

PTL playoffs preview: 7/17/2014 (First Round)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Here's a rundown of what Iowa basketball fans can expect Thursday evening when the opening round of the Prime Time League playoffs gets underway at the North Liberty Community Center:

No. 5 Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company (2-2) vs. No. 4 Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale (2-2)

6 p.m., Roberts Gym

The first playoff game of the evening features a pair of 2-2 teams that ended up on the wrong end of a four-way coin flip and found themselves pitted against one another right away.

Merchants/Iron is coming off a 109-89 loss to Pelling/Comfort Care last week. However, it did beat Autowash/Homes the previous time these teams met on July 3 in Waterloo. In that contest, Merchants/Iron received a 23-point showing from junior guard Mike Gesell, as well as a 17-point effort from incoming freshman forward Dominique Uhl.

As for Autowash/Homes, it's coming off a convincing 98-76 win over Armstrong where junior guard Anthony Clemmons led the way with 26 points after only scoring three points against Merchants/Iron the previous go-around. Autowash/Homes also features junior center Adam Woodbury, who has arguably been the best Iowa player in the PTL this summer. Woodbury is currently averaging 26 points and 11 rebounds per game and has posted double-doubles each of the past two weeks. Against Merchants/Iron, he finished with 24 points and 14 rebounds.

The winner of this contest faces top-seeded Armstrong in the semifinals on July 24.

No. 6 BlendCard (1-3) vs. No. 3 L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare (2-2)

7:30 p.m., Jones Gym

Thursday's playoff nightcap features a BlendCard team that earned its first win of the summer last week and will look to make it two straight. It also features a Pelling/Comfort Care squad with two consecutive wins to its name after starting the summer 0-2.

The big story here will be BlendCard not having the services of sophomore guard Peter Jok for this game. Jok is currently serving an indefinite suspension from all Iowa basketball-related activities following an arrest earlier in the week. His absence will be enormous for BlendCard, as Jok has scored a combined 59 points each of the past two weeks, including 29 points in a 77-75 loss to Pelling/Comfort Care back on July 3 in Waterloo.

As for Pelling/Comfort Care, it will be seeking strong performances yet again from its senior duo of Gabe Olaseni and Josh Oglesby. Against BlendCard two weeks ago, Olaseni posted a double-double of 22 points and 16 rebounds and he's more recently coming off a 33-point showing last week. Meanwhile, Oglesby will look to build off a solid showing last week against Merchants/Iron where he finished with 15 points and six assists.

The winner of this game earns a spot in the PTL semifinals next week and will face second-seeded Culver's/McCurry's, who won the four-way tiebreaker for the first round bye via coin flip following the conclusion of last week's games.

(Exhibition) No. 1 Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (3-1) vs. No. 2 Culver's/McCurry's (2-2)

6 p.m., Jones Gym

Although this game won't actually count, the league's top two seeds will play a pick-up game against each other during the first playoff game taking place Thursday night in North Liberty. Both Armstrong and Culver's/McCurry's are coming off defeats last week despite earning automatic spots in next week's semifinal contests.

When these teams met on July 3 in Waterloo, Armstrong emerged victorious with a 102-78 win. That night (and really, all summer long), it was led by junior forward Jarrod Uthoff, who had a double-double consisting of 29 points and 16 rebounds.

Culver's/McCurry's has lost two straight, but will have the services of senior forward Aaron White on Thursday after he missed last week's game against BlendCard to participate at the LeBron James Skills Academy in Las Vegas. Thursday will also mark the first PTL appearance in North Liberty for incoming sophomore guard Trey Dickerson, who made his only other two appearances the last two weeks when games were being played in Waterloo.

Jok suspended indefinitely

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa sophomore guard Peter Jok has been suspended indefinitely from all basketball-related activities, Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery said in a statement issued by the UI on Tuesday. Jok's suspension comes [after being arrested for the second time in three months Monday on charges of driving his moped](#)

[with a revoked license.](#)

Jok's license was suspended following his first arrest last April on OWI charges. McCaffery's statement comes after Iowa athletics director Gary Barta issued a statement Tuesday morning saying the incident would be further investigated.

