



Alec Burks was a first team All-Big 12 Conference pick in 2011.

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



04/21/2011 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Alec Burks To Enter NBA Draft

BOULDER - Colorado's portion of The Alec Burks Watch is over - or maybe just beginning. CU's highly acclaimed sophomore guard announced at an on-campus news conference Thursday afternoon that he is leaving school early for the NBA, leaving the Buffs and a burgeoning number of followers to watch his progress from afar as he launches a professional career.

"I'm glad . . . I'm glad everybody can get off my back now," Burks said of his decision. "It's been a long time coming. It's a great day; my mom, my brother are happy. When you see somebody realize their dream, it's always a great day."

The run-up to the dream has been harrowing. Burks had deliberated on the decision since the end of the 2010-11 season in which he helped lead CU to a school-record 24 wins and to the NIT semifinals in New York. Only the third CU underclassman to declare himself eligible for the NBA

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Alec Burks Biography

Draft (the first was sophomore Chauncey Billups in 1997, the second was junior David Harrison in 2003), Burks had said his decision would be based on how high he was projected to be selected in the June 23rd draft.

In its most recent mock draft, NBADraft.net viewed Burks as the tenth overall selection. Nonetheless, until a Wednesday meeting with a trio of prospective agents - he hasn't yet signed with one yet but plans to - and still more discussions with those closest to him, Burks said he had decided to return for his junior season and continue "kicking with everybody."

"I was coming back," he said before weighing input from the potential representatives, his mother, his former AAU coach, CU Coach Tad Boyle and Billups. Boyle said with "an unbelievable amount of distractions" bombarding Burks, the slender sophomore had "handled it as well as any young man could have handled what he's gone through this year."

But in the end, the prospect of being paid to play hoops and being able to assist his family spoke loudly to Burks - and in good conscience, Boyle couldn't offer a rebuttal. "I ask our players to be unselfish (and) as the head coach at Colorado, this guy makes me a better coach. We're better with (Burks) at Colorado than we are with him going to the NBA. There's no question about that," Boyle said.

"But for me to try to recruit him and sway him back, to try and not do what's in his best interest, I'd be acting selfishly. I'd be a hypocrite; it's not something I'm interested in being. So as hard as it's been, as much as we'd love for him to come back and join us, it's a decision he has to make for himself and his family - and we respect that."

At the conclusion of the 2010-11 season, Burks believed he was going to be an NBA lottery pick, and with several players who might have been just in front or behind him electing to return to school he said "this was the perfect time for me to come out . . . it was something I couldn't pass up."

The NBA's current collective bargaining issue - a lockout by owners is possible on July 1 - was not a factor in Burks' decision. "It didn't really matter to me," he said. "The NBA is a dream of mine . . . I've got to take advantage of the time and where I'm at right now. I've got a high draft status and I have to take advantage of it. I'm going to get paid regardless; I'm going to get paid for playing basketball."

According to Boyle, that Burks hasn't signed with an agent yet should not offer a glimmer of hope that Thursday's decision will be reversed: "This is what he wants to do; this is a dream of his. He hasn't determined if he's going to sign with an agent or when, but that'll take care of itself."

As for being NBA-ready, Burks said he must "work on every aspect of my game. I need to get stronger; I'm going to a grown-man league. I need to work on my jumper. I'm going to work on everything to get my game right for the NBA."

And Boyle termed Burks' readiness for the next level "risk-reward - and it takes me back to my investment days. You have to look at the risk of coming back and the reward of coming back. You have to look at the risk of going forward in the NBA Draft and the reward. The rewards are pretty obvious. I think if you took money out of the equation, it'd be a pretty simple answer. But money's money, and you're talking about a situation where Alec can put himself on a course to take care of

himself and his family for years to come . . . it's hard to say he's making a bad decision."

A lightly recruited high school player from Grandview, Mo., the 6-foot-6 Burks blossomed for the Buffs over the past two seasons, totaling 1,291 points and setting school seasonal scoring records in both his freshman (512 points) and sophomore (779) years. Additionally, his total as a sophomore broke Cliff Meely's long-standing seasonal mark of 729 set in 1970-71.

