

No more Payne; Washpun will visit Hawkeyes

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Wes Washpun Sweepstakes are heating up.

Iowa Coach Fran McCaffery, in search of backcourt help with Cully Payne leaving, plans to meet with Washpun Thursday at his office in Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

New Tennessee Coach Cuonzo Martin, who offered Washpun a scholarship to Missouri State, has promised to call back this week to discuss what's happening at Tennessee.

Meanwhile, other coaches from around the country are calling as well.

Suddenly, the 6-foot-1 point guard from Cedar Rapids Washington appears to be in demand.

Although indications were that Iowa has offered him a scholarship, Washpun said Tuesday morning that he doesn't know if the Hawkeyes will offer him one.

"I don't know yet," he said Tuesday morning. "I talked to Fran last night ... so I just have to wait and see what happens."

Jamie Johnson, Washpun's AAU coach, told the Metro Sports Report that Washpun has been offered a scholarship by Iowa.

Payne, who missed most of the 2010-11 season with an injury, plans to transfer to another school. That leaves Bryce Cartwright as the only experienced point guard at Iowa.

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"Of course, that's good news for me, obviously, because I'm a backcourt player, but I don't know yet," Washpun said. "We'll just have to wait and see. I'm actually going down there on Thursday to talk with Coach McCaffery in his office."

Tennessee Coach Martin apparently is in the race as well.

"I talked to him on Saturday," Washpun said. "He said he'd be getting back to me earlier this week."

Frank Haith, the new coach at Missouri, inquired about Washpun while he was still the head coach at Miami (Fla.), but now has changed schools. "I haven't heard anything from him," Washpun remarked. "We'll just have to wait and see."

Washpun is optimistic about the recent developments. "I feel pretty good about them," he said.

The spring signing date is Wednesday, April 13. Washpun said he plans to make a decision by then, "at the latest."

Washpun averaged 18 points, 5.4 rebounds, 4.0 assists, 3.4 steals and 2.1 blocked shots for Cedar Rapids Washington this season and helped the Warriors make the Class 4A state playoffs.