

## CU Buffs freshman Hornbuckle prefers Bzdelik`s offense

### 6-foot-7 Hornbuckle looks to contribute right away for Buffs

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A year ago this week legendary Arizona coach Lute Olsen stepped down after leading the Wildcats to 24 NCAA appearances during his 25 years on the bench in Tucson.

Despite Colorado`s lack of basketball tradition and March Madness, Keegan Hornbuckle -- who was offered a scholarship by Olsen after an official visit to Arizona -- decided the more stable coaching situation in Boulder was a better fit for his development.

And so the 6-foot-7 forward from Westlake Village, Calif., committed to Jeff Bzdelik.

"When (Olsen) left, that`s kind of when I lost interest in it," Hornbuckle said.

Hornbuckle was also recruited by Arizona State, Michigan and Oregon State.

So why did he choose the Buffs again?

"Keegan is a smart kid. He definitely did his homework before he committed to Colorado," Terry Kelly, Hornbuckle`s high school coach, told the Los Angeles Times last fall. "In reality, the system is perfect for him. He had plenty of options, but I think he made the right choice. ...

"We are talking about a kid who will have the opportunity to play right away, in a very tough conference, no less. He`s not going to shy away from competition at the next level. He can step in and make an impact, there`s no question about it."

Bzdelik hopes to produce a winning record at CU this season after suffering back-to-back 20-loss seasons. Hornbuckle and four other newcomers bring a much-needed infusion of athleticism and depth to a program that has taken its lumps in the Big 12 in recent years.

"Keegan has a high basketball IQ, a very good skill set and he`s very long and athletic," Bzdelik said after a recent workout with his young team. "He has a great upside."

Hornbuckle won two state championships at Campbell Hall High School and averaged 12.2 points, 4.8 rebounds, 1.5 assists and 1.3 steals as a senior. He said the Princeton-style offense Bzdelik brought to Boulder fits his game perfectly.

"I`m starting to get used to everything and the offense. I feel like I`m running everything a lot smoother than when we first started," Hornbuckle said. "My strengths right now are my endurance and my running and cuts and basketball IQ. I need to improve on my strength when I`m driving and on defense."

Hornbuckle will likely be able to provide Bzdelik a spark off the bench as a big guard or small forward. He will have a chance to be an understudy to junior Cory Higgins, a third-team All-Big 12 selection last season who led the team in scoring and rebounding.

Bzdelik has said that all four true freshmen will have an active role on this year`s team. Hornbuckle`s class also includes point guard Shannon Sharpe, shooting guard Alec Burks and center Shane Harris-Tunks.

"I like to run and cut and all that. I thought this was the best offense I could do that in," Hornbuckle said. "I`m hoping to get in for a lot of minutes. We`re pretty deep, but hopefully I`ll be able to get some minutes and play hard and do pretty well."

Bzdelik also adds junior college transfer Marcus Relphorde to the rotation this season. The 6-7 forward`s name has come up frequently as a player who has opened eyes during preseason workouts.

"Marcus has impressed me," Hornbuckle said. "He`s a big kid and he`s strong. Cory has also impressed with me with how easily he runs the offense."

CU`s first practice for the 2009-10 season will be tonight after the team holds its annual media day at the Coors Events Center.

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