Burks was his team's leading scorer (20.5 average) and was one of two unanimous first-team All-Big 12 Conference selections as well as being one of 20 finalists for the prestigious John Wooden Award. Averaging 25.3 points, 8.7 rebounds and 5.7 assists, he led CU to the Big 12 tournament semifinals for the first time and became the first Buffs player to make the all-tournament during their 15 seasons in the conference.

He conceded his productivity in one of the nation's best leagues left him "very amazed. A lot of people didn't expect this, and I probably didn't expect it for myself." The realization that he could not only compete but excel in the Big 12 came after his freshman season. "Basically I had a great year in one of the best leagues in the country," he said. "I felt like after that I could get to the next level."

Burks' teammates shared in his excitement, but were realistic about what his exit means for next season as the Buffs enter the Pac-12 Conference.

"I'm just happy for that man," said point guard Shannon Sharpe, maybe the closest of any of the Buffs to Burks. "He had to go out and make a decision - and he made it. He's about to go out there and do his thing. Now, instead of me watching him on the court, I'm going to be watching him from the bed (on TV).

"Alec and me will still be cool, we'll still be close. It just means there's not going to be a lot of face-to-faces. There's going to be a lot of wireless, a lot of WiFi, a lot of texts - that type of stuff."

Added forward Andre Roberson: "We're going to miss him. We all wish him the best of luck . . . I think it was the best decision he could possibly make, the best for him. We're all happy for him."

But Sharpe also called Burks' departure "a big loss. The man is one of the best scorers in the country. We all have to make bigger contributions . . . you look at our team, we're going to have to be even more defensive-minded."

Boyle's incoming freshman class includes a trio of Los Angeles-area recruits - point guard Spencer Dinwiddie, shooting guard Askia Booker, forward Damienne Cain - and Jeremy Adams, a transfer from Navarro (Texas) Junior College.

In addition, transfers Carlon Brown (Utah) and Sabatino Chen (University of Denver) will be eligible in 2011-12 after sitting out this season in adherence with NCAA transfer rules.

But along with Burks, Boyle loses seniors Cory Higgins, Levi Knutson, Marcus Relphorde, Javon Coney and Trent Beckley. Burks' decision, said Boyle, "leaves us in the same position we were; we're just down a man - but a pretty darn good one. But in terms of the future of the program, it's as bright as it's ever been.

"We're losing a lot of production, but next year's team is going to be a new team whether Alec came back or not. Obviously we'd better with him than we are without him. But this doesn't change the course that Colorado basketball is on."

CU can use Burks' brilliant career and his decision "as a positive," Boyle said. "When we talk about kids' dreams, part of coming to this campus is following your dreams. Whether you're a basketball player or a chemical engineer or whatever the case may be . . . you want to follow your dreams. Alec's dream has been to play in the NBA. He's realized that at Colorado; that's something we can sell when we go into homes and talk about future Buffs."

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Posted: Thursday April 21, 2011 6:17 PM

Burks leaving Colorado for NBA

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) - Shooting guard Alec Burks is leaving Colorado early for the NBA draft after a record-setting sophomore season with the Buffaloes.

Burks was joined by Colorado coach Tad Boyle and his teammates at a news conference to announce his decision Thursday. Burks said he wrestled for weeks with the notion of skipping his final two years of eligibility, and consulted with his family, coaches and others, including former Colorado star and current New York Knicks guard Chauncey Billups.

"It was tough," said Burks, who plans to hire an agent in the coming days. "I was really deciding on coming back. I wasn't ready to give up the college experience. But I had to make the best decision for myself, and that's what I feel like I did."

The NBA draft is scheduled for June 23.

"The NBA is a dream of mine," Burks said. "I feel like I've got to take advantage of it."

Boyle said that Burks is ready to make the jump to the professional ranks and he fully supported his decision.

"Obviously, he's proved he can produce in one of the best leagues in the country and at the highest levels of college basketball," Boyle said. "You're talking about a situation where Alec can put himself on a course to take care of himself and his family for years to come. It's hard to begrudge anybody that opportunity, especially someone who has worked as hard as he's worked."

