going up 58-57 at halftime, Pelling/Report went on a fury in the second half and didn't look back as it beat Armstrong 118-99. Pelling/Report is now 4-0, while Armstrong drops to 2-2 with the loss.

Once again, both senior forward Zach McCabe and junior center Gabe Olaseni compiled double-doubles to lead the charge for Pelling/Report. Olaseni is continuing to dominate offensively

this summer after coming away with 29 points on 13-of-23 shooting and 15 rebounds, both of which were team highs.

Of those 29 points, 21 of them came in the second half when he began to put on a dunking display for those on hand.

"It's a chance to improve and I didn't really start out well in the first half," Olaseni said. "I wasn't really in a groove offensively, I was missing a lot of chippies, I was frustrated. I think I played a little bit better in the second half by getting a few dunks and getting myself going, so I feel good about the win."

Meanwhile, McCabe finished with 19 points on 6-of-10 shooting and hauled in 10 rebounds to help the winning cause. In defeat, sophomore guard Mike Gesell nearly put together a triple-double. Despite shooting 12-of-35, Gesell still managed to score a game-high 35 points for Armstrong and also put together nine assists and eight rebounds.

BlendCard 103, Greater Iowa Financial Group/Vinton Merchants 83

The good news for Financial/Merchants Sunday was Marble's return. That would be the only good news it got, however.

BlendCard didn't have the same scoring outbursts from either sophomore forward Jarrod Uthoff or sophomore guard Anthony Clemmons it had become accustomed to having. But neither Hawkeye player needed to go off as BlendCard defeated Financial/Merchants 103-83 to move to 4-0 and set up that battle of unbeaten PTL squads next week.

"Whenever you're winning, it's exciting," Clemmons said. "That was one of our goals, to try and win this thing without any losses." "It's a confidence thing. It's just me coming in the gym every day and saying, 'I'm going to dominate.' I mean, that has become part of my routine."

After both Uthoff and Clemmons scored 20-plus points in each of BlendCard's first three games, it was former Iowa City West High product Dondre Alexander leading the charge Sunday with 25 points. Clemmons came away with 17 points on 5-of-12 shooting and also had three rebounds and three assists. Uthoff still put together a double-double of 14 points on 6-of-10 shooting and 15 boards.

Marble shot 11-of-28 from the floor and finished with a game-high 33 points along with eight rebounds and seven assists for Financial/Merchants, who was again without junior guard Josh Oglesby as he continues recovering from a finger injury.

**PTL play resumes July 7 at the North Liberty Community Center, starting at 3 p.m. Central with the battle of 4-0 teams – BlendCard vs. Pelling/Report. Two games will follow at 4:30 p.m. – Culver's/McCurry's vs. Financial/Merchants and Comfort Care/Gatens vs. Armstrong. Be sure to visit HawkeyeDrive.com for ongoing coverage of the PTL this summer.*

PLAYER INTERVIEWS:

Kyle Meyer:

Devyn Marble: