

Big 12, ESPN honor CU's Alec Burks

CU sophomore scored 33 points in upset of Texas

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NBA scouts aren't the only ones who recognize Alec Burks' talents. The 6-6 sophomore guard was named the Big 12 Player of the Week for the second time this season on Monday.

Burks averaged 23.5 points and 9.0 rebounds during Colorado's wins over Texas Tech and No. 5 Texas.

"Alec is a special player when he has the ball in his hands," CU head coach Tad Boyle said. "The thing I've appreciated about what he's done this year is he has been a team player."

Burks was also named the national player of the week by ESPN analyst and college basketball writer Andy Katz.

During the comeback win over the Longhorns, Burks scored 33 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and dished out four assists to lead the Buffs back from a 22-point deficit.

Baylor's Perry Jones was named the conference's Rookie of the Week.

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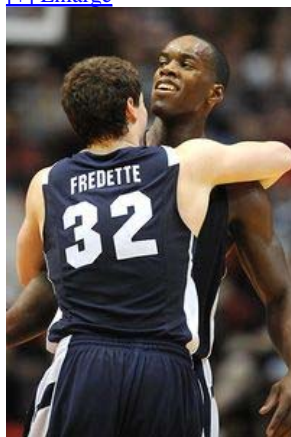
Drama-Free Championship Week?

Andy Katz takes a look at the various conference races and bubble situations. **Tags:** [Men's College Basketball](#)

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bracket. The reason is the Cougars knocked off Colorado State at home and then completed a season sweep by beating San Diego State on Saturday at a rocking Viejas Arena.

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Christopher Hanewinkel/US Presswire On Saturday, it was more than just The Jimmer Show in San Diego.

Of course, it helped that Texas lost at Colorado and Duke fell to Virginia Tech. But BYU did its part. No other team this week had to win a game in as crazed an environment. The season sweep of San Diego State -- the only two losses the Aztecs have had this season -- puts the Cougars as the top team in the West and in position to be in Denver for the first and second rounds, and then Anaheim if the Cougars advance to the Sweet 16.

BYU had every reason to be intimidated Saturday with a capacity crowd revved up and ready for revenge. But the Cougars, every one of them, were poised and played with a purpose on every possession. [Jimmer Fredette](#) dished out nine assists and had a hand in nearly all the team's 14 made 3s. BYU's defense on San Diego State's interior was solid, and the overall preventive nature that limited the Aztecs' fast-break opportunities was also effective.

BYU has two games remaining -- home games against New Mexico and Wyoming -- to clinch the MWC title and its top seed, as well as stay on course for a No. 1 seed.

Meanwhile, Fredette is inching closer to being the national player of the year, and there's no reason why Dave Rose shouldn't be a finalist for national coach of the year. The Cougars have developed into quite a story because they are not just Fredette and four others. Rose has massaged this team to work well together at both ends of the court.

--Andy Katz

More teams that impressed us

Team of the Week: BYU

Brigham Young ended the week as a No. 1 seed in Joe Lunardi's

Virginia Tech: The Hokies had one big chance left to make a case for an NCAA tournament berth. Beating No. 1 Duke was a must and Virginia Tech got it done. If you saw coach Seth Greenberg's reaction after the game, you could tell how relieved he was to win this one. Barring a collapse, Tech should dance.

Gonzaga: The Bulldogs were written off in the WCC and seen as an at-large team a few weeks ago. But the Zags completed an impressive road week by winning at Saint Mary's in overtime on Thursday and then holding last-place San Diego to 31 points Saturday to get a share of the WCC title (with SMC) for the 11th straight season.

Colorado: The Buffaloes started out the Big 12 3-0 with wins over Kansas State, Missouri and Oklahoma State, but then fell flat for several weeks. So if CU was going to make a late push, the Buffs had to pull off a stunner this weekend. CU did in rallying from 22 down at home to beat Texas after winning earlier in the week at Texas Tech. CU is now 7-7 in the Big 12 and in position to earn a bid in the next 10 days.

Louisville: The Cardinals are looking strong for a double-bye in the Big East tournament after beating Rutgers on the road and then outlasting first-place Pitt in Louisville on Sunday. The Cardinals continue to be the surprise (even more so than St. John's) in the Big East. The Cards and Red Storm are tied for third in the conference.

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Brad Mills/US Presswire
Scoop Jardine has improved lately, so have the Orange.

Syracuse: The Orange are on a roll again. The rugged Big East schedule is unforgiving and that 2-6 stretch seems like months ago. This past week, Syracuse won at Villanova and at Georgetown. The Orange did catch both clubs at opportune times, but Syracuse is simply playing more sound ball, especially [Scoop Jardine](#).

UCLA: The Bruins had every reason to feel down in the dumps after losing an overtime game last week at Cal. But UCLA responded with its best homestand of the season by crushing Arizona State and Arizona in the final two games at Pauley Pavilion before the renovations. The Bruins are now tied with Arizona for the Pac-10 lead. The schedule favors Arizona (hosts the Oregon schools), but UCLA is more than capable of going on the road and sweeping the Washington schools.

St. John's: The Red Storm revival continues as they won their fifth and sixth straight games, a home win over DePaul and a road win at Villanova on Saturday. [Dwight Hardy](#) continues to make a push for Big East Player of the Year and Steve Lavin for Big East Coach of the Year.

Purdue: The Boilermakers are within a game of Ohio State for first place in the Big Ten after sweeping road games at Indiana and Michigan State. The latter, a 20-point beatdown, gave the Boilers a sweep of the season series with the Spartans. Purdue continues to impress as JaJuan Johnson is making a strong case to be a Big Ten Player of the Year along with Ohio State's [Jared Sullinger](#). Johnson recorded 20 points and 17 boards on Sunday.

Regular-season champions: Several conference tournaments begin this week. Time to give a shout-out to those who earned the right to be the No. 1 seed in their league. Among those who compete this week:

- **America East** -- Vermont (13-3)
- **Atlantic Sun** -- Belmont (19-1)
- **Big South** -- Coastal Carolina (16-2)
- **Colonial** -- George Mason (16-2)
- **Horizon** -- Milwaukee (13-5, split title with Butler and Cleveland State)
- **MAAC** -- Fairfield (15-3)
- **Missouri Valley** -- Missouri State (15-3)
- **Northeast** -- Long Island (16-2)
- **Ohio Valley** -- Murray State (14-4)
- **Patriot** -- Bucknell (13-1)
- **Southern** -- Charleston (14-4 in South, split with Wofford) / Western Carolina (12-6 in North, split with Chattanooga)
- **Summit** -- Oakland (17-1)
- **Sun Belt** -- Florida Atlantic (13-3 in East) / Arkansas State (11-5 in West, split with Louisiana-Lafayette)

• **West Coast** -- Saint Mary's (11-3, split title with Gonzaga)

-- *Andy Katz*

Player of the Week: [Alec Burks](#), Colorado

Burks has been on the radar of NBA scouts all season long because he can score (19.7 ppg) and change a game. Well, now he might be able to add something else to his scout sheet: lifting his team into the NCAA tournament.

If Colorado knocks off Iowa State in Ames and then beats Nebraska at home, the Buffaloes should be in line for an NCAA tournament at-large berth.

A lot of the credit goes to Burks. The Buffs found themselves down 22 to Texas at one point Saturday, but then Burks scored 24 of his 33 in the second half, including 11 in a game-changing 14-0 run. He also had 10 boards and four assists in the 91-89 win. There were a ton of great performances this past week, but very few players can say they almost single-handedly saved their team's season.

-- *Andy Katz*

More performances that wowed us

[Marcus Morris](#), Kansas: As the Jayhawks cruised past the Oklahoma schools, Morris totaled 50 points on the week and shot 70 percent (16-23) from the field. He even made 4-of-7 from beyond the arc.

[Andrew Gonzalez](#), Houston Baptist: In the program's best win since returning to Division I, a 70-68 victory over a decent Middle Tennessee team, Gonzalez led the previously 3-22 Huskies with 36 points and seven rebounds.

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AP Photo/Stew MilneMarshon Brooks and Ben Hansbrough put on a show at the Dunkin' Donuts Center.

[Marshon Brooks](#), Providence: The Friars couldn't quite pull off the upset of Notre Dame, but not for a lack of effort from Brooks, who set a Big East record with 52 points (knocking PC's Eric Murdock out of the record book). The nation's second-leading scorer scored 35 in the second half alone and made 20-of-28 shots (6-10 from 3) for the game. On this remarkable night, Brooks outscored Big East teams DePaul (51) and Georgetown (46) all by himself.

[Ben Hansbrough](#), Notre Dame: Lost in the hoopla over Brooks' historic performance was the fact that Hansbrough continued to make a push for Big East Player of the Year with 32 points against the Friars, missing just three of his 13 shots. He followed up with 21 against Seton Hall for the Big East's second-place Irish.

[Adrian Oliver](#), San Jose State: For a Spartans team that has suddenly won four in a row, Oliver scored 36 in an upset of New Mexico State and then followed up with 23 in a victory against Louisiana Tech. On the week, he made 16 of 17 free throws and half of his 3s (7-14).

[Jimmer Fredette](#), BYU: Fredette shot just 35 percent for the week, but that still translated to 59 points and 11 assists as the Cougars made a case for a No. 1 seed with wins over Colorado State and at San Diego State.

[Jacob Pullen](#), Kansas State: Pullen gets on this list for a second straight week as he continues to turn around the previously disappointing Wildcats. In two crucial victories at Nebraska and home against Missouri, Pullen totaled 51 points, making 18-of-20 from the charity stripe and 7-of-11 from the 3-point line.

[Alex Francis](#), Bryant: The Bulldogs lost a pair of road games, but their freshman forward from Harlem still had a sterling week. Against NEC champ Long Island, Francis made 20 of 27 shots for 43 points (and nine boards). He followed up with 25 and 10 at St. Francis (NY).

[La'Shard Anderson](#), Boise State: What a week for Anderson and the Broncos, who picked off road wins at Fresno State and Nevada. The senior guard totaled 56 points, nine assists and six steals while shooting 72 percent from the field (18-25) and 60 percent from 3 (6-10).

[Donald Sims](#), Appalachian State: The Mountaineers came out of nowhere to win seven of their final eight SoCon games; in an 85-70 victory over league leader Charleston, Sims went off for 32 points (11-16 FG, 6-9 from 3) and added six assists.

[Jake Thomas](#), South Dakota: The opponent (Chicago State) wasn't great, but the performance sure was as Thomas bested his previous career high by nine, scoring 40 points and connecting on a ridiculous 10 of 16 3-pointers. He also added eight boards and four steals.

[Dwight Hardy](#), St. John's: Like Hansbrough, Hardy continued his Big East POY push by scoring 34 points (5-9 from 3) in a win at Villanova, the Red Storm's sixth straight. It was the third time in three weeks the senior notched a career high in scoring. From the Duke game through today, Hardy is averaging 25.1 ppg and St. John's is 8-1.

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Jayne Kamin-Oncea/US Presswire
Reeves Nelson's 27 points and 16 rebounds carried the Bruins past Derrick Williams and Arizona.

[Reeves Nelson](#), UCLA: In the last game at Pauley Pavilion before it undergoes massive renovations, the Bruins moved into a tie for first in the Pac-10 with a shockingly easy 71-49 victory over Arizona. UCLA was led by a career-high 27 points from Reeves Nelson, who made 10 of 13 shots and pulled down 16 rebounds.

[Andrew Warren](#), Bradley: It's been a rough season for the Braves, but in his final home game ever, the senior Warren set career highs in points (33), rebounds (11) and assists (5) and matched his high mark in steals (4) as Bradley rolled past Drake 90-64.

[Josh Owens](#), Stanford: With a win at Oregon, the Cardinal avoided what would've been their first five-game losing streak in 18 years. A large reason for that was Owens, who scored a career-high 31 points and added 11 rebounds.

[Ja'Rob McCallum](#), Milwaukee: In a victory the Panthers needed in order to secure an improbable 1-seed in the Horizon tourney (which means home-court advantage), the sophomore guard hit seven 3s in just 11 attempts and finished with 23 points and six boards in UWM's overtime win at Youngstown State.

[Tu Holloway](#), Xavier: After nearly pulling off his third triple-double of the season (12 points, 15 assists, nine rebounds vs. La Salle), Holloway went on the road against a desperate Dayton team and led X with 26 points, six boards and five assists. He nailed a 3 when UD had cut the lead to two with a minute to go and then hit two clinching free throws with six seconds left.

[JaJuan Johnson](#), Purdue: Johnson put on quite a road show, posting 20 points and nine rebounds in a victory at Indiana and then delivering 20 points, 17 boards and seven blocks in a thoroughly dominant effort in Purdue's 67-47 beatdown of Michigan State. It was the first 20-15-5 game by any major-conference player this season -- and the first in a Big Ten conference game since 2000.

-- Brett Edgerton

Observations from the week that was

Andy Katz

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AP Photo/Nick Wass Leonard Hamilton is dealing with life without Chris Singleton, FSU's best player on offense and defense.

- Assessing Florida State and Georgetown will be a tough chore for the selection committee. FSU doesn't have its best player in [Chris Singleton](#) (fractured right ankle) for the foreseeable future. The Seminoles beat Wake Forest and Miami, but lost at Maryland without Singleton. So how will the committee judge Florida State? The résumé likely will put the Noles in the field, but they should be seeded much lower based on the personnel that will play in the tournament. Meanwhile, Georgetown is without arguably its most important player in guard [Chris Wright](#). He broke a bone in his non-shooting left hand and the Hoyas are convinced he will return by the NCAA tournament. But they lost at home against Syracuse without him and were horrendous against Cincinnati after he went down early in the game. Georgetown has one game remaining (at Cincinnati) and then it's on to the Big East tournament. Going 0-2 before Selection Sunday would not be advisable.

- [Jimmer Fredette](#) is the clear front-runner for national player of the year. Duke's [Nolan Smith](#) and Ohio State's [Jared Sullinger](#) can certainly end the season with higher-profile performances, but Fredette made quite a statement over the weekend. He played as complete a game in a hostile environment as any of the aforementioned have personally played in this season. Fredette was targeted throughout the game by the passionate SDSU fans as well as the Aztecs' defense. Yet he played with four fouls, made 3s, scored 25 points and tied a season high with nine assists in a convincing road win at San Diego State.

Fredette has handled himself at such a high level throughout the course of this season. He has been the focus for every opposing defense, yet has answered every opportunity and has put BYU in position to be a No. 1 seed. I'm not sure either of the aforementioned players or Connecticut's [Kemba Walker](#) have to deal with the personal shots and vitriol that Fredette has to deal with on the road. If he wins this honor, it would be a testament to a player who worked his tail off throughout his career to become a star.

For more of Katz's observations, see the [complete post](#) in the Nation blog.

Eamonn Brennan

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AP Photo/Skip Peterson After looking mediocre in the nonconference, Tu Holloway and Xavier are rolling again.

- All Xavier does is win. The Musketeers haven't gotten a ton of national acclaim this season, primarily because they looked barely mediocre for much of the nonconference season. Once A-10 play began, though, Xavier has resembled the program we've come to know over the past five seasons, the one with three consecutive Sweet 16 appearances. Xavier has lost but one game in conference play, a weird, out-of-character performance at Charlotte. After Sunday's win at Dayton, it is now 13-1 in the league and has proven for the third straight year that it's never wise

to doubt Xavier's eventual tourney readiness no matter the level of turnover in the program. Thanks in large part to the brilliant guard play of Tu Holloway -- like Jordan Crawford, yet another Kelvin Sampson/IU recruit who landed a few hundred miles east in Cincinnati -- second-year coach Chris Mack has picked up right where his predecessors Thad Matta and Sean Miller left off. There's no reason to doubt these Musketeers. Ever.

- Virginia Tech still isn't there yet. No one likes to be a party pooper -- I can only assume Hokies fans are still partying even as this post is being published, and why not? -- but it should be noted that Seth Greenberg's team, which basked Saturday in proclamations that its 64-60 win over Duke was a bid-sealer, still has to finish the season strong if it wants to get in the NCAA tournament. Virginia Tech's RPI is still a little shaky. Its only other top-50 win came over Florida State, which barely counts; the Seminoles have hovered in the mid-50s in the RPI for much of the season. The sweep at the hands of Virginia and the loss at Georgia Tech are definite black marks. Tech can't afford to slip up down the stretch, especially since its last two regular-season games come against fellow ACC bubble teams: a home contest versus Boston College and at Clemson.

For more of Brennan's observations, see the [complete post](#) in the Nation blog.

Week in quotes

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Jamie Rhodes/US PRESSWIRE Rick Pitino was none too pleased that his team received a technical foul for the overzealous and little-too-early celebration of a cheerleader.

- "All good things have to come to an end, and the male cheerleader has come to an end." -- Louisville coach Rick Pitino after a Cardinals win that saw cheerleader Jordan Alcazar get called for a last-second technical foul, allowing Pittsburgh an opportunity to tie the score.
- "To have Trapani make that last shot means so much to me, you have no idea. And I know it does to his family and to all those former players. ... You couldn't have written it any better."
-- UCLA coach Ben Howland on walk-on [Tyler Trapani](#), the great-grandson of Hall of Fame coach John Wooden, making the final basket at Pauley Pavilion before it closes for renovations.
- "As the leader of the Connecticut basketball program and an ambassador of the university, the buck stops with me. No qualifications, no exceptions. I fully acknowledge that we, as a staff, made mistakes and would like to apologize."
-- Connecticut coach Jim Calhoun in a statement after the NCAA suspended him for three Big East games next season for recruiting violations.
- "BYU is Final Four good. And I don't know that our guys liked to hear that. And then I said, 'We are, too.'"
-- San Diego State coach Steve Fisher after a loss to BYU.
- "The most protected dude I've seen since Michael Jordan."
-- USC coach Kevin O'Neill to reporters on Arizona forward [Derrick Williams](#), who leads the nation in free throw attempts.

[ESPN Conversations](#)

[59](#) comments

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What's On Tap

All times ET

Monday

7 p.m.: Villanova at Notre Dame (ESPN)

9 p.m.: Kansas State at Texas (ESPN)

Tuesday

7 p.m.: Illinois at Purdue (ESPN)

7 p.m.: Baylor at Oklahoma State (ESPN2)

7 p.m.: Alabama at Florida (ESPNU)

8 p.m.: Missouri at Nebraska (ESPN3)

9 p.m.: Vanderbilt at Kentucky (ESPN)