Burks' consistently productive play at Colorado has made his draft stock rise.

The 6-foot-6 guard ranks third on the school scoring list with an average of 19 points per game. He set the single-season scoring record of 779 points this season while helping Colorado reach the NIT semifinals in New York, and also set the freshman scoring record of 512 points.

Several mock drafts project Burks going in the middle of the first round, though Burks believes he has the potential to be a lottery pick.

"I'm going to work on everything to get my game right for the NBA," he said.

Boyle believes Colorado's basketball future remains bright, adding that it is better off in the long run having had Burks the

past two seasons.

"We're not as good and we're not as experienced, but that doesn't mean we can't have a great year," Boyle said. "I'm optimistic, and I'm proud of Alec. This is something we can use as a positive in our recruiting efforts. Part of coming to this campus is following your dream and whether you're a basketball player or a chemical engineer or whatever the case may be, you want to follow your dream. Alec's dream is to play in the NBA and he's realized that at Colorado."

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CU Buffs' Alec Burks declares for NBA Draft

Sophomore leaves Colorado after two impressive seasons

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

Posted: 04/21/2011 12:44:03 PM MDT



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Alec Burks is ready to grab the torch from Chauncey Billups.

Fourteen years after Billups left Colorado for an amazing career in the NBA, Burks has decided to follow the same path, opting to leave the Buffs after his sophomore season and enter his name in the NBA Draft.

Burks, a unanimous All-Big 12 First Team selection who averaged 20.5 points and 6.5 rebounds during the Buffs' record 24-win campaign, made his decision known during a press conference today at the Dal Ward Center.

"I'll be entering the 2011 draft and hiring an agent," Burks said Thursday. "I felt like it was something I just couldn't pass up."

Burks, recruited out of Grandview, Mo., by former CU and Denver Nuggets head coach Jeff Bzdelik, is considered to be the top shooting guard prospect this season by some scouts.

"It's very exciting because two years ago nobody knew me," Burks said during an interview with the Camera as CU was making its run down the stretch. "Now I get to make the decision of my life."

Burks 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.

Last April Bzdelik left for Wake Forest, and Burks was upset that assistant Steve McClain was not promoted to head coach. Tad Boyle wisely met with the emerging star and his parents, Steve and Dina, and they were all quickly on the same page.

Burks set a new single-season scoring mark at CU with 779 points during the 2010-11 campaign. Cliff Meely (729 points, 1970-70) is the only other player in program history to score more than 700 points in a season.

"As a coach, I'm going to support him in whatever he does," Boyle said of Burks after CU's season-ending loss to Alabama in the National Invitation Tournament semifinals at Madison Square Garden. "I've told him that and I've told his family that."

Billups, who left CU after his sophomore season in 1997, has talked to Burks about the decision. The current New York Knicks point guard compares the skinny 6-6 wing to a couple of players he won an NBA championship with in Detroit.

"There are guys built like Alec in the NBA. He's a frail guy but he's a special talent for his size," Billups said. "He's a play-maker. Some guys really can't add weight, guys like Tayshaun Prince and Rip Hamilton, they've tried all their life to gain weight and couldn't do it. I wouldn't put that much stock in (Burks' size)."

Burks' father played in the Pac-10 at Washington. He had a feeling his son would make basketball a profession before the Buffs started playing in the Pac-12 next season.

"When Alec was a freshman in high school he was small, but he was always spending time in the backyard working on his game," Steve Burks told the Camera during CU's final visit to Kansas as a conference foe. "I kept telling my wife, 'There's something about Alec. He's always working on basketball and he could develop into a pro.'"

"Not only did he grow in size, but his game grew up, too. I was like, 'Man, this is going to happen.' He turned out to be a talent, he really did."

Burks will obviously be missed at CU. But now he can take the torch from Billups as a great ambassador for the university in the NBA.

"He told me to keep working and everything else will take care of itself," Burks said of the advice he received from Billups.

The NBA Draft will be held on June 23 in New York.