"We support Peter, but we're not happy with his recent pattern of behavior," McCaffery said in the statement. "In the interim, Peter will continue to attend summer school classes, participate in community service projects, and take time to work on things internally, as outlined in accordance with the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct. We will monitor his progress and go from there."

A whirlwind summer for White

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

For Aaron White, the basketball player, this summer has been surreal. It started last month after getting his cell phone fixed when he discovered voicemails from Iowa assistant coach Sherman Dillard notifying him of an invite to the Kevin Durant Skills Academy in Washington, D.C. Then came last week, where White went to Las Vegas and participated in the LeBron James Skills Academy. Learning from the NBA's two best players has enabled White to hone his craft on the court.

For Aaron White, the Northeast Ohioan who naturally is a Cleveland sports fan, this summer has been surreal. It started with the aftermath ensuing the Browns' selection of Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel in the NFL Draft and

watching his favorite NFL team go from afterthought to being talked about on ESPN every day.

Then came last week at James' camp. Shortly after meeting James at an opening banquet and then getting an opportunity to play pick-up ball against him, White witnessed like everyone else as James made the decision to return home and play for the Cavaliers following a four-year stint with the Miami Heat.

Just having a chance to play basketball at James' camp would have made the experience memorable enough for White. Doing that and also seeing James return to his favorite NBA team made it even more so.

"Obviously being from Cleveland and having pride in being from there, I'm happy that he's back," White said during a teleconference call Tuesday. "In terms of what it means to the city, it's unbelievable. Cleveland fans are some of the most passionate fans in the country about sports and the way he came back with that letter, talking about how it was more than basketball, how he feels Northeast Ohio is his home and how he owes it to the city to bring a championship back and with his family there, I think it's huge.

"I thought he did it in a tremendous way that brought the hearts of a lot of Cleveland fans back and really, for Ohio in general to be honest. The one thing I've learned being away from home as long as I have is there's a huge pride in being from Northeast Ohio and being from Cleveland. So it's a tremendous thing for him to come back."

As for the camps themselves, White said both had a similar structure in terms of drills and how days were planned since both camps are coordinated by former NBA player John Lucas and Nike EYB. He talked about the various drills that were done – full court 1-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-3, 5-on-5-on-5 where a new group of five players comes in for the previous offensive group if it doesn't score.

Offensively, White was advised to do what got him invited to both camps in the first place. Instead of trying to do too much, he said his mindset was to just stay active at both ends, take open shots when they were there and let the game come to him. Defensively, White found himself guarding all five spots on the floor throughout various points of both camps.

“It’s good to be able to read the offensive player, move your feet and try and get there before they do, try to get to their spot before they do,” White said. “A lot of times, kids go to these camps and think, ‘I need to score the ball. I need to show my offensive game.’ But that’s the ‘do what you do.’”

“What I do is I’m in the right place at the right time and move without the ball and just tried to work on my defense. That’s how I was trying to affect the game because I’m aware there’s a lot more to the game of basketball than just putting the ball in the hole.”

For Aaron White, the Cleveland sports fan, the future looks promising. Not just to his hometown Browns and Cavs, but to the entire city as a whole. For Aaron White, the basketball player, the future appears just as promising now after having these interactions with Durant and James this summer.

The 6-8 forward said his two biggest takeaways from both NBA superstars were the mantra of never being satisfied – whether it’s one singular win during a season or a statistical feat – and knowing the intensity needed to play at a high level. As that pertains to his senior season with Iowa, White knows he’s being counted on to lead the Hawkeyes much like Durant and James lead their respective NBA teams.

“I just got back [Monday] and I was telling Gabe [Olaseni] that we’ve got to really ramp up the intensity,” White said. “Even if it’s chatter on the sideline or whatever it might be, you just got to do everything at a high level because that’s

how the game's played. The game is at a high level and a high pace and you can't turn around and let the game start.

"Even though it's July and even though it's the summer, you got to get that engrained in you. Then it doesn't become something that has to be challenged once the season comes."

