

THORBURN: Alec Burks likely to win over Jazz fans

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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For the most part, the 2011 NBA Draft was littered with a bunch of no-names and difficult-to-pronounce names.

No. 1 pick Kyrie Irving only played in 11 games at Duke due to injury. Apparently, only the Los Angeles Lakers had any grainy video footage or statistics on late second-round picks Chukwudiebere Maduabum and Ater Majok.

However, this draft did include one big name.

Jimmer.

The greatest challenge former Buffs standout Alec Burks, selected No. 12 overall by the Jazz, might face in the NBA will be making Utah's professional basketball fans forget about Mr. Fredette.

Jimmer Fredette, the former BYU star who stole the March Madness spotlight, was snapped up by publicity-starved Sacramento at No. 10 (via a trade with Milwaukee) instead of falling to the local franchise.

Privately, Jazz executives had to be relieved. Meanwhile, the locals swept up in Jimmermania are in a state of mourning and upset rebuilding Utah passed on Fredette at No. 3 for Enes Kanter.

"I don't think we as an organization get off too much on trying to take one player ... I think you want to be very careful not to over-promote a young athlete," Jazz president Randy Rigby told the Salt Lake Tribune before the draft. "In particular, you're bringing them into the NBA, and you've got the best of the best here. And a young rookie has some real challenges breaking into this league.

"To put that kind of pressure and to build your marketing and your philosophy and your organization around an athlete like that can become very problematic real fast, if all of a sudden with an injury or a failure to immediately come out and perform. Those images can be short lived, and now you've compounded your problem."

I did an interview with a Salt Lake City radio station on Friday, and the line of questioning was all about Burks' perceived flaws.

Fredette, a non-factor on the defensive end during his four-year career in the Mountain West, is portrayed as the next Steve Nash. Burks, who averaged 19.0 points per game at CU while playing against bruising Big 12 defenses, is often described as "a shooting guard who can't shoot."

The inevitable comparisons to Jimmer's career going forward and the unflattering scouting reports should serve Burks well at the next level. The lightly-recruited kid from Grandview, Mo., saved some of his best performances for Kansas and Missouri, programs that ignored him during the recruiting process.

"I can't wait to begin the journey," Burks said during his first professional press conference at the Zions Banks Center on Friday.

I'm not going to predict that Burks will have a better NBA career than Chauncey Billups. No player from the 2011 draft is likely to be named most valuable player of the Finals during their careers.

It should be noted, however, that Mr. Big Shot only shot 41.3 percent from the field during his two seasons in Boulder while scoring 1,020 points. Burks is taking his talents to Salt Lake City after amassing 1,291 points and shooting 49.5 percent.

"If I don't have the most confidence in myself then, no one will have it for me," Burks noted. "We're going to have to earn our right to eat, and I like that."

Fredette and Burks will probably both have lengthy, productive NBA careers as role players. Jimmer won't live up to the Tim Tebow-like hype. Alec isn't going to become a one-name superstar like Kobe and LeBron.

But I wouldn't bet against CU's favorite Show-Me State import winning over Utah in time.

"I come from Missouri, and when you come from Missouri, everyone has confidence," Burks said. "It's something that is instilled in me."

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Former CU Buff Alec Burks confident in joining Jazz

Both Utah draft picks arrive with chip on shoulder

Associated Press
Boulder Daily Camera

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SALT LAKE CITY -- The newest members of the Utah Jazz arrived in Salt Lake City on Friday with something to prove, center Enes Kanter because he hasn't played in 14 months and former University of Colorado guard Alec Burks because he's always been somewhat overlooked.

Jazz general manager Kevin O'Connor said those qualities make the two first-round draft picks a perfect fit in Utah, especially as they join players still upset about missing the playoffs last season and a coach about to embark on his first full year in charge.

"I see a little attitude and a little frustration from all of us in that we want to be able to make it right and be building in the right direction," O'Connor said.

The 6-11 Kanter and 6-6 Burks give the Jazz size and toughness, not to mention more youth. Both are 19, which means four players 21 or younger could figure in the Jazz rotation next season.

Kanter is expected to compete for minutes at center and power forward, while Burks has the versatility to play shooting guard and a little point guard.

Their development, however, could be on hold if there is an NBA lockout.

If that happens, Kanter said he will go home to his native Turkey and play for his national team, hopefully against the likes of Dirk Nowitzki and Pau Gasol in the European League.

"I think that will keep me in shape, make me ready for the NBA," said Kanter, who already is an impressive physical specimen despite being forced to sit out last year when he was declared ineligible at Kentucky. He has a 7-foot-1 wing span, weighs 262 pounds and has just 5.9 percent body fat.

Jazz strength coach Mark McKown said Kanter is a physical player like former NBA player Rafael Araujo, who once shattered a backboard with a dunk.

"He was a beast," McKown said of Araujo. "Enes is almost a beast. And he will be a beast."

Burks doesn't have the 3-point range that BYU star Jimmer Fredette has. But he said he's a better outside shooter than the 29 percent number he put up at Colorado.

Burks said proving critics wrong is what he does, especially after being under-recruited out of high school.

"That chip on my shoulder only added to my confidence," said Burks, the first Colorado player in school history to score more than 770 points, grab 240 rebounds and hand out 100 assists in a single season.

Marketing a national sensation like Fredette would have been easy. But Jazz President Randy Rigby said not to underestimate what winning will do.

"When people see the tools Alec Burks brings to this community, people will be happy," Rigby said.

