



Freshman Alec Burks says he believes in new coach Tad Boyle.  
Photo Courtesy: Ray Miller



04/21/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

## Burks' Big Decision: He's Still A Buff

**BOULDER** - University of Colorado basketball fans can exhale; Alec Burks is staying put.

The Big 12 Conference's freshman of the year said Wednesday he was angry and frustrated last week when he floated the possibility of transferring if CU Associate Head Coach Steve McClain was not promoted to succeed Jeff Bzdelik.

That didn't happen. Tad Boyle, formerly of Northern Colorado, was introduced Monday as the Buffaloes' 18th head hoops coach, and Burks said afterwards he would "explore my options."

But less than 48 hours later, Burks had moved solidly into Boyles' corner.

"He told me his plan, I liked it and I like him . . . I'm putting all of my trust in him," Burks said. "He said we were going to play hard, play fast and go all out to win - and I believe in that."

Burks, whose 512 points made him the first CU freshman to surpass 500, said his mother also played a pivotal role in his decision: "She agreed that the best thing for me was to stay here . . . I can

see that, too. I like it a lot out here."

The Grandview, Mo., product figures to be an integral part of a CU team that will enter the 2010-11 season with high expectations. After finishing a game below .500 overall (15-16) and 6-10 in the Big 12 (eighth place) this season, the Buffs have their sights on an NCAA Tournament berth next season. CU's two most recent NCAA appearances came in 2003 and 1997.

Envisioning an NBA career, Burks said transferring to another Division I program and having to sit out a season per NCAA transfer rules didn't make sense.

"That's one of the things it came down to, too," he said. "My mom said the worst thing I could have done was act out of frustration . . . I'm over that now.

"When I said all that I was just mad that coach McClain didn't get it. I was always pretty close to him, but I know I'm going to get close to coach Boyle, too."

On Monday, when asked about the Burks scenario, Boyle said all he wanted the athletic 6-foot-6 guard to do was "try and get to know me - just make the effort to get to know me. And after you've come to know me a little bit, then you have to make the decision that is best for you . . .

"But I think with the year he had and the kind of career that's in front of him, I want to help him continue to grow and make him a better player."

Burks, who averaged 17.1 points a game was only the second CU freshman to lead the team in rebounding (5.0), said Boyle told the Buffs Wednesday that his style of play would be "faster, more up tempo and allow us to show more athleticism . . . I'm all about that."

Chief among his off-season goals is putting on at least 10 pounds. He finished his freshman season weighing about 185. A bigger, faster, stronger Burks should be a boon for Boyle's first Buffs team.

"I want to get stronger, faster and more explosive," he said. "I'm still very young; I know I can put on some more weight."

But even as a wiry first-year player in the Big 12, Burks was impressive. His 17.1 points a game average this season led all Big 12 freshmen and placed him fourth nationally. He was second in the conference in rebounding and fourth in steals.

Burks scored 20 or more points in eight games and led CU in scoring in 12 games and in rebounding in 14 games. He made the *Basketball Times* first-team All-America freshman team and was a second-team freshman All-America selection by *The Sporting News*.

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# Burks not bolting from Buffs

## Big 12 Freshman of Year supports new coach Boyle

**By Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 04/21/2010 07:42:43 PM MDT

Tad Boyle has already won a huge recruiting battle.

Within 48 hours of being introduced as Colorado's new head coach, Boyle solidified Alec Burks' commitment to the program after flying to Grandview, Mo., to meet with the gifted guard's parents.

Burks was upset that Steve McClain, the CU associate head coach under Jeff Bzdelik, was not hired on Monday. But after meeting with Boyle and also talking the situation over with his mom, the reigning Big 12 Freshman of the Year has backed off on talk of exploring options at another school.

"(Boyle) told me his plan, I liked it, and I like him," Burks said in a release prepared by CU. "I'm putting all of my trust in him. He said we were going to play hard, play fast and go all out to win. And I believe in that. ...

"When I said all that, I was just mad that coach McClain didn't get it. I was always pretty close to him, but I know I'm going to get close to coach Boyle, too."