Jok faces legal trouble again

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa sophomore guard Peter Jok was arrested on charges of driving while his license was revoked at 11:45 p.m. Monday night in Iowa City. The arrest took place on the corner of N. Madison and Market Streets. According to the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, Jok was pulled over for [having improper rear lights and failure to have a safety flag on his moped](#).

Jok's moped license was revoked after he was arrested on OWI charges last April. His punishment following that incident was in compliance with the UI's Student-Athlete Code of Conduct.

"[Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery] and I were made aware of the incident involving Peter Jok and a moped this morning," Iowa athletics director Gary Barta said in a statement issued Tuesday morning. "We don't yet know all the facts, but we are gathering those today."

"I'm very disappointed to learn about this, especially in light of the fact that Peter had a previous incident earlier this summer. We will work through this in accordance to our Student-Athlete Code of Conduct and team rules."

7/10/2014: PTL round-up

*(*Editor's note: Due to a prior commitment, I wasn't able to travel to Waterloo to cover Thursday's PTL games. I have however obtained copies of the stat sheets from Thursday's games and have a compilation of what took place below. Regular coverage from HawkeyeDrive.com of this summer's Prime Time League will resume next week from North Liberty. Thanks for understanding.)*

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare 109, Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company 89

After starting the summer with two straight defeats, Pelling/Comfort Care managed to reel off its second consecutive win Thursday, defeating Merchants/Iron 109-89. Both teams finished the regular season portion of league play with 2-2 marks as a result of Thursday's outcome.

The story behind Pelling/Comfort Care's success was the Hawkeye senior duo of center Gabe Olaseni and guard Josh Oglesby. Olaseni produced a game-high 33 points on 14-of-22 shooting from the floor and even drained a 3-pointer for good measure in this contest. After not playing last week, Oglesby responded with a 15-point, 6-assist effort that included 3-of-8 shooting from behind the arc.

If there was a positive for Merchants/Iron in defeat, it was once again the play of Mike Gesell. The junior guard scored a team-high 28 points and did so on 11-of-21 shooting. He also contributed four rebounds and four assists. Incoming freshman

forward Dominique Uhl only scored seven points on 3-of-10 shooting, but also managed to tally eight rebounds.

BlendCard 112, Culver's/McCurry's 98

It took four weeks, but BlendCard is no longer winless in the PTL this summer after coming away with a 112-98 victory over a short-handed Culver's/McCurry's squad.

After producing a 30-point performance last week for BlendCard, sophomore guard Peter Jok put on a similar show for the folks at Waterloo's Cedar Valley SportsPlex. He shot 9-of-17 from the floor to finish with 28 points and also contributed with six rebounds and two assists. Even more impressive for BlendCard was that it won Thursday despite not having its top draft pick, Northern Iowa's Seth Tuttle.

As for Culver's/McCurry's, it was minus senior forward Aaron White, who was in Las Vegas taking part in the LeBron James Skills Academy this week. It did however have the services of incoming sophomore guard Trey Dickerson, who made his second PTL appearance of the summer. The junior college transfer had 18 points on 5-of-14 shooting for Culver's/McCurry's and also had five rebounds and four assists in defeat.

Despite Thursday's defeat, Culver's/McCurry's won a four-way tiebreaker at 2-2 via coin flip for the playoffs' No. 2 seed, while BlendCard solidified the No. 6 spot with a 1-3 record.

Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale 98, Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty 76

Armstrong won't enter the PTL playoffs unbeaten after suffering a 98-76 loss to Autowash/Homes on Thursday, its first defeat of the summer. But with a 3-1 mark in league play, Armstrong still managed to secure the playoffs' top seed as a result of the night's earlier outcomes.

Once again, a six-man Armstrong squad Thursday night was led

by junior forward Jarrod Uthoff, who had a dominating 25-point, 19-rebound showing in defeat. But his effort wasn't enough to combat Autowash/Homes' 1-2 punch of juniors Adam Woodbury and Anthony Clemmons.

Playing in just his second PTL game of the summer, Clemmons responded big-time from a 3-point game last week by dropping a game-high 26 points on 11-of-16 shooting. As he has all summer, Woodbury continued to impress himself by contributing with another double-double of 22 points (also on 11-of-16 shooting) and 17 rebounds.