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Ringo: Losing Burks won't change course for Buffs, Boyle

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 04/21/2011 11:52:34 PM MDT

Alec Burks made the right decision in choosing to end his college career and leave Colorado for the NBA.

Why? Money, of course. The opportunity to make lots of it.

Burks announced his decision Thursday at the Dal Ward Center during a press conference in which he sat next to coach Tad Boyle, while most of his teammates watched from the back of the room.

He acknowledged he was originally inclined to stay for another year, but his mother, Dina, encouraged him to leave. Thank goodness for moms.

Burks would have been crazy and just plain foolish not to jump at the opportunity to make millions in at least a three-year guaranteed salary.

Fortunately, he had a mother wise enough to explain that to him and convince him it was the right move.

No, money isn't everything and having a lot of it will certainly bring along some headaches the rest of us don't experience, but money also prevents a lot of problems and stress and allows for a richer life, so to speak.

That is certainly what Dina and Steve Burks have wanted for their two sons from the time they brought them into the world.

The fact is Burks would have been at serious risk of losing his opportunity to earn his millions had he returned to play for Boyle.

All it takes is one misstep, one wrong landing, one collision with an opponent and Burks could suffer a serious injury that might rob him of the opportunity to fulfill his dream of playing in the NBA, not to mention the financial repercussions.

Burks has said from the beginning that he would have a tough time turning down the lure of the NBA and its riches if he was considered one of the top 14 picks in the draft, a lottery pick. And he played well enough during his sophomore season to earn that distinction, if you put any stock in what scouts and other NBA decision makers are saying he is a top-10 pick at this point.

Players picked at that point in the draft can generally count on making at least \$6 million. Some make much more.

Let's hope Burks is wise enough to be smart with the money he makes and doesn't end up another sad story of a professional athlete who is somehow strapped for cash a few years after the game passes him by and the checks stop rolling in.

Now that the decision has been made, it's time to look ahead to what the Buffs might be in the 2011-12 season in their first season in the Pac-12 Conference and playing without Burks.

CU won't have a NBA-ready talent, at least not one that is apparent in April, but it will have a nice corps of returning talent along with some intriguing new faces.

The biggest question might be who will do the scoring lost in the departure of Burks and seniors Cory Higgins, Levi Knutson and Marcus Relporde?

There was reason to believe that if Burks returned, the Buffs could be one of the best teams in the conference because of the additions of transfers such as Carlon Brown from Utah and Jeremy Adams from junior college, along with the return of Andre Roberson and injured big man Shane Harris-Tunks.

Now it's safe to say the Buffs will be picked somewhere in the middle of the Pac. Those players have to carry the load as Boyle brings along a talented group of three true freshmen from California.

No one would have liked to have Burks back next year more than Boyle, but the Buffs' coach didn't seem particularly worried about his program losing its best player. That's a good sign.

"Obviously we're better with him than we are without him, but this doesn't change the course that Colorado basketball is on," Boyle said.

Boyle is quietly confident that Thursday's press conference won't be the last of its kind for years to come in Boulder.

If forward Andre Roberson continues to develop at the rate he did in one year under Boyle, he could be having a similar gathering two years from now following his junior season.

A year ago at this time, Boyle was busy recruiting Burks. Maybe convincing is a better word. He flew to Kansas City to visit with Burks' mother and talked with her son about how his style of play would allow Burks a lot of freedom on the court.

Burks was considering entering the draft and also transferring schools because CU didn't hire his preferred choice in coaches, but he ultimately opted to give Boyle a shot.

A year later, there is no doubt he made the right call.

It was the first step in what turned out to be a great sophomore season. I'd be surprised if a year from now we aren't saying he made another wise move with his decision to get paid for his talents.

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cu basketball

CU turns to new talent in wake of Burks' departure for NBA

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 04/22/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado is about to learn about life without Alec Burks. Can anyone possibly replace all that magic?

Carlton Brown, anyone? Jeremy Adams?

Relatively unknown now among CU fans, Brown and Adams had better become household names next winter if the Buffaloes have any hope of replacing Burks, a bouncy shooting guard who surprised no one Thursday by announcing he's headed to the NBA and will not return for his junior season.

Burks, 6-foot-6, led the Big 12 Conference in scoring (20.5) this past season, and CU coach Tad Boyle said replacing Burks' stats-stuffing production — he also ranked 12th among Big 12 players in rebounding (6.5) and 14th in assists (2.95) — will not fall on any one player.

"I feel a lot of guys on this team can have breakout years next season," Burks said after the news conference, which he called "a great day" because the NBA has been a lifelong dream. "They're going to do a lot better than people think. I'm going to be their biggest fan."

There's a lot to replace, and it's just not Burks.

Also leaving a deep void are the team's other double-figure scorers: departing seniors Cory Higgins (16.1), Levi Knutson (11.7) and Marcus Relphorde (11.2). Higgins completed his illustrious career in a tie with Richard Roby (2004-08) as the school's all-time leading scorer with 2,001 points.

Boyle arrived from Northern Colorado about this time last year and inherited a veteran roster. It's a different story for 2011-12. Eight of the 12 scholarship players on the roster will be freshmen or sophomores.

"We are losing a lot from last year's team," Boyle said. "But the next team would be a new team, whether Alec came back or not. This doesn't change the course we're on."

"Some years you have more coming back than others. We're not as good; we're not as experienced. But that doesn't mean we can't have a great year."

Boyle said Brown and Adams will get the first

cracks at filling the scoring wing positions manned for a combined six seasons by Higgins (four) and Burks (two).



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Brown, 6-5 and 215 pounds, is a senior transfer from Utah (scoring a team-best 12.6 points per game in 2009-10) who is ready to make the most of his only season in a Colorado uniform. He may not possess the athleticism of Burks, but he's close. As a transfer, Brown practiced with CU last season and threw down as many tomahawk dunks as anybody, including Burks.

"Carlton is one of the most athletic guys I've ever seen," Burks said Thursday. "Colorado fans are going to love him."

Before his junior season at Utah, Brown was named by one preseason college basketball publication as the "most entertaining" player in the Mountain West Conference. Another college hoops yearbook ranked Brown as the MWC's best athlete.

Adams, CU's lone spring signee, also is big for a wing guard at 6-5. He transferred from Navarro (Junior) College in Texas after redshirting his

first year at Texas A&M. Adams led a balanced Navarro attack with 12.4 points per game this past season, but Boyle is well aware Adams averaged 27 points as a high school senior in talent-rich Mississippi.

Unlike most junior college transfers, Adams will have three years of eligibility at CU rather than the standard two.

"Jeremy does a little bit of everything," Boyle said. "He chose Colorado based on this (Burks declaring for the NBA) being a possibility. . . . He had an opportunity to be an immediate factor and contributor. That was appealing to him."

CU is going to be looking for improved play from returnees such as point guards Nate Tomlinson and Shannon Sharpe and forward Andre Roberson. Big things are expected of 6-11 sophomore center Shane Harris-Tunks, who missed last season with a torn ACL, and 6-3 junior guard Sabatino Chen is a transfer from the University of Denver who Boyle believes is better suited for CU's up-tempo offense.

Also coming aboard are three freshmen who were standouts at Los Angeles-area high schools: 6-4 point guard Spencer Dinwiddie, 6-1 combo guard Askia Booker and 6-7, 230-pound power forward Damiene Cain. Boyle does not

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expect any of the newcomers to redshirt.

"We're going to talk to everybody about elevating their game," Boyle said. "One door shuts and another opens. There are open doors now for our guys to step through.

"I'm proud of Alec. This is something we can use as a positive (in recruiting). The NBA can happen for players that come to Colorado."

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dave kriegler

Krieger: Burks' decision is right on the money

By Dave Krieger
The Denver Post

Posted: 04/22/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — During two memorable years as a CU basketball player, perhaps the most underrated part of Alec Burks' game was his decision-making on the court.

Thursday afternoon he announced another smart decision, this one off the court, although you might have to be a Warren Buffett disciple to understand why.

