

Uthoff visits ISU and Iowa, but not ready to decide

Written by Jim Ecker
Sunday, 06 May 2012 20:55 -

arrod Uthoff enjoyed his visit to Iowa State last week as he continues to search for a new college basketball team, but it's becoming a recurring theme for the 6-foot-8 forward.

He enjoyed his official visit to Creighton two weeks ago and he also enjoyed poking around Iowa City on Saturday, just a day after he finished his trip to Ames.

He also imagines he'll enjoy his trips to Marquette and possibly Florida, and that's the rub. What does he do if he likes them all?

It could be a tough decision as he looks for a comfortable place to land after deciding to leave the University of Wisconsin basketball team after one year.

"Yeah, it will be tough. It definitely will be," he said Sunday night. "It won't come easy."

There were unofficial rumblings over the weekend that Uthoff, the 2011 Mr. Basketball from Cedar Rapids Jefferson, might be leaning toward the Iowa Hawkeyes, but he scotched those rumors.

"As of right now I'm not leaning one way or the other," he maintained.

But Uthoff confirmed the Hawkeyes are still a strong possibility. "Definitely," he said. "They're definitely in the picture."

Uthoff visited with Iowa State Coach Fred Hoiberg and the Cyclones on Thursday and Friday, his second official visit on the re-recruiting trail after his year at Wisconsin did not pan out.

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"I liked it," he said. "I like the way Coach Hoiberg coaches and I think it would be a pretty good fit.

"I like the way they space the floor and give the players the ability to create. It's almost the opposite of Wisconsin. Wisconsin's is more of a restricted offense and a system. Iowa State is a pretty open system."

Uthoff played some one-on-one basketball with ISU's Melvin Ejim, Chris Babb, Will Clyburn and Bubu Palo during his visit to Ames. He knows Hoiberg has rebuilt the Cyclones with Division I transfers, but said it won't be a major factor in his ultimate decision because he's confident he'll get a fair shake wherever he goes.

Uthoff was a young high school kid when he made his first round of college visits several years ago, perhaps a little nervous and a little naive. He's still young after spending just one year at Wisconsin, but feels he's better equipped to handle the process now.

"Oh, definitely," he said. "I have a lot more detailed questions I can ask and get a better understanding of the program. Once you've gone through the college system one year, no matter what team it is, you have a better understanding of the questions you need to ask and stuff like that."

Uthoff and his girlfriend made an informal trip to Iowa City on Saturday. The Hawkeyes and all the other Big Ten schools are on the "restricted" list and cannot speak directly to Uthoff, thanks to Wisconsin Coach Bo Ryan and the Badgers, but he can see things for himself and receive messages from third parties.

"I can't talk to any of the players or any of the coaches there," he confirmed.

Uthoff and his girlfriend got something to eat in Iowa City and played a round of golf at Finkbine, the UI course. "She's actually a golfer. She just got me started," he said.

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Uthoff said he might visit Marquette later this week or perhaps after the school year ends at Wisconsin on May 19. He's also thinking about a trip to the University of Florida, but no trips have been finalized to either place. He also said he might visit Indiana, Virginia or elsewhere.

Uthoff said it probably will be weeks, rather than a few days, before he makes a final decision. He's in no rush and wants to get it right. He wants to finish all his visits before picking a winner.

"Yeah, most likely," he said.