Playoff Schedule:

July 17:

6 p.m. (Roberts Gym) – No. 4 Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale (2-2) **vs. No. 5** Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company (2-2)

*6 p.m. (Jones Gym) – No. 1 Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (3-1) vs. No. 2 Culver's/McCurry's (2-2)**

**Game doesn't count in standings or as part of the playoffs*

7:30 p.m. (Jones Gym) – No. 3 L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare (2-2) **vs. No. 6** BlendCard (1-3)

July 24:

6 p.m. (Roberts Gym) – Autowash/Homes-Merchants/Iron winner **vs. No. 1** Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (3-1)

7:30 p.m. (Roberts Gym) – Pelling/Comfort Care-BlendCard winner **vs. No. 2** Culver's/McCurry's (2-2)

July 31:

7 p.m. (Roberts Gym) – 2014 Prime Time League Championship Game

**All times listed are Central Standard. Be sure to visit HawkeyeDrive.com for ongoing coverage of the Prime Time League this summer.*

PTL preview: 7/10/2014 games

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Here's a rundown of what Iowa basketball fans can expect Thursday evening with the three Prime Time League games taking place at the Cedar Valley SportsPlex in Waterloo:

L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare (1-2) vs. Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company (2-1), 6 p.m.

Both teams are coming off victories last week and in the case of Merchants/Iron, it still has a shot at earning a first-round bye when the playoffs start next week should it win this contest.

Merchants/Iron defeated Autowash/Homes 108-90 last week after receiving a 23-point performance from junior guard Mike Gesell. It also had a 17-point effort from incoming freshman forward Dominique Uhl in the win.

As for Pelling/Comfort Care, it picked up its first win of the summer last week after defeating BlendCard, 77-75. Although it was without the services of senior guard Josh Oglesby, it did have senior center Gabe Olaseni and he delivered with a 22-point, 16-rebound display.

BlendCard (0-3) vs. Culver's/McCurry's (2-1), 6 p.m.

BlendCard still seeks its first win of the summer, while Culver's/McCurry's looks to avoid entering next week's playoffs on a two-game losing streak.

Last week, BlendCard came close to getting a win, but found itself on the wrong end of a 77-75 nail-biter against Pelling/Comfort Care. Despite losing though, it received its best performance of the summer from sophomore guard Peter Jok, who dropped 30 points on 10-of-18 shooting. It also got a 14-point, 7-rebound effort from junior walk-on Okey Ukah.

As for Culver's/McCurry's, it suffered its first loss of the summer last week when it lost to Armstrong, 102-78. It received a double-double from Aaron White, but he will not be playing for Culver's/McCurry's Thursday night as he is currently participating in the LeBron James Skills Academy in Las Vegas. However, Culver's/McCurry's will have incoming sophomore guard Trey Dickerson, who had 16 points and nine assists in his PTL debut last week.

Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale (1-2) vs. Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (3-0), 7:30 p.m.

Armstrong has a chance to secure the top seed in next week's playoffs, while Autowash/Homes looks to avoid entering the playoffs on a two-game losing streak.

Autowash/Homes is coming off a 108-90 loss to Merchants/Iron where it did received another stellar performance from Adam Woodbury. The junior center finished with 24 points and 14 rebounds. On Thursday, Autowash/Homes will be looking for a better shooting performance from junior guard Anthony Clemmons, who only had three points on 1-of-10 shooting last week in what was his first game of the summer.

As for Armstrong, it's coming off a 102-78 win over Culver's/McCurry's where junior forward Jarrod Uthoff was nothing short of dominant. Uthoff shot 13-of-23 from the floor to finish with 29 points and also tallied 16 rebounds in the

victory. How he fares with Woodbury in the paint defending will be intriguing to watch Thursday.

7/3/2014: PTL round-up

*(*Editor's note: Due to a personal matter, I wasn't able to travel to Waterloo to cover Thursday's PTL games and won't be able to next week either. I have however obtained copies of the stat sheets from Thursday's games and have a compilation of what took place below. My plan right now is to be back in North Liberty on July 17. Thanks for understanding.)*

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company 108, Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale 90

Merchants/Iron picked up its second victory of the summer thanks in large part to the second half performance of junior guard Mike Gesell. The South Sioux City, Neb., native finished with 23 points on 9-of-21 shooting, with 20 of those points coming during the second half. Merchants/Iron also received a 17-point outing from incoming freshman forward Dominique Uhl in the win.