"What I think it comes down to is risk/reward," CU coach Tad Boyle said. "It takes me back to my investment days."

Burks said he was coming back to CU for his junior year until a series of meetings Wednesday changed his mind. Among them were conversations with agents who represent NBA players.

No doubt they told him what league executives already know: The fear of an NBA lockout has thinned out the 2011 draft class to the point that Burks' stock is higher than it's ever been — and higher than it probably ever will be again.

Sell high, they say. That's what Burks is doing.

A number of teams had Burks rated about the 20th-best draft prospect before players such as Harrison Barnes of North Carolina, Jared Sullinger of Ohio State and Perry Jones of Baylor decided

to go back to school rather than risk sitting out a year because of an NBA labor dispute.

Even lesser-known players such as Jeffery Taylor of Vanderbilt have recently announced they will forgo the draft. Take these and other names off the board and Burks moves up to the bottom of the lottery — the top 14 picks — and a few analysts have him higher than that.

In short, the very thing that might have kept Burks in school — the prospect of twiddling his thumbs at home next winter while his CU teammates are playing in the Pac-12 — has increased his draft value on a one-time basis to the highest position he is likely to see. Draft position, in turn, determines the size of an NBA rookie contract, and one of Burks' top priorities is to provide financial security for his mother, Dina.

"I felt like a lot of top players that might have been in front of me or behind me decided to come back to school, so I felt like it was a perfect time for me to come out," he explained.

Some will argue that if Burks improved during his junior year, his draft stock might rise with his play, but veteran NBA hands say that's unlikely for two reasons.



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First, the 2012 draft is expected to be loaded with a new crop of one-and-done freshman phenoms in addition to the players who would have come out this year if not for the pending lockout.

Second, NBA scouts tend to devalue players the longer they stay in college. This may seem perverse, but scouts assume the best players are gone after a year or two. They also think pro prospects lose valuable time playing basketball part-time in college.

Educators and others who preach the value of learning for its own sake will certainly disagree, but this practical fact remains: Most kids go to college to get a good job. Alec Burks is in a position to get a very good job, thanks to two years at CU in which he developed from a marginal Division I prospect into a star in a major conference.

"Part of coming to this campus is following your dreams," Boyle said. "And whether you're a basketball player or if you're a chemical engineer or whatever the case may be, a pre-med major, you want to follow your dreams. Alec's dream has been to play in the NBA, and he's realized that."

His departure is certainly a blow to Boyle's program, which Burks helped bring to life. But Boyle has scrupulously looked out for Burks' interests rather than his own, which will serve him and CU well in the living rooms of blue-chip recruits going forward.

Is Burks ready for the NBA? The answer is no. He has the body of a college kid, not an NBA player.

One talent scout compared him to Larry Hughes, another willowy combo guard who entered the draft in 1998 after one year of college and was the eighth overall pick. Hughes will never be in the Hall of Fame, but he played 12 seasons in the NBA and made about \$65 million.

"The rewards are pretty obvious," Boyle said. "I think if you took money out of the equation, it would be a pretty simple answer. But money's money. And you're talking about a situation where Alec can put himself on a course to take care of himself and his family for years to come. It's hard to begrudge anybody for taking an opportunity who's worked as hard as he's worked."

Boyle and Burks teamed to put CU hoops back on the map this season. And the university can be proud of the head on this kid's shoulders as he leaves after two years. Like it or not, his assessment of the market realities is on the money.

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THE DENVER POST

Alec Burks to leave Colorado for NBA draft

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Alec Burks has been called the most talented Colorado men's basketball player since Chauncey Billups. And like Billups, Burks will give up his final two years of eligibility to declare for the NBA draft.

Burks, a 6-foot-6 shooting guard, said today he will leave the school to turn pro.

"I was really excited about coming back (to CU) until yesterday," Burks said. "I wasn't ready to give up the college experience. But I talked to a lot of people.

"I thought about (the possibility of an NBA owners) lockout," Burks said. "But it's a risk-reward. The NBA has been a dream of mine."

