

Written by
Sunday, 18 August 2013 18:14 -



UPDATE: See bottom of this article for game 2 commentary/results.

For the first time since March 2013, [Marcin Gortat](#) was able to take the court to lead Poland to a victory in a warmup game for Eurobasket 2013. That he was even able to take the court in a competitive basketball game was a huge step forward in Gortat's rehab.

Gortat scored 20 points of Poland's 66 points, including 3 dunks among 9 of 12 field goals. He also pulled down 5 rebounds and committed 4 turnovers in 21 minutes.

According to [@SunsNationPL](#), a polish site for Suns fans, [Gortat "made a huge difference on both ends of the floor."](#)

Regarding the foot recovery, [@SunsNationPL](#) tweeted that Gortat "didn't show any signs of the pain in his foot. Very positive both for the Polish team and the Suns."

This must be a big relief for Gortat more than anyone.

The injury

Gortat missed the last 21 games of the [Phoenix Suns](#) season after [suffering a mid-foot Lisfranc injury on March 6, 2013](#)

. His rehab and healing process has been slow. After an initial diagnosis of 3-4 week recovery, Gortat was barely walking freely before the Suns season ended five weeks later.

After the season he took a few weeks off, and then began preparing to represent Poland in Eurobasket 2013. [Jared Dudley](#) recently visited Gortat in Poland and tweeted several times about how Gortat is the clear face of Polish basketball. Gortat himself said he feels a lot of pressure - both from himself and his country - to play year-round for the NBA and Poland.

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The continuing pain

Gortat had said he felt "better and better" and that "the rehabilitation is going well, but I still feel the pain of the foot, even during training."

[Of the return to Phoenix for a checkup before playing competitively](#) , Gortat said "I have to make sure that I will be healthy for the whole [NBA] season."

Frankly, no matter what your obligation is to your country, your first responsibility is to the team that is paying you \$8 million dollars to compete in the U.S.

[In further comments to Eurobasket 2013 reporters](#) , Gortat laid fears to rest even before hopping stepping on the plane.

"I told my colleagues on the national team, that this is not not a holiday trip," the 29-year-old center explained.

"I'm going there [to the USA] to train normally, but also to meet with the physio-therapists of the Phoenix Suns.

"It was a serious injury and it has been slow to heal.

"The worst thing is that I cannot rest, especially at a time when I know I should train hard.

"I realize that sometimes you have to give the leg some rest, and I'm running in the gym, on the floor, doing more exercise and even prolong my workouts."

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Cleared to play

Last week, Gortat was [as cleared to play basketball](#) by the Suns doctors, despite the lingering pain. After spending a few days in Orlando, he returned to Poland over the weekend and played today. Very well, in fact.

Good for everyone - Marcin, the Suns and Poland.

Updates

First game (8/18 vs. Belgium) - 20 pts, 5 rebounds in 66-52 win

(see notes above in this story)

Second game (8/19 vs. Italy) - 18 pts, 5 rebounds in 82-79 win

Comments from @SunsNationPL:

"Gortat with another good game, but different than yesterday. Italian team used double teaming but Marcin adjusted well and showed some great low-post moves (including Dream Shake and a couple and-1s). In the fourth, Gortat made some important buckets and showed leadership. Fouled out with 15 seconds left."