

Nelly Junior Joseph (Iona) 6'9" 230 PF/C (Film 12/19/20 vs. Rider)

Out of the NBA Academy in Africa the freshmen big man is clearly above this league in terms of size and athleticism. On film his arms are long and chiseled. He is a good athlete that will just improve over time as he learns the game of basketball and how to use his body.

On offense he is clearly raw. He is not fluid with the ball. Most of his game is stiff and his footwork is questionable right now. He finished with 4 turnovers but I would not have been surprised if he got called for a couple traveling calls too. Nelly finished with 13 points on 5/7 shooting and 3 offensive rebounds. He had a good game and was efficient but he has so much room for growth. I don't know when he started playing but it seems as if it was not too long ago. He had one move where he sealed after he set an off ball screen. When he caught it he faced the basket, jabbed to his left, went right and spun back to his left with a right handed floater. It was definitely his most impressive offensive play of the night. He scored most of his baskets just off catching passes around the rim and finishing. He is extremely raw right now and has little skill but has the tools to improve. He is shooting 64% from the free throw line and has not attempted a three this season. His shot did not look terrible, I believe he may be able to develop a decent shot before he leaves.

On defense he just used his athleticism and size to make up for being late or for poor technique throughout the game. A couple times he just lost his man and was able to still recover and block his shot. Nelly was able to show the ability to defend in the PnR and I believe when he starts to really learn how to defend he will be fine. He has a lot of potential on this side of the floor as he learns the game and how to really use his body. On the glass he would end up in a terrible position for the rebound and still end up with the ball. He was just physically too much for Rider. The fact that he was not only able to hold his own but positively impact the game was very impressive.

In terms of NBA potential he is far away. Currently, he needs to improve at just about every skill in the game. Nelly needs to learn the game of basketball and just continue to work on his craft over time. He is a tremendous athlete and in the MAAC he could end up being the best player in the conference down the road. I am excited to see him develop under Coach Pitino at Iona and believe him getting the chance to play as a freshmen will help him significantly down the road.