Among the bright spots once again for Autowash/Homes was junior center Adam Woodbury, who posted a double-double Thursday of 24 points on 9-of-13 shooting and 14 rebounds. Through three games this summer, Woodbury is averaging 25.7 points and 10.7 rebounds per contest. One other item of note for Autowash/Homes was the return of junior guard Anthony Clemmons to the lineup Thursday. In his first PTL game of the

summer, Clemmons had three points on 1-of-10 shooting, along with seven rebounds and four assists.

Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty 102, Culver's/McCurry's 78

In the battle of undefeated teams, it was Armstrong remaining unbeaten after a convincing 102-78 win over Culver's/McCurry's.

Armstrong received a trio of 20-plus point performances Thursday, one of which came from junior Jarrod Uthoff. The 6-8 forward had a game-high 29 points on 13-of-23 shooting and also hauled in 16 boards to lead Armstrong to the win.

On the losing end, senior forward Aaron White had a double-double of 20 points on 8-of-22 shooting and 12 rebounds. The big story for Culver's/McCurry's, however, was the PTL debut of incoming sophomore guard Trey Dickerson. The junior college transfer finished with 16 points on 7-of-18 shooting and also compiled nine assists in defeat.

L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare 77, BlendCard 75

Pelling/Comfort Care picked up its first win of the summer Thursday in beating BlendCard 77-75.

The story for the victors was senior center Gabe Olaseni. The PTL's top overall pick had 22 points on 10-of-17 shooting Thursday and also pulled down 16 rebounds to lead the charge. Pelling/Comfort Care managed to win despite not having senior guard Josh Oglesby available Thursday.

BlendCard is now the league's only winless squad at 0-3. But it had a bright spot in sophomore guard Peter Jok, who played his best game of the summer Thursday with 30 points on 10-of-18 shooting. In addition, junior walk-on Okey Ukah added 14 points and also hauled down seven rebounds.

PTL preview: 7/3/2014 games

By Brendan Stiles

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Here's a rundown of what Iowa basketball fans can expect Thursday evening with the three Prime Time League games taking place at the Cedar Valley SportsPlex in Waterloo:

Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale (1-1) vs. Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company (1-1), 6 p.m.

Junior center Adam Woodbury will be looking to lead his Autowash/Homes squad to a second consecutive win Thursday when it plays Merchants/Iron. Two weeks in, Woodbury has been the most consistent Hawkeye player in the PTL.

In his team's 111-109 win over Pelling/Comfort Care last week in North Liberty, the 7-1 center finished with 26 points and nine rebounds, and this followed up a game where he had 27 points and nine boards. Junior guard Anthony Clemmons is also expected to be in the Autowash/Homes lineup Thursday after missing the first two games of the summer being back in his home state of Michigan.

As for Merchants/Iron, junior guard Mike Gesell was among the team's bright spots last week in a 105-90 loss to Culver's/McCurry's after finishing with 25 points on 10-of-20 shooting. Incoming freshman forward Dominique Uhl had nine points and six rebounds in defeat.

Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (2-0) vs. Culver's/McCurry's (2-0), 6 p.m.

The winner of this contest will have the inside track to the

league's top playoff seed as both Armstrong and Culver's/McCurry's enter this game unbeaten.

Armstrong is coming off an 87-78 win over BlendCard where it dominated the glass with a 53-27 rebounding edge. Fourteen of those boards came courtesy of junior forward Jarrod Uthoff, who also had 19 points on 8-of-21 shooting. Armstrong is still expected to be without the services of incoming freshman guard Brady Ellingson on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Culver's/McCurry's had a fortunate surprise last week with senior forward Aaron White suiting up before going to Washington, D.C., for Kevin Durant's Nike Skills Academy. He played little in the second half of its 105-90 win over Merchants/Iron, but White did have 15 points and nine rebounds. Tonight also marks the PTL debut of incoming sophomore guard Trey Dickerson, who will be playing alongside White on Culver's/McCurry's this summer.

