

Uthoff says Iowa, ISU on restricted list

Written by Jim Ecker
Saturday, 14 April 2012 12:30 -

Jarrold Uthoff said Saturday that he liked just about everything at the University of Wisconsin.

He liked the coaches, liked the sellout crowds at the Kohl Center and really liked going with the Badgers to the NCAA basketball tournament, even though he was being redshirted and couldn't play.

"It was a good time," he said about his first year at Wisconsin. "It was an exciting time, especially the tournament and especially going to the Sweet 16."

As it turns out, Uthoff's first year with the Badgers will also be his last. He met with Coach Bo Ryan this past week and has decided to transfer.

"It just wasn't a good fit for me basketball-wise, not nearly as good a fit as I thought it would be," he told the Metro Sports Report in a telephone interview from Madison, Wis.

Uthoff, who starred at Cedar Rapids Jefferson, said he didn't feel entirely comfortable as a 4-man (power forward) in Wisconsin's "Swing Offense," in terms of his assignments. He said he wasn't comfortable with "where they want to utilize me and the skill set it requires to play here."

Uthoff is a lanky 6-foot-8 forward who weighs about 205 pounds, roughly 15 or 20 pounds more than when he enrolled at Wisconsin last summer. He was more of a perimeter player in high school with a good shot and ballhandling skills, rather than a power forward who played near the basket.

Uthoff averaged 26.2 points, 11.2 rebounds and 3.2 blocked shots at Jefferson during the 2010-11 season when he was named Iowa's "Mr. Basketball" and the Gatorade Player of the Year.

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Uthoff said he did not make a spur-of-the-moment decision to leave Wisconsin.

"I've thought about it for several months," he said. "When I went in to talk to Coach Ryan (this past week) is when I finally decided."

Uthoff declined to disclose details of his meeting with Ryan, saying it was a confidential conversation. He also met with Wisconsin assistant coach Gary Close, who recruited Uthoff for the Badgers.

Uthoff was granted a release from his scholarship from Wisconsin, but with restrictions that include all the other Big Ten schools, Iowa State and Marquette.

"I can't contact any Big Ten coaches. I can still go there (to a Big Ten school), but I'd have to pay for my own education, at least for the first year," he said.

He'd face a similar situation at Iowa State or Marquette.

"I'm very confident I can find a good fit for me. We'll see what happens in the next few weeks or however long it takes to decide," he said. "I want to stay close to home, mainly schools in the midwest."

Uthoff declined to comment on the possibility of moving to the University of Northern Iowa or Creighton, two midwest schools that might make sense. "I'm still looking at different schools," he remarked.

Uthoff will have to take another redshirt season in 2012-13 if he transfers to another NCAA Division I school. He could play right away if he transfers to a junior college, but he's not leaning in that direction.

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"I'm not entirely sure if I want to go to a junior college or not," he said. "I'm not sure about that idea, because I think it would be good to get familiar with the program (at another Division I college) for an entire year before playing."

The news broke on Thursday that Uthoff would be leaving Wisconsin, setting off a whirlwind of phone calls and questions.

"It's been pretty hectic," he said. "I've had a lot of positive encouragement, people saying 'the best of luck' and wishing me the best."

Uthoff plans to finish the current semester at Wisconsin and transfer in good academic standing. He'll have three years of eligibility at his new school, beginning with the 2013-14 campaign.

Uthoff said he's enjoyed his time at Wisconsin, but is confident it's time to leave. He said he's become a better player after spending one year with the Badgers.

"Yes I am," he said. "My overall game is better."