McClain has also turned the page quickly and already left Boulder for Bloomington. The former Wyoming head coach was hired Wednesday as an assistant at Indiana under Tom Crean.

"I don't think there is anyone who wants the kids at CU to be successful more than (my wife) Kim and I do. We spent a lot of time and energy with these kids," McClain said during an interview with the Camera. "I hope people understand that when they spoke out for me during the coaching search it was because of the relationship we had and the hard work and sacrifices we made together the last three years. ...

"I believe we have put them in position to finish in the upper half of the Big 12 and to go to the NCAA Tournament next season. No one will be rooting harder for them than me."

When McClain returned to CU from the Final Four in Indianapolis earlier this month he joked about the impact Butler's run to the title game would have on his profession.

"They just got a lot of coaches fired," McClain said of the Bulldogs, who were a bounce away from beating Duke in an epic NCAA championship game. "Now every athletic director is going to say, 'Look what Butler's doing. Why can't we do that?'"

Buff fans would settle for a 20-win season and an invitation to the big dance after four consecutive losing seasons.

The return of Burks, who averaged 17.1 points per game and set the new CU freshman scoring record with 512 points, certainly makes the prospects of achieving some form of madness next March more realistic for Boyle.

"I want to get stronger, faster and more explosive," Burks said. "I'm still very young; I know I can put on some more weight."

Crean hopes McClain can help him get the Hoosiers back on top in a college hoops-crazed state still buzzing about Butler.

"It means a lot to me to be able to bring in someone with the knowledge, experience and aggressiveness of Steve McClain," Crean said in a release. "I have admired him for how hard he works and for how hard his teams, especially at Wyoming, played. He brings a toughness to our program that has shown in those who have played for him, and he carries that same mindset over into recruiting."

McClain worked a 12-plus hour day recruiting for the Hoosiers on Wednesday. He will be introduced at a press conference

later in the week at Crane Hall, a new 67,000-square-foot basketball developmental center at Indiana that will be formally dedicated on Sunday.

"To have an opportunity to go with Tom, someone I've known and respected a long time, and be a part of a program that a shot to win a national championship is exciting," McClain said. "I don't care how long you've been doing this, when you walk into a gym that has five banners it's special."

Now that Burks is on board for his sophomore season, Boyle's focus will shift to recruiting and hiring a staff. The former Northern Colorado head coach says that process begins from scratch.

"We'll start fresh. The assistants that are here have some names of kids they were recruiting and we'll certainly look at that," Boyle said on Monday. "As I put together our staff, they will have some contacts and leads throughout the country that we will follow up on. We will salvage the best we can here late, but again we're not going to jump the gun and sign guys just to sign them."

The spring recruiting period began on April 14, the day Bzdelik was introduced as Wake Forest's new head coach, and it ends May 19. Boyle has three scholarships to offer.

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## Burks staying with CU's Boyle

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

Posted: 04/22/2010 07:58:11 AM MDT

Updated: 04/22/2010 09:35:44 AM MDT



After meeting with new head coach Tad Boyle, guard Alec Burks has decided to stay at the University of Colorado. (THE DENVER POST | HYOUNG CHANG)

It won't show up on recruiting charts, but newly hired Colorado men's basketball coach Tad Boyle bagged his No. 1 target Wednesday when CU star guard Alec Burks announced that he will remain a Buffalo.

Burks, a 6-foot-6 guard and the reigning Big 12 Conference freshman of the year, had said Monday when Boyle was hired that he would "explore his options" and possibly consider

transferring to another school. Burks had voiced his disappointment that Colorado did not promote then associate coach Steve McClain as a replacement for head coach Jeff Bzdelik, who left last week for Wake Forest.

Soon after getting the CU job, Boyle flew to Kansas City and met with the Burks family at their Grandview, Mo., home. That visit, and the initial workouts with the team, must have made an impression Burks. He was quoted on the school's website that he is solidly behind Boyle and is excited about the program's future under the former Northern Colorado coach.

"He told me his plan," Burks told the CU website. "I liked it, and I like him. I'm putting all of my trust in him. He said we were going to play hard, play fast and go all out to win, and I believe in that

"My mom said the worst thing I could have done was act out of frustration (for McClain not being named head coach). I'm over that now. I was always pretty close to (McClain). But I know I'm going to get close to coach Boyle, too."