L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare (0-2) vs. BlendCard (0-2), 7:30 p.m.

One team will get its first win of the summer Thursday while the other falls to dead last at 0-3.

Pelling/Comfort Care is coming off a nail-biting 111-109 defeat to Autowash/Homes last week. In that game, it received a pair of 17-point performances from its senior duo of Gabe Olaseni and Josh Oglesby. Olaseni also finished with six rebounds and shot 8-of-16 from the floor, while Oglesby finished 5-of-12 shooting.

BlendCard will desperately be seeking a big-time performance from sophomore guard Peter Jok, who has had a quiet summer thus far after leading the PTL in scoring last year. In its 87-78 loss to Armstrong last week, Jok finished with 15 points on 5-of-13 shooting.

COMMENTARY: Iowa's next B1G chapter (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

On Tuesday, the next chapter in a dramatic change of landscape in college sports commences. The Big Ten, which expanded to 12 institutions in 2011, will increase by two more when Maryland and Rutgers become official conference members.

From the Big Ten's perspective, these additions mark a new beginning of sorts. Anyone associated with the conference's long-standing members will have to re-evaluate their school's ideals. By expanding to the Eastern shore, the Big Ten will now have more of a national brand than ever before and this national branding goes beyond football.

But let's talk football since that's the biggest moneymaker at most of the Big Ten's institutions. Individually speaking, neither Maryland nor Rutgers will directly impact Iowa football. Neither team's in the Hawkeyes' division and once the league schedule increases to nine games in 2016, both teams will scarcely appear on Iowa's schedule. If anything, the impact these two additions have on Iowa has more to do with the entire conference realigning its divisions by geography and allowing the Hawkeyes to play more of their natural conference rivals on an annual basis. On that front, it's a good thing.

But one could make the argument the arrivals of Maryland and Rutgers will indirectly have an enormous impact on Iowa going forward. Again, the Big Ten is building more of a national

brand, which means there's going to be more attention placed on schools like Iowa than ever before.

Some (not all) of what would be considered "success" when it comes to Iowa football is no longer going to be the case. Consistently being an 8-win team that annually goes to bowl games and has an enormous fan following to such games isn't going to matter like it once did. It might still matter to people in Iowa and many who are and have always been Hawkeye fans. But it's not going to tip the scale nationally.

Here's the other (perhaps greater) issue Iowa and its conference brethren will face – the role a 4-team college football playoff will now have on society. Just going to bowl games won't matter like it did before. Iowa's not only competing against other Big Ten teams. It's essentially competing against everybody from all of the major conferences as well.

Consider this scenario: Iowa wins the Big Ten in 2014, but isn't part of the 4-team playoff because the teams that win the ACC, Big 12, Pac-12 and SEC all finish higher in the polls and get selected instead. Now throw in that the Rose Bowl is one of the semifinal games this season and the Big Ten champion gets sent instead to the Cotton, Fiesta or Peach Bowls. Then let's say over the following 11 years (there's a 12-year agreement with the current format), Iowa has mostly winning seasons, but not a single conference championship or playoff appearance to its name.

If you're an Iowa fan, how would you feel knowing that in one of the few instances where everything could fall into place for the Hawkeyes to win the Big Ten, they still get considered an afterthought nationally because they weren't the national champion or even one of the other three playoff participants?

Sure, local interest would be sky-high. That will never change regardless of year. But let's tie this back to the Big Ten

wanting to become more national. If you're not part of the biggest stage, then why is anyone in a place like New York City or Washington, D.C. suddenly going to care?

This already happens in basketball, which is why I don't foresee adaptation being as big a concern there. The NCAA Tournament already exists. In Iowa, last year's Hawkeyes are known for reaching the tourney for the first time in eight years. Outside of Iowa, the Hawkeyes are known for losing "the play-in game." Unless the Hawkeyes start frequently appearing in more tournaments and put themselves in position to reach bigger stages like the Sweet 16, Elite Eight or even the Final Four, that stigma's going to stick. If this seems obvious, that's because it is and it will be in football, too.

