

Big Ten, Big East to play Gavitt Games starting in 2015-16

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The Big Ten and Big East Conferences have agreed to an eight-year series of college basketball contests that will be known as the Gavitt Tipoff Games, starting with the 2015-16 season. This event is named in honor of the late Dave Gavitt, who was the original founder of the Big East Conference in 1979 after coaching for 10 years at Providence College.

During each of the eight seasons this series will take place, eight games will be played the first week of the season – two games per day from Tuesday through Friday. All match-ups that are part of the Gavitt Tipoff Games will be televised nationally on ESPN, the Big Ten Network and Fox Sports 1. Games played at Big Ten venues will be carried by ESPN and BTN, while Fox Sports 1 will televise all match-ups played at Big East venues.

The games will be played on campus sites of Big Ten and Big East schools. While the Big Ten will feature 14 schools beginning in July, the Big East – which is now basketball-only – currently features 10 schools: Butler, Creighton, DePaul, Georgetown, Marquette, Providence, St. John's, Seton Hall, Villanova and Xavier.

Under the agreement set in place by both conference, all 14 Big Ten programs will be featured a minimum of four times in the Gavitt Tipoff Games over the eight-year span while all 10 Big East programs are included a minimum of six times. Any match-ups that already happen on an annual basis between Big

Ten and Big East schools (i.e. Wisconsin vs. Marquette, Nebraska vs. Creighton) will continue as is and would not be included as part of this event.

Match-ups for the 2015-16 season will be announced next spring.

Iowa to face UNC in Big Ten/ACC Challenge

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The Iowa Hawkeyes will play at North Carolina on Dec. 3 as part of the 2014 Big Ten/ACC Challenge. News of this match-up [was first reported Thursday by Sports Illustrated's Brian Hamilton](#).

Iowa last played North Carolina in the championship game of the 2004 Maui Invitational, won by the Tar Heels 106-92. North Carolina went on to win the national championship that season. Prior to that, the Hawkeyes and Tar Heels played each other twice with Iowa winning both times. One of those victories came in the Hawkeyes' only previous visit to the Dean Smith Center during the 1988-89 season.

This match-up leads to a pair of intriguing storylines. On the North Carolina side of things, junior-to-be guard Marcus Paige is from Marion, Iowa and played alongside current Hawkeye juniors-to-be Mike Gesell and Adam Woodbury on the same AAU team. Paige was also recruited by Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery and the Hawkeyes before choosing to become a Tar

Heel. Paige is one of five native Iowans that North Carolina head coach Roy Williams has won recruiting battles for throughout his entire head-coaching tenure dating back to when he coached Kansas and landed Raef LaFrentz.

Then there's Woodbury, the one native Iowan Williams wasn't successful at luring away from the Hawkeye State. North Carolina was among the teams heavily recruiting the Sioux City native before he opted to play for McCaffery at Iowa.

The Hawkeyes' visit to Chapel Hill is one of five known non-conference games for the 2014-15 season. Among the other known match-ups are a home game against Iowa State, Northern Iowa at the Big Four Classic in Des Moines, and two of California, Syracuse and Texas in the 2K Sports Classic on Nov. 20-21 at Madison Square Garden. Iowa will also play two home games as part of the 2K Sports Classic before making the trek to New York City.

Iowa's contest with North Carolina comes on the third day of this year's Big Ten/ACC Challenge, which now starts on Dec. 1 as a result of having 14 games now with the additions of Maryland and Rutgers to the Big Ten. Among the other match-ups this year are Wisconsin playing Duke at home, Michigan playing Syracuse at home, Ohio State playing at Louisville and Michigan State playing at Notre Dame.

Jok arrested on OWI charge

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa freshman guard Peter Jok was arrested on charges of

operating while intoxicated (OWI) early Saturday morning in Iowa City. News of Jok's arrest [was first reported Saturday morning by the Des Moines Register's Rick Brown.](#)

Jok, 20, was pulled over by Iowa City police while riding a moped at the corners of S. Riverside Dr. and W. Iowa Ave. The arrest was made at 2:43 a.m. after Jok blew a .082, according to reports.

Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery issued a statement Saturday through the UI while recruiting in California saying he would gather all the facts once he returned to Iowa City. He also said whatever consequences Jok faces will be in compliance with the UI's Student Athlete Code of Conduct.

Jok is only the second basketball player under McCaffery's watch to face any type of legal issues. In 2012, former Iowa forward Kyle Meyer was initially charged with a public intoxication after being arrested in his dorm room by UI police and would later get the charge dropped to a PAULA (possession of alcohol under the legal age).

Dickerson signs with Hawkeyes

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa filled one of its three available scholarships Wednesday with the signing of point guard Trey Dickerson, who submitted his national letter of intent Wednesday. Dickerson, who is listed at 6-1, 180 pounds) had committed to head coach Fran McCaffery and his program shortly after visiting Iowa last month.

Dickerson is a native of Queens, N.Y., and played at the junior college level last season with Williston State College in Williston, N.D. While there, he posted game averages of 19.8 points, 5.7 assists and 3.5 rebounds.

"We're thrilled that Trey is joining the program," McCaffery said in a statement issued by the UI Wednesday. "He's an incredibly talented, quick and creative point guard who can also score. He's excellent in transition and can also play in the half court.

"Trey has great feel for how to play. He's a perfect fit for our style."

Because he only played one season at the junior college level before signing with Iowa, Dickerson will have three seasons of eligibility for the Hawkeyes starting in 2014-15. As of Wednesday, Dickerson is one of three additions to Iowa's roster with Brady Ellingson and Dominique Uhl both signing letters of intent last November.

With the previously announced departures of former Hawkeyes Darius Stokes and Kyle Meyer last week, Iowa currently has two available scholarships and has the option of filling one, both or neither this spring. Any scholarships not filled before the 2014-15 season begins will carry over into the November signing period along with the three Iowa has available to replace seniors-to-be Aaron White, Josh Oglesby and Gabe Olaseni once their eligibility is up.

Meyer to transfer

By Brendan Stiles

Kyle Meyer was granted a release from his scholarship and will transfer, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery announced in a statement issued by the UI on Tuesday.

Meyer redshirted in 2012-13 and was part of a five-player class that also included former guard Pat Ingram, who transferred following last season. As a redshirt freshman, Meyer played in 12 games and was used sparingly.

"Kyle and I had a healthy discussion at the conclusion of the season," McCaffery said in the statement. "Ultimately he has decided to pursue more playing time and a larger role at another institution. Kyle has great work ethic and tremendous character, and will be a valuable teammate wherever he decides to go.

"We appreciate his hard work and positive attitude the last two years. Kyle has a bright future and we will assist him any way we can."

In addition to Meyer's departure, which now leaves an additional scholarship open for Iowa, the Hawkeyes also lose junior Darius Stokes, who was given a one-year scholarship last season after serving as a walk-on for three years. Stokes went through Senior Night festivities alongside Devyn Marble, Melsahn Basabe and Zach McCabe.

3/31/2014: State of the Big Ten, Volume 126 (premium)

Every Monday, we will be running a weekly series titled "State

of the Big Ten," which will be made available to all members of HawkeyeDrive.com. This series of columns will focus on one major headline regarding the conference and go in-depth on the subject at hand.

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With Wisconsin reaching its first Final Four since 2000, this seems like a week that should be devoted to discussing the job Bo Ryan has done with the Badgers this year and the bright future that appears to be lying ahead for them. But thanks to a ruling that occurred last week in Chicago, it isn't. *(Should Wisconsin beat Kentucky and reach the national title game, next week's space will be entirely devoted to Ryan's squad.)*

Earlier in the year, former Northwestern quarterback Kain Colter became the leader of a group seeking to have unionization brought into college football. Last week, the National Labor Relations Board in Chicago ruled in favor of Colter and his party, saying that Northwestern football players are university employees and therefore have the legal grounds to unionize. Naturally, Northwestern University is appealing this and the NCAA has already gone on record as saying it doesn't agree with the ruling, so no actual resolution will come anytime soon.

A lot has been documented in recent days about the effect this will have on college sports as a whole in the future. Right now though, an interesting perspective to examine is the effect this could have on Northwestern football in the short term.

Because he's no longer a member of the team, Colter has the ability to speak out on this issue publicly as much as he wants and the longer this process continues, the more he'll speak. From a pure football perspective, coaches don't like having to deal with outside distractions to whatever they're

trying to accomplish and Northwestern head coach Pat Fitzgerald is no exception to this. As much as he'd like to brush this aside and solely concentrate on his current team, Fitzgerald won't be able to this season.

Northwestern might be able to place stipulations on what gets asked of any of its student-athletes (not just football players) regarding this. It won't be able to shield Fitzgerald though from any media in Chicago or nationally.

In May, the Big Ten will conduct its annual spring meetings in Chicago and this is a year where football coaches will be present at those meetings. Fitzgerald, Northwestern athletics director Jim Phillips and Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany will be fielding questions about this then and it will probably be the biggest topic of discussion that week. Same thing goes for when the Big Ten conducts its annual Football Media Days in late July, which are also in Chicago. This isn't going to get ignored.

With all of this being said, one thing that will be interesting to watch this fall is what happens on the gridiron. Keep in mind, the Wildcats are coming off a massively disappointing season that began with promise. A team that won 10 games (including the Gator Bowl) in 2012 couldn't even get bowl-eligible in 2013.

One thing coaches and players say all the time is how improvements are made in the offseason. This is going to be a different offseason in Evanston. It's one thing for players to improve physically, but how much of a mental drain is this going to have on everyone inside that football program between now and August? The answer to this question won't be verbally revealed during the season, even if it seems obvious one way or the other. What does seem obvious is that no matter what ends up happening long term, these next few months might prove to be the most challenging of Fitzgerald's coaching career.

How Northwestern responds both on and off the field to everything will significantly shape the type of future it has, both as a football program and as a university.

2013-14 Big Ten men's basketball TV schedule: NCAA/NIT (April 1-5)

Every week, we will post the TV schedule for all games featuring Big Ten teams. Here is where and when you can watch them this week:

April 1:

NIT Semifinals: Florida State vs. Minnesota (at New York City, N.Y.), 8 p.m., ESPN2

April 5:

NCAA Final Four: No. 8 Kentucky vs. No. 2 Wisconsin (at Arlington, Texas), 7:49 p.m., TBS

***All times listed are Central Standard Time.**

3/24/2014: State of the Big

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While this season isn't quite over yet with three Big Ten teams still playing in the NCAA Tournament, one thing has become clear over the past week regarding the conference's future. The drop-off between the past few years and the upcoming 2014-15 season will be quite evident.

Now that's not to say there won't be good teams. With the exception of losing Ben Brust, Wisconsin will bring back everyone else of importance and could be a preseason top 5 team come November. There's also a team like Illinois that should be able to use its recent NIT run as a springboard into 2014-15.

But the drop-off will be noticeable, mainly because of the players leaving or potentially leaving once this season ends. Indiana is the most obvious Exhibit A after what transpired Monday in Bloomington with three players being released from scholarships – and this is after Noah Vonleh declared he would leave for the NBA after a freshman season where he led the Big Ten in rebounding.

Ohio State loses Aaron Craft, but the Buckeyes have also seen Amadeo Della Valle opt to leave early so he can play professionally overseas and they are reportedly losing LaQuinton Ross early to the NBA. Michigan State is probably losing Gary Harris on top of Adreian Payne graduating and who

knows what will happen at Michigan over the coming weeks with players like Nik Stauskas, Glenn Robinson III and Mitch McGary.

Just from a talent perspective, there's going to be a decline and that's with the Big Ten adding both Maryland and Rutgers next season (although Rutgers isn't likely to bring much to the table right away in terms of talent). It's just a reality.

Last year was the best the conference had been in 20-plus years. This year has been the deepest the Big Ten has been in recent memory. Next year won't compare to either. It just won't.

A lot still has to happen over the next couple of months before any finalities can be made about individual teams. More players are going to transfer and some might even transfer in to some of these teams. But collectively speaking, there's a lot going away once this season ends two weeks from now in Arlington, Texas.

Two types of teams are best equipped for the short-term. One type is a team like Wisconsin or Michigan who boded well this year and will potentially return quite a bit next year. The other type is the team building off transfers. This is how Nebraska made the NCAA Tournament in two years under Tim Miles and how a team like Illinois (maybe Indiana depending on who comes in) will likely return to the dance in 2015.

The ones that stand pat – or at least appear to be standing pat – are the ones that decline. This is how Purdue has fallen and how Ohio State had as poor a year as it has had under Thad Matta.

If there's good news for some of these programs, it's that they have time to adjust their rosters accordingly. Otherwise, the middle of the pack is going to be loaded and will result in teams faring worse than expected.

2013-14 Big Ten men's basketball TV schedule: NCAA/NIT/CBI (March 24-28)

Every week, we will post the TV schedule for all games featuring Big Ten teams. Here is where and when you can watch them this week:

March 24:

CBI Quarterfinals: Penn State at Siena, 6 p.m., CBS Sports Network

March 25:

NIT Quarterfinals: Southern Miss at Minnesota, 8 p.m., ESPN

March 27:

NCAA Sweet 16: No. 6 Baylor vs. No. 2 Wisconsin (at Anaheim, Calif.), 6:47 p.m., TBS

March 28:

NCAA Sweet 16: No. 11 Tennessee vs. No. 2 Michigan (at Indianapolis, Ind.), 6:15 p.m., CBS

NCAA Sweet 16: No. 4 Michigan State vs. No. 1 Virginia (at New York City, N.Y.), 8:57 p.m., TBS

***All times listed are Central Standard Time.**

McCaffery updates son's condition

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery issued a statement Friday saying the tumor removed from his son Patrick's thyroid was found to be malignant and that discussions about further treatment are ongoing.

Patrick, who turned 14 on March 20, had the procedure done March 19 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, one week after the McCaffery family went public with his condition. Prior to his surgery, Fran returned to Iowa City from Dayton, Ohio – where the Hawkeyes played their first round NCAA Tournament game against Tennessee on March 19 – to be with his family. Fran then returned to Dayton later that day to coach Iowa's 78-65 loss to the Volunteers.

Below is the statement issued by Fran McCaffery through the UI in its entirety on Friday:

"Today, we received word from doctors that the tumor that was removed during our son Patrick's surgery on Wednesday is malignant. We will visit with doctors as soon as possible to determine Patrick's treatment."

"Margaret and I would like to thank everyone again for the outpouring of support from across the country for our son Patrick and family this past week. We appreciate everyone's thoughts and prayers."