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NCAA tournament: Former Brighton star will miss Harvard's NCAA game in SLC because of LDS mission

By Randy Hollis, Deseret News

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Summary

Former Brighton High star Corbin Miller helped Harvard University end a 66-year NCAA tourney drought last year. But as the Crimson prepare for their 2013 NCAA opener in Salt Lake City, Miller will miss the game as he serves an LDS mission in Mexico.

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SALT LAKE CITY — A year ago, as a freshman, former Brighton High School star Corbin Miller did a great job serving as a backup point guard on a Harvard University men's basketball team that reached the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1946.

A year later, Harvard has again earned an invitation to the NCAA's Big Dance. And this time, the Crimson have traveled all the way from Cambridge, Mass., to play their March Madness opener in what is essentially Miller's backyard — EnergySolutions Arena.

But when 14th-seeded Harvard (19-9) takes the court against third-seeded New Mexico (29-5) tonight at 7:50 p.m., Miller won't be anywhere near the arena.

Instead, he'll be busy doing his duty a little further south — serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Puebla, Mexico.

"Corbin, we miss him, and there is no question about it," Harvard coach Tommy Amaker said Wednesday as his team prepared to face the powerful Mountain West Conference champion Lobos in tonight's opening-day nightcap at ESA.

"Every time I have a chance to communicate and email with him, believe me, I say that to him. His family and I'm sure a lot of his family and friends will be here for our game (tonight).

"He was an outstanding player for us last year," Amaker said of Miller, a 6-foot-2 sharpshooter who averaged around four points per game for the Ivy League champs in 2012, when they finally ended a 66-year NCAA tourney drought. "As fate would have it, we are here in his hometown, so to speak, to have an NCAA tournament game and he's not able to be here with us."

Of course, Harvard's coaching staff knew that Miller had made serving a mission his main commitment when they were recruiting him out of Brighton High a couple of years ago.

"It's really who I am," Miller told Jack McCluskey of [ESPN.com](#), "the things that I'll be doing and being able to go out and serve other people and share a message that brings joy to my life. It's always just been something that's very important to me and a big part of my life."

Despite the prospect of losing the sharpshooting guard to church service for two years, though, coach Amaker still wanted the young man to come play for the Crimson.

And though they wish he was here for what promises to be a very tough game tonight against the Lobos, they're anxious to see what he can do once he returns to the program next year.

"We certainly miss him. We're looking forward to having him back," Amaker said. "He's been a terrific addition to our basketball program. He was an outstanding shooter and scorer for us last year as a freshman, and I think he's going to continue to do really, really neat things for Harvard."

His teammates agree.

"He sent us a couple of emails that Coach posted in the locker room," Harvard junior guard Laurent Rivard said. "So it's always good to have news from him. He's doing well.

"We invited his parents to come to the game (tonight), so they are going to be here and support us."

"We can't wait to get him back because he's definitely a great addition to our team and a great shooter," said sophomore swingman Wesley Saunders. "Whenever he gets back, we're going to accept him back with open arms."

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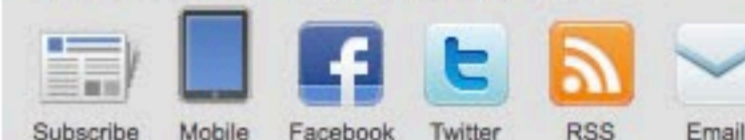
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