As crazy as this might sound, the best thing that could happen to Iowa football is if sometime in the next 10 years, the NCAA allows teams to play 13 regular season games excluding conference championships, bowls and playoff games. Until that day comes, the Hawkeyes might be hamstrung if strength of non-conference schedule is going to be any type of factor in playoff team selection.

Iowa wants seven games at Kinnick Stadium every season and wants to play Iowa State every season. When the Big Ten goes to nine league games in 2016, the Hawkeyes are going to basically be left with two non-conference games to fill and they're going to require both of them be played at Kinnick Stadium. No home-and-homes with a team like Pitt or playing a game at Soldier Field against Northern Illinois like in 2012 would be happening.

Unless the Big Ten bulks up, future schedules won't be getting stronger. Even if the Big Ten bulks up, it appears inevitable that all five major conferences will start playing nine league games. In other words, if schedules remain at 12 games for the foreseeable future, Iowa may have to make some sacrifices down the road if it wants to be in a realistic position to reap the

reward of being part of a national brand such as the Big Ten.

Sure, Iowa might not be crossing paths in a Big Ten Championship Game with either Maryland or Rutgers anytime soon. But between those two programs now joining the Big Ten and how the 4-team college football playoff is going to determine success both on the field and off the field with name recognition and national appeal, it's safe to say the Hawkeyes are at a crossroads and how they handle this now will dramatically effect their future long term.

Marble becomes member of Magic

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Former Iowa guard Devyn Marble will be a member of the Orlando Magic after being taken in the second round of the 2014 NBA Draft on Thursday. Marble was selected 56th overall by the Nuggets, but Denver made the pick for Orlando as part of a trade where the Nuggets acquired Arron Afflalo.

Marble is the first Hawkeye player drafted by a NBA team since 2007 when Adam Haluska was chosen 43rd overall by the then-New Orleans Hornets. As a senior last season, Marble led Iowa in scoring with an average of 17 points per contest and was named first-team all-Big Ten.

Watching the draft in his hometown of Southfield, Mich., with about 20-25 family and friends – including Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery and his staff – on Thursday, Marble called the

moment “surreal” when his agent, former Iowa guard B.J. Armstrong, had notified him that he was Orlando bound.

“At first, I was just happy and just blessed to have been taken off the board and I think the Orlando Magic is a great organization for me,” Marble said during a teleconference late Thursday night. “They’ve got some young guys with talent and I think it’s a good spot for me, to be honest.”

Marble also went on to say how the moment was more emotional for him than even he thought it would end up being. He mentioned how he felt confident about being picked, even as the draft got near the very end where Marble ended up going.

“I’m not even an emotional guy, but I was just happy to come this far,” Marble said. “So much hard work was put into it. I don’t think people truly understand how hard I had to work to get to where I’m at today. So I think just all of that poured out at once.”

The trade in which Orlando acquired the pick used to select Marble was just completed Thursday. Because the Magic didn’t originally have a late second round selection, Marble never actually took part in a workout with Orlando. He did however acknowledge that despite not working out for the Magic that it had interest in him.

Earlier in the draft, Orlando ended up with point guard Elfrid Payton out of Louisiana-Lafayette. With that in mind, Marble said he would likely be used as a wing player for the Magic after playing both point and off-guard during his four-year career with the Hawkeyes.

“That’s what most teams felt like my position was, a 2 or 3,” Marble said. “Especially as a 2 and then as I get stronger as a 3 also. So they’re probably going to use my versatility more as a wing player than a point guard.”

As Marble looks forward to the next chapter in his life, which

starts Friday with an introductory press conference in Orlando, he also took time Thursday to recognize the last four years spent as a Hawkeye. He said McCaffery told him how proud he was of what Marble had accomplished. Marble also believes his selection into the NBA will create an impact on the current Iowa program as it moves on without him.

“I think prospects and recruits are going to look at Coach McCaffery and see that he does have a formula to put players into the draft,” Marble said. “Also looking at Aaron White, going to the [Kevin] Durant camp is very helpful also. I think it will really help him moving forward with his recruiting and getting the team together that he wants.”