Burks averaged 17.1 points last season and became the first CU freshman in history to score more than 500 points. He finished with 512.

During his introductory news conference, Boyle said one of his first tasks was to convince Burks to stay.

"I told Alec to try to get to know me, just make

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THE DENVER POST

an effort to get to know me," Boyle said Monday. "And after you've come to know me a little bit, then you have to make the decision that is best for you. But I think with the year he had and the kind of career that's in front of him, I want to help him continue to grow and make him a better player."

Boyle will get that opportunity. And CU's prospects for next season just got brighter.

As for McClain, he has been hired to fill the vacant assistant coaching position on Tom Crean's staff at Indiana.

"It means a lot to me to be able to bring in someone with the knowledge, experience and aggressiveness of Steve McClain," Crean said in a press release.

The 47-year-old McClain spent three seasons as an assistant for the Buffaloes after serving as head coach at the University of Wyoming from 1998-2007.

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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

APRIL 21, 2010, 9:40 AM

# CU fans need to move past the stigma

By **TOM KENSLE** |  2 Comments

If there's one thing I've learned during the past week, it's that many University of Colorado fans have this stigma regarding Northern Colorado and believe the hiring of a men's basketball coach from "little" UNC in some way tarnishes CU's reputation and diminishes its status.

Do those fans realize that UNC now also plays basketball at the Division I level? The Big Sky Conference, led by its perennial kingpins Montana and Weber State, is respected nationally.

UNC, at No. 118, finished higher than Colorado State (119) and Colorado (120) in the NCAA's official RPI power rankings for the regular season. There are 347 programs playing Division I men's hoops, so UNC rated just outside the top third.

But beyond that, let's take a roll call of Big 12 Conference teams with current head men's basketball coaches that were hired directly from leagues outside the six "power" conferences:

Oklahoma (Jeff Capel, Virginia Commonwealth)  
Oklahoma State (Travis Ford, Massachusetts)  
Texas A&M (Mark Turgeon, Wichita State)  
Baylor (Scott Drew, Valparaiso)  
Missouri (Mike Anderson, Alabama-Birmingham)  
Nebraska (Doc Sadler, Texas-El Paso)  
Iowa State (Greg McDermott, Northern Iowa)

And now Colorado, with Tad Boyle.

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Longmont, Colorado  
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## **CU's Burks says he plans to stay**

*By Patrick Ridgell*  
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Colorado announced Wednesday night that guard Alec Burks will stay with its men's basketball program in 2010-11.

Burks said Monday he would "explore his options," meaning he was considering a transfer, after it hired Tad Boyle as its new head coach. Burks and his teammates wanted CU to hire former associate head coach Steve McClain.

The Big 12's freshman of the year in 2009-10, Burks met with Boyle this week and has decided to stay.

"He told me his plan, I liked it and I like him . . . I'm putting all of my trust in him," Burks said in a release. "He said we were going to play hard, play fast and go all out to win – and I believe in that."

Burks, whose 512 points made him the first CU freshman to surpass 500, said his mother also played a pivotal role in his decision.

"She agreed that the best thing for me was to stay here . . . I can see that, too. I like it a lot out here," he said in the release.

A projected lottery pick in 2011, Burks said transferring to another Division I program and having to sit out a season per NCAA transfer rules didn't make sense.

"That's one of the things it came down to, too," he said in the release. "My mom said the worst thing I could have done was act out of frustration.

"When I said all that, I was just mad that coach McClain didn't get it. I was always pretty close to him, but I know I'm going to get close to coach Boyle, too."

Burks averaged 17.1 points a game last season. He's the second freshman to lead the team in rebounding (5.0).



# INDYSTAR★COM

## IU names assistant hoops coach

By Terry Hutchens

Posted: April 21, 2010

Steve McClain, who spent the last three seasons as the associate head coach at Colorado, has been hired as an assistant coach at Indiana.


He will formally be introduced at a press conference Friday at Assembly Hall.