The Big 12 Conference's top scorer (20.5) for the recently concluded season, Burks had been tight-lipped about his decision-making process.

But he recently told The Denver Post during an interview that he would declare for the 2011 NBA draft if he received an indication that it is likely he would be selected within the first 15 picks.

CU coach Tad Boyle had been in contact with NBA team officials and had passed along the confidential information to Burks.

"I 'recruited' Alec last year at this time," Boyle

said. "This time it wasn't about recruiting him. It was about supporting whatever decision he made."

Two well-known NBA draft-related websites project Burks to go higher than No. 15.

"I have to get stronger, it's a grown man's league," Burks said. "And I have to get stronger."

NBA**draft.net** has Burks being selected 10th. **DraftExpress.com** projects him to go 12th. A recent article in **NBA.com** said Burks is the consensus choice among league scouts to be the top shooting guard available in this year's draft, ahead of Washington State junior Klay Thompson.

Burks recently visited family members in the Kansas City, Mo., area, to discuss his options. He has spoken often about taking care of his mother, Dina,

financially.



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All Things Buffs blog



The Denver Post's college football reporters give analysis, notes and minutiae on this blog devoted to CU athletics.

Burks previously said that the potential of a July 1 lockout by NBA owners would not enter into his decision. He said that if he decided to turn pro he would hire an agent and not merely test the waters. College players that declare for the draft without hiring an agent can withdraw by May 8 to retain their college eligibility.

"I'm glad everybody will get off my back now," Burks said. "I'm excited. It's a great day."

In two years, Burks has made his mark on the Colorado record book. His career scoring average (19.0) ranks only behind Cliff Meely (24.3) and Shaun Vandiver (20.6). He holds CU freshman (512 points) and sophomore (779) scoring records. And as a sophomore he became the first Buff in history to reach 770 points, 240 rebounds and 100 assists in the same season.

Billups also left college early for the NBA, 14 years ago following his sophomore season with the Buffaloes.

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APRIL 21, 2011, 4:56 PM

Draft standing too good for CU's Burks to pass up

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Alec Burks might have surprised some folks here Thursday during his news conference when he said as of Wednesday he was leaning toward returning to Colorado for his junior season.

I wasn't privy to the "real good conversations" that took place on Wednesday between the NBA and coach Tad Boyle and Burks and prospective agents. And those conversations remain confidential.

But after working the room Thursday following the announcement, here's what I was able to piece together:

Burks became convinced that his draft stock is as high now as it could be because A) he already is rated the top player at the 2-position (shooting guard), and there is a big gap between he and the second-ranked player at that position, Washington State junior Klay Thompson. B) More college underclassmen with first-round potential than usual elected to return to school. Thus there figures to be more competition for the upper half of the first round next year. And C) One of those players that chose to stay in school, 6-8 sophomore Harrison Barnes of North Carolina, is projected as a shooting guard for the NBA. Thus, Burks likely would not be rated the top draft-eligible player at that position in 2012 like he is now.

As far as the money issue, it sounds like the Burks family, led by Alec's mother, Dina, is not in dire straits and is doing well enough to get by. But as somebody told me, "Hey, the money is there to make everybody's life easier."

That's hard to leave on the table.

And as far as a potential/probable lockout by the NBA owners on July 1, Burks said the money will be there at some point.

And, in the meantime, the agent he hires could easily borrow six figures against Burks' earning potential.

If I were Alec, I'd help out the family and buy a fancy car.

Bling? Not so much.

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Thursday, April 21, 2011

Alec Burks enters NBA draft

ESPN.com news services

Colorado sophomore guard [Alec Burks](#) announced Thursday at a news conference he will enter the NBA draft and forgo his final two years of eligibility.

ESPN.com NBA Insider Chad Ford ranks the 6-foot-6 Burks as the No. 1 shooting guard and No. 14 overall player on his Big Board list.

Burks was joined by Colorado coach Tad Boyle and his teammates at a news conference to announce his decision Thursday. Burks said he wrestled for weeks with the notion of skipping his final two years of eligibility, and consulted with his family, coaches and others, including former Colorado star and current [New York Knicks](#) guard [Chauncey Billups](#).

