

## **Uthoff learns lessons at NeXt All-American Classic**

Written by Jim Ecker

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HOFFMAN ESTATES, Ill. - Jarrod Uthoff is just 17 years old and still growing.

That was easy to forget this season when the 6-foot-8 senior from Cedar Rapids Jefferson was named Iowa's Mr. Basketball and the Gatorade Player of the Year.

Uthoff was one of the youngest, skinniest and most unselfish players on the court Sunday afternoon at the NeXt All-American Classic at the Sears Centre Arena in the northwest Chicago suburbs.

He held his own in the all-star game that featured 20 college-bound seniors, but also learned a few things.

"These guys are so much bigger than me, and stronger than me," Uthoff said after scoring 10 points and grabbing three rebounds. "I really need to get a lot stronger, but I've said that before. This really shows it."

Uthoff is tall enough, although he's still growing and could reach 6-10, but he'll need more weight and more strength to succeed at the University of Wisconsin.

He currently weighs 190 pounds and didn't have the muscle to bang with the big bodies in the Sears Centre. "There were a lot of great players out there," he said.

Uthoff scored his 10 points away from the basket. He swished two 3-pointers and hit all four of his free throws, but had no luck around the bucket.

Uthoff's team lost in overtime, 109-100, in a dunk-fest before a sparse crowd of perhaps 300 fans. Uthoff played for the "Got Now" team against the "Got Next" squad.

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"It was really fun," he said. "I enjoyed every minute of it."

The players in this game are headed to St. John's, Arizona State, DePaul, Marquette, Virginia Tech, Northwestern, Maryland, Minnesota, the College of Charleston, Illinois, Louisville and Wisconsin. Two of Uthoff's future Wisconsin teammates, 7-foot Frank Kaminsky of Lisle, Ill. and 6-foot-guard George Marshall of Chicago, also played in the game.

Uthoff won't turn 18 until May 19, and a few weeks later he'll report to Madison, Wis., for summer school and a heavy regimen of weightlifting and conditioning. He's hoping to get stronger by the time basketball practice starts in October.

"I'm hoping to get to at least 200, 205 by then," he said.

Wisconsin graduates six seniors, so there could be playing time for freshmen, but Uthoff doesn't know if he'll play this season or take a redshirt year to develop.

"That all depends on how much stronger I get, and if I'm ready to play by November," he said. "If I'm ready to play, then I won't redshirt. If I need another year to get stronger, then I will redshirt. I hope to be playing in November."

Jefferson Coach Stu Ordman thinks Uthoff will be a good fit with Coach Bo Ryan and the Badgers.

"A system where the players help each other get open, and the bigs can step out and shoot 3s as well as post up," said Ordman, who attended Sunday's game. "Everybody is expected to play defense. That's a good system for Jarrod."

"Jarrod has a great attitude and a good work ethic," said Ordman. "That will help him be

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successful."

The all-stars did not play a lot of defense Sunday, but that's not unusual for an all-star game. Unofficially, there were 29 dunks in the 43-minute contest, and once a player passed the ball he was unlikely to get it back on that possession.

"That's OK," said Uthoff, who passed the ball more than he shot it. "It was fun, because nothing was riding on it. It was just go out there and have fun."

Twelve players scored in double figures. Nnanna Ekwu, a 6-10 center who will play at Illinois, led all scorers with 20 points. Nick Faust, a 6-6 guard who is headed to Maryland, netted 19.

GOT NOW (100): Adjehi Baru 7 2-2 16, David Sobolewski 0 0-2 0, George Marshall 0 0-0 0, Joe Coleman 4 0-0 8, Martin Breunig 3 0-2 6, Nick Faust 5 7-10 19, Rashawn McElrath 6 0-0 13, Jarrod Uthoff 2 4-4 10, Nnanna Ekwu 10 0-3 20, Zach Price 3 2-3 8. Totals 40 15-26 100.

GOT NEXT (109): Jahii Carson 4 4-5 12, Macari Brooks 5 3-6 14, Phil Greene 4 1-2 9, Norvel Pelle 5 0-2 10, Juan Anderson 2 2-2 6, Dorian Finney-Smith 6 4-5 16, Jamie Crockett 5 1-2 11, Ben McLemore 6 1-2 14, Jamari Traylor 4 3-4 11, Frank Kaminsky 2 2-6 6. Totals 43 21-36 109.

Halftime - Got Now 49, Got Next 36. Regulation - Got Now 95, Got Next 95. 3-point goals - Got Now 5 (Uthoff 2, Faust 2, McElrath), Got Next 2 (Brooks, McLemore).