McClain, who also spent nine seasons as the head coach at Wyoming from 1998-2006, replaces Roshown McLeod who was dismissed by IU coach [Tom Crean](#) in late February.

McClain was one of three finalists for the Colorado job that was filled Monday by [Tad Boyle](#).

Call Star reporter Terry Hutchens at (317) 444-6469.

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## Steve McClain Named Assistant Men's Basketball Coach at Indiana

**April 21, 2010**

**Bloomington, Indiana** - Indiana University men's basketball coach Tom Crean has announced that Steve McClain, who boasts more than 28 years of coaching experience on the collegiate level, has joined the Hoosiers staff as an assistant coach, effective immediately.

"It means a lot to me to be able to bring in someone with the knowledge, experience and aggressiveness of Steve McClain," said Crean. "I have admired him for how hard he works and for how hard his teams, especially at Wyoming, played. He brings a toughness to our program that has shown in those who have played for him, and he carries that same mindset over into recruiting."

McClain comes to IU after spending three seasons at Colorado, including the last two as associate head coach. During his time there, he played a prominent role in rebuilding the CU program and served as acting head coach during the absence of head coach Jeff Bzdelik for a portion of last season which saw CU finishing 15-16, including seven losses by six points or less. In addition, junior guard Cory Higgins earned All-Big XII honors and freshman guard Alec Burks was named Big XII Freshman of the Year.



Steve McClain

"I am excited to have the chance to walk into a building with five banners and be a part of a program that believes that what is on the front of the chest means much more than what is on the back of the jersey," McClain added. "That is what college basketball is all about."

During his career as a coach, he has worked firsthand with several players who went on to play with or were drafted by NBA teams, including Kurt Thomas and Lee Nailon at TCU, Justin Williams and Josh Davis at Wyoming, Ben Davis and Shaun Vandiver at Hutchinson CC, and Harvey Grant at Independence CC.

"He has had a huge part in the development of so many outstanding players and we are excited to get him started with our program," noted Crean. "He has hit the ground running in his first day on the job and with as much energy as I like to have, he brings that and then some. Indiana basketball is very fortunate to have him here."

Prior to his time in Boulder, the 1984 graduate of Chadron State College served as the 19th head coach at the University of Wyoming from 1998-2007. For nine seasons, McClain led the Cowboy program through one of its most successful periods in school history, posting the fifth highest winning percentage in school history (57.7 percent) and achieving a 157-115 record, averaging 17 wins per season through his nine years.

"I'm really looking forward to being able to work with Tom and this staff," said McClain. "Our philosophies are exactly on the same page in terms of how you ought to play and the toughness it takes to win a championship. Whether it's what you do in the office or what you do on the court that day, how you go about things determines how quickly you can reach that goal and Tom and I share the same beliefs."

In four of his nine seasons, Wyoming appeared in postseason play, advancing to the second round in each of the 1999, 2002 (NCAA) and 2003 seasons. They also played in the first round of the 2001 NIT. In conference play, McClain's teams captured two of the first seven Mountain West Conference titles, sharing the title for the 2000-01 season and winning it outright in 2001-02. The outright title in 2001-02 was Wyoming's first outright championship in 20 years. Overall, the Cowboys finished in the upper half of the league in six of McClain's nine seasons.

McClain, 47, coached two All-Americans during his stint Laramie. Josh Davis was an Associated Press Honorable Mention All-American in his senior season of 2001-02. Prior to the 2002-03 season, Marcus Bailey was one of only 50 players nationally named to the John R. Wooden Award Preseason All-America team. In five of the nine seasons that McClain coached in the MWC, at least one Cowboy earned All-Mountain West Conference first-team honors: Josh Davis (1999-2000 and 2000-01); Marcus Bailey (2000-01 and 2001-02); Uche Nsonwu-Amadi (2002-03); Donta Richardson (2002-03) and Jay Straight (2004-05).