Ford: Who's In, Who's Out?

ESPN NBA Insider Chad Ford is keeping an updated list, with analysis, of who's in and out of the 2011 NBA draft. [Column](#)

"It was tough," said Burks, who plans to hire an agent in the coming days. "I was really deciding on coming back. I wasn't ready to give up the college experience. But I had to make the best decision for myself, and that's what I feel like I did." He averaged 20.5 points, leading the Big 12 in scoring and breaking the single-season record for points scored. He also led the team in assists and was second on the squad in rebounds, averaging 6.5 boards per game.

Burks helped lead the Buffaloes to a 24-14 season that saw them set a school record for wins and reach the NIT semifinals after missing the NCAA tournament.

Colorado played its final year in the Big 12 before moving next season to the Pac-12, a conference losing much of its talent to the NBA draft.

"The NBA is a dream of mine," Burks said. "I feel like I've got to take advantage of it."

Boyle said that Burks is ready to make the jump to the professional ranks and he fully supported his decision.

"Obviously, he's proved he can produce in one of the best leagues in the country and at the highest levels of college basketball," Boyle said. "You're talking about a situation where Alec can put himself on a course to take care of himself and his family for years to come. It's hard to begrudge anybody that opportunity, especially someone who has worked as hard as he's worked."

Boyle believes Colorado's basketball future remains bright, adding that it is better off in the long run having had Burks the past two seasons.

"We're not as good and we're not as experienced, but that doesn't mean we can't have a great year," Boyle said. "I'm optimistic, and I'm proud of Alec. This is something we can use as a positive in our recruiting efforts. Part of coming to this campus is following your dream and whether you're a basketball player or a chemical engineer or whatever the case may be, you want to follow your dream. Alec's dream is to play in the NBA and he's realized that at Colorado."

Arizona's [Derrick Williams](#), UCLA's [Tyler Honeycutt](#) and [Malcolm Lee](#), USC's [Nikola Vucevic](#), Washington's [Isaiah Thomas](#) and Washington State's [DeAngelo Casto](#) have announced they will remain in the draft. Washington State's [Klay Thompson](#) said Monday he was leaning toward staying in as well.

Information from ESPN.com's Diamond Leung and The Associated Press was used in this report.

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Apr 21, 2011

Colorado sophomore Alec Burks to enter NBA draft

06:50 PM

By [Tim Gardner](#), USA TODAY
[Comment](#)

1 Recommend

Colorado sophomore guard Alec Burks has announced [that he will enter the NBA draft](#).

The 6-6, 195-pound Burks averaged 20.5 points this season and nearly led the Buffaloes to the NCAA tournament before they were passed over for an at-large bid by the selection committee.

Though he said he has not yet hired an agent, Burks said he plans to and looks forward to making the leap to the NBA and not return to school.

"I'm still determining," Burks said about hiring an agent. "I met with some yesterday. I might meet with some more, I might not. I have yet to determine who my agent is going to be. I might sign one, I might wait until May 9th to sign one. I might come back, I might not, but right now I'm going to the NBA."

Colorado coach Tad Boyle said that the team supports Burks in his decision.

"He's had an unbelievable two years here at Colorado," Boyle said. "Our job has been to support him and be there for him and help him with whatever he may need. ... I'm not sure I could have expected anymore out of this young man. How he's handled it, how he's stayed focused, how he has put his blinders on and kept his nose to the grind stone, and he's handled it as well as any young man could have handled what he's gone through this year. I am very, very proud of him for that."

Burks said that thanks to other college players deciding to stay in school, he felt his draft stock was boosted in the process. He now sees himself as a lottery pick in the NBA draft in June.

"I feel like with the people that are coming back, I thought I was going to be a top pick, a top 10 or lottery. It's just something I couldn't pass up."

Burks said that while he is ready for the next step, he knows there is plenty he needs to work on.

"I'm going to work on every aspect of my game. I just need to get stronger. It's a grown man's league. I need to work on my jumping, but I'm going to work on everything to get my game ready for the NBA."

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