

It's decision day for CU Buffs' Alec Burks

Colorado star likely to enter NBA Draft

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Alec Burks will have his version of "The Decision" today.

Colorado's star sophomore is expected to announce that he will be taking his talents to the NBA during a 2 p.m. press conference.

Throughout the recently completed season Burks said he would leave school after this semester and enter the NBA Draft if he was projected as a top-15 pick. The mock draft at nbadraft.net on Wednesday evening had the smooth 6-6 wing going No. 10 overall, and several scouts believe Burks is the top shooting guard prospect.

Burks recently returned home to Grandview, Mo., to discuss the decision with his mom, Dina, who sacrificed greatly to support him and his older brother Steve through the years.

"That would probably be the main reason, to take care of her after all her struggles and my family's struggles," Burks said during a recent interview with the Camera. "That would be the top priority if I left."

Burks was a unanimous All-Big 12 First Team selection after averaging 20.5 points and 6.5 rebounds during the Buffs' record 24-win campaign. He was the first and only CU player to be named the Big 12 Freshman of the Year after averaging 17.1 points and 5.0 rebounds during the 2009-10 season.

Burks set a new single-season scoring mark at CU with 779 points during the 2010-11 campaign. Cliff Meely (729 points, 1970-71) is the only other player in program history to score more than 700 points in a season.

Although the coaching staff is holding out hope that Burks could choose to return for his junior season and lead the program into the Pac-12, his CU career has been referenced in the past tense, even by teammates, recently.

"As a coach, I'm going to support him in whatever he does," head coach Tad Boyle said after the Buffs' loss to Alabama in the National Invitation Tournament semifinals last month at Madison Square Garden. "I've told him that and I've told his family that."

CU already loses seniors Cory Higgins, Levi Knutson and Marcus Relphorde. But the new staff signed three freshmen-to-be from the Los Angeles area -- Spencer Dinwiddie, Askia Booker and Damienne Cain -- in November.

Last week the Buffs signed Jeremy Adams, a 6-5 shooting guard who will help fill the void if Burks leaves.

"We don't want to build a team, we want to build a program that can sustain success from one year to the next," Boyle said. "It's hard to build a program when you lose four starters in one year, when you lose 80-to-85 percent of your scoring in one year, when you have seven new scholarship players that weren't playing for you the previous year. ...

"Next year is going to be a completely different team and a completely different season."

It has been an amazing two years for CU basketball and Burks, considering the struggles of the program before he arrived on campus and the fact that Jeff Bzdelik was one of the only coaches who recruited him.

"It's very exciting because two years ago nobody knew me," Burks said. "Now I get to make the decision of my life."

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college basketball

Stay or go? Colorado guard Alec Burks to announce NBA decision Thursday at 2 p.m.

By **Tom Kensler**
The Denver Post

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Will he or won't he?

Colorado and shooting guard Alec Burks have scheduled a media-only news conference for 2 p.m. today in Boulder for the Buffaloes standout to announce whether or he will declare for the 2011 NBA draft or return for his junior season.

Burks, 6-feet-6, said recently that he will give up his final two years of college eligibility if he receives an indication that he would be one of the first 15 players selected in the draft. NBA analysts and mock drafts project him to be picked earlier than No. 15.

"He's not telling us what he's thinking," departing senior guard Levi Knutson said Wednesday. "But he obviously has a lot to think about. There are benefits to both options. I know he has had a lot of fun playing college basketball the last couple of years. That's not an easy thing to give up. He has to do what's best for him and his family."

CU coach Tad Boyle said he doesn't know what Burks' decision will be. Burks was going to meet with his mom one last time Wednesday night. And Boyle said he was going to pick Burks up after class at 1 p.m. Thursday.

A native of the Kansas City, Mo., area, Burks earned unanimous all-Big 12 Conference honors after leading the league in scoring (20.5 for all games) and ranking 12th in rebounding (6.5) and 14th in assists (2.95).

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