

# Hawkeyes undergoing final preparations for Europe



Iowa junior center Gabe Olaseni (00) goes for a lay-up during the start of Iowa's fifth practice prior to playing six exhibitions next week in Europe on Monday, Aug. 5, 2013, at Carver-Hawkeye Arena in Iowa City. Olaseni, a London native, will start the first two exhibitions, which the Hawkeyes are playing in his hometown.

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – The anticipation for next week is exponentially building among members of the Iowa men's basketball program. For the majority of the players, the team's departure for London, England on Aug. 11 will mark the first time they've ever experienced being in Europe.

Then there's junior center Gabe Olaseni, a London native who will not only get to return home and play two of Iowa's six

European exhibitions in front of family, but start both exhibitions the Hawkeyes will play in his hometown. Iowa will be playing a pair of exhibitions against the London Lions in the Copper Box, which was one of the venues to open last year when London hosted the Summer Olympiad.

Olaseni said he wanted to surprise his parents with the news, so he didn't say anything to his mother about he and the team coming to London until right after the last spring semester concluded. As for the team's itinerary, he did provide the coaching staff with some input, but said he hadn't seen the team's final trip itinerary yet as of Monday afternoon.

"Being from London, I haven't done a lot of the tourist stuff, so that's going to be a new experience," Olaseni said. "But just the culture element, I think the guys are going to have a fun time.

"It's going to be a good experience off the court, which hopefully translates to on the court chemistry."

Olaseni starting those two London exhibitions before the rest of the trip concludes in France is the only part of Iowa's starting lineup head coach Fran McCaffery has fully committed to making happen right now. Outside of that, the possibilities are endless for McCaffery, who said he would have "all different kinds of starting lineups" while in Europe.

The fourth-year head coach elaborated further on how he wants to constantly sub players in and out over the course of these six contests, mainly to get an idea of how different rotation combinations look on the floor together. Nothing else, he said, is expected to change in terms of coaching style even though the style of play is different overseas and the competition will primarily consist of professional players.

"We're going to have all different kinds of lineup combinations on the floor," McCaffery said. "We could go big, we could go small, we can have a pressing lineup on the floor.

We can have an offensive lineup on the floor or a defensive lineup.

“I’m going to rotate the guys consistently throughout the game. Just keep subbing in and out different combinations, because you never know which guys are going to play well together and which guys aren’t and this gives us a great opportunity to see that.”

Shortly after returning from playing in the World University Games last month in Russia, junior forward Aaron White mentioned how some dynamics might be different with team practices in terms of conditioning and getting accustomed to that international style of play. As the Hawkeyes geared for what was their fifth of 10 allotted practices Monday afternoon, White said he seemed pleased with where he and his teammates are at this point.

“We just kind of jumped right into drills and we already knew what we were doing,” White said. “We remembered plays from last year and it was just kind of picking up where we left off.

“They’ve been good. They’ve been competitive and we’ve been getting after it.”

### **Basabe reflects on summer back home**

Monday marked the first time since last season that senior forward Melsahn Basabe spoke to the media. Instead of staying in Iowa and participating in the Prime Time League like almost all of his other teammates, Basabe was granted the opportunity to return to his home state of New York this summer in order to spend time close to family and also gain experience working an everyday job.

That experience would prove beneficial to Basabe.

A typical day for him this summer he said consisted of waking

up as early as 5:30-6:30 a.m. and working extensively on conditioning, running miles, hills and steps. He also would make time during the day to get some weightlifting and did all this while working two jobs – one at a summer camp where he worked with kids and another with a pharmacy where he went around delivering pharmaceuticals.

“I’m going to be a grown man graduating, so I wanted to get a taste of the real world,” Basabe said. “Coming back here has made me appreciate it more.”

As for time spent on the court, he wasn’t able to do much. An injury that wasn’t disclosed Monday kept him from playing more than he would’ve liked in the summer leagues he would’ve been allowed to participate in under NCAA guidelines since he wasn’t participating in the PTL.

“I hadn’t really played much this summer, but basketball obviously sticks with you,” Basabe said. “I’ve really just tried to focus on my conditioning because I know the basketball will come.”

### **Practice observations**

The first 30-45 minutes of Iowa’s practice after McCaffery spoke Monday afternoon was made open to the media. Fourteen players – the 12 on scholarship and walk-ons Darius Stokes and Kyle Denning – all took part in the warm-up stretching period in the beginning portion. The stretching was all Basabe and sophomore guard Mike Gesell did during the open portion.

During team drills, Basabe spent most of the time riding a stationary bike, while Gesell continued his recovery from a broken finger on his left hand. Gesell wore a cast that hovered over his left index finger and was mostly doing conditioning and work with his right hand.

As for those who did take part in the drill portion during the open portion, they were divided into two groups – black

jerseys and gold. The five players wearing black jerseys formed the first group during drills. This group consisted of senior guard Devyn Marble, junior guard Josh Oglesby, senior forward Zach McCabe, White and sophomore center Adam Woodbury. The second group wearing gold featured sophomore guard Anthony Clemmons, freshman guard Peter Jok, sophomore forward Jarrod Uthoff, redshirt freshman forward Kyle Meyer and Olaseni.

### **Additional housekeeping**

McCaffery was asked about Iowa's non-conference schedule and said he was still unsure when it could finally be announced. The one game remaining in question is who Iowa will play in its one home game that's part of the Battle 4 Atlantis. He did confirm Monday that his alma mater, Penn, is among the group of non-conference opponents the Hawkeyes will face at Carver-Hawkeye Arena this season.

The other big thing McCaffery commented on Monday was the NCAA's decision to bump up when teams can conduct their first official practice of the season. Iowa's first practice will take place on the first day it's allowed to have one, which will now be in late September. Prior to this year, the earliest a team could conduct its first official practice was mid-October.

"I think it's a great rule," McCaffery said. "The women did that for awhile and it was a great idea. It enables you to kind of space out your work. You get everything that you need to get in from a teaching standpoint, but you're not overworking the players too early."