The high point of the Cowboys' return to national prominence was Wyoming's appearance in the 2002 NCAA Tournament, marking the school's first appearance since 1988. It was in that season that McClain engineered one of his best Cowboy teams, earning Coach of the Year honors from his fellow coaches, winning a school-best 22 victories (the most since 1987-88) and advancing to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

His 2001-02 Cowboy squad broke two of the nation's longest winning streaks. With its 73-66 win over No. 6 Gonzaga in the

opening round of the 2002 NCAA Tournament, Wyoming broke the Bulldogs 14-game winning streak, a then-school record. Earlier in the year at Utah, the Cowboys defeated the Utes 54-46, breaking Utah's 48-game home win streak against conference opponents, which was the longest conference winning streak in the country.

In the 2000-01 season, McClain earned Mountain West Conference Coach of the Year honors from CollegeInsider.com, and garnered the same honor from MWC media members for the 1999-2000 season.

McClain and his Wyoming teams won 18 or more games five times with a trio of consecutive 20-win seasons from 2000-2003, marking the first time three straight 20-win seasons had been accomplished in 15 years on the Laramie campus.

Also during his nine seasons, the Cowboys defeated three Top-25 ranked opponents -- No. 20 TCU on Jan. 14, 1999; No. 24 Utah on Feb. 28, 2000; and No. 6 Gonzaga on March 14, 2002.

His Wyoming squads were consistent contenders in the conference race during his tenure. UW finished in the top half of the conference in six of McClain's nine seasons there.

Prior to his head coaching experience in Wyoming, McClain was an assistant at Texas A&M in 1998, then served as an assistant coach at Texas Christian University from 1994-98. While at TCU, McClain helped lead the Horned Frogs to a Top-25 ranking an NCAA Tournament appearance in 1998 under head coach Billy Tubbs. During his tenure there, Kurt Thomas became just the third player in NCAA history to lead the nation in scoring and rebounding in the same season.

The year prior to Tubbs' staff taking over in Fort Worth, TCU posted a record of 7-20. Three years later, the Horned Frogs posted a 22-13 record, advanced to the Championship Game of the 1997 Western Athletic Conference Tournament and played their way into the Second Round of the National Invitation Tournament. In 1998, TCU joined the elite programs in the country, posting a 27-6 record and leading the nation in scoring at 97.2 points per game.

The Horned Frogs earned an NCAA Tournament bid in 1998, and ended the season ranked No. 15 in the final Associated Press poll. TCU also became the first team in Western Athletic Conference history to go undefeated in league play, posting a 14-0 record in 1998 on way to winning the WAC Pacific Division title.

Not only did McClain enjoy success as an assistant coach, but also he brought to Wyoming an outstanding record as a head coach. In 1994 as the head coach at Hutchinson Community College in Hutchinson, Kan., he won the National Junior College Championship in only his third season, and was named the National Junior College Coach of the Year.

At the junior-college level, McClain compiled a 91-16 (.850) record in three seasons, and his teams were known as high-scoring squads. His 1994 National Championship team averaged 90 points per game on way to a 35-4 (.897) record. In 1992-93, the Hutch Dragons compiled a 29-5 (.853) record, averaged 92.6 points and ended the season ranked No. 11 in the NJCAA. His first season as head coach, 1991-92, Hutchinson posted a 27-7 (.794) record.

Prior to becoming head coach at Hutchinson, McClain served as an assistant coach there for five seasons, helping guide the Dragons to the 1988 NJCAA National Championship. Before coaching at Hutchinson, he was also an assistant coach at Independence Community College in Independence, Kan. (1985); Sioux Empire Junior College in Iowa (1984); and his alma mater Chadron State College in Chadron, Neb. from 1982-84.

"I know growing up in the Midwest, I understand the importance of Indiana basketball and what it means to an entire state," added McClain. "Having brought a team to Bloomington while I was at Wyoming, I have experienced firsthand the passion of the fans and their interest in everything that goes on with the Hoosiers. Having known Tom a long time as a colleague and friend, it is a great opportunity for me to come in and be able to help them rebuild this great program."

Born August 15, 1962, McClain is a native of Orient, Iowa, and is married to the former Kim Van Asselt of Hutchinson, Kan. They are the parents of a son, Dylan (8).

"We have had a friendship for many years and loyalty and trust is the cornerstone of any relationship," said Crean. "We know that Steve will add to what already is an outstanding staff."