O'Connor cautioned that fans will have to be a bit patient, though, as both draft picks are still teenagers.

"It's like being patient with a quarterback," O'Connor said. "You have to go through some growing pains."

Miller said the fans in Utah will love Burks and Kanter if they work hard and compete hard.

"We have a young team that we're working hard to grow and develop into a great young team that one day will win an NBA championship for the fans here," Miller said.

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Deseret News

Utah Jazz: Enes Kanter, Alec Burks introduced to local media

Published: Friday, June 24, 2011 9:26 p.m. MDT

SALT LAKE CITY — Enes Kanter grew up — boy, did he grow up — cheering for the Utah Jazz.

Alec Burks grew up cheering for Utah's NBA championship nemesis, Michael Jordan.

Now, the two promising 19-year-old prospects are teammates who are poised to help the Jazz return to the NBA playoffs.

After being selected by Utah in the first round of Thursday night's 2011 NBA Draft, Kanter and Burks were formally introduced as the two newest members of the Jazz family at a press conference Friday at the Zions Bank Basketball Center, where team general manager Kevin O'Connor told them that a wonderful journey is about to begin.

"I think this is the start of a journey. You're 19 years old and you've kind of fulfilled your dream now by playing in the NBA," he said, sounding very much like a philosophical guidance counselor. "Now it's time for you to understand that it's a journey, and where the journey takes you is up to you.

"You both have the ability to be very, very successful in our league. You'll get everything that we can do to support you, both on and off the court. And it's going to be your responsibility to play up to the level that we think you're capable of playing to.

"And ... as good a basketball players as they are, all our background works says they're even better people," O'Connor told the assembled media. "So that's a nice addition to be able to have talent and character, and fortunately we feel like we were able to do that."

Kanter was taken by Utah with the third pick in the draft. The 6-foot-11 center hails from Turkey, the same country that brought Jazz fans another similar-sized big man in Mehmet Okur, who played in only 13 games last season in the aftermath of suffering a torn Achilles tendon during the 2010 playoffs, then battling ankle and back problems after his return to the lineup.

Due to their admiration for Okur, Kanter and his family used to wake up at 3 or 4 a.m. just to watch Jazz games on television.

"I'm so happy to have him here because I know he will help me a lot because we both from Turkey and we both play the same position," Kanter said. "They love Memo in Turkey because of his personality. First of all, he's a great personality. That's why they love him, and he's also a great player. He's like Dirk (Nowitzki) in Turkey."

Kanter and Okur have never actually met, but that's about to change very soon.

"I heard he called me, but I was in press conference," Kanter said in slightly broken English. "I will call him after press conference. I'm looking forward to it, yeah. ... I think he will help me a lot; he will teach me lots of things. ... Memo's a great guy."

Burks, a 6-6 shooting guard, was the 12th pick in Thursday's draft. He averaged 20.5 points, 6.5 rebounds and 2.9 assists per game last season as a sophomore at the University of Colorado, where he earned Big 12 Conference Freshman of the Year honors in 2009-10.

He admitted he doesn't know a great deal about the Jazz, but promised to get up to speed — something the quick kid should have no trouble doing.

"Everybody knows about John (Stockton), Jeff (Hornacek) and Karl (Malone), you know, and Bryon Russell," Burks said. "Everybody knows about 'The Shot.' That's about as much as I know. I can't wait to learn more and more about their history.

"I was a Michael Jordan fan," he said. "I wasn't a Bulls fan. Everybody was a Michael Jordan fan. I guess they really didn't like him around here."

No, they don't. But who could blame Burks for admiring MJ, the man who ruined Utah's NBA title hopes in 1997 and '98? After all, Burks' middle name is Michael.

He also admitted he had a little trouble sleeping on Thursday night.


"It's hard to sleep when you just made your dream come true," he said. "I just can't wait to begin this journey."

Jazz fans probably feel the same way.

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Men's Steeple: Billy Nelson's Return To Oregon Is Successful

By LetsRun.com

June 25, 2011

*Race Video And Results At Bottom Of Page

Former Oregon Track Club member **Billy Nelson**, who is now back in Colorado training under collegiate coach **Mark Wetmore**, made his return to Eugene a successful one as his final last lap overtook **Dan Huling** for the win. Recap, results and video below.

Derek Scott looked comfortable leading the field through the first four laps, and 2008 Olympian Billy Nelson, 8:13 steepler and last year's champ Daniel Huling, and **Ben Bruce** were in close pursuit.

Things finally got rolling around 2,000 meters, as Huling, Nelson and 2009 World Champs team member **Kyle Alcorn** opened up a 10-meter gap on former US champ **Josh McAdams** and Bruce. McAdams attempted the top three with 600 meters to go.

In the lead, Huling looked very strong. Nelson was five meters back, second place seemingly secure, and the real battle was Alcorn and McAdams for the third and final spot on the World Championships team.

With 200 to go, Huling seemed to falter slightly as Nelson had not given up the hunt. Racing hard, Alcorn and McAdams were


In the last 80 meters, Nelson stormed by Huling on the inside for the win. Huling held on for second and Alcorn surged for third, but had to settle for fourth.

It was the first major win for Nelson. Although an Olympian while a collegian in 2008, Nelson was only NCAA runner-up to

Nelson already has the Worlds "A" standard (8:23.1), so the guys behind him will go to Europe to chase it so they can go for it. If none of them get it, Huling will go to Worlds with the "B" standard along with Nelson.


1	William Nelson	New Balance	8:28.46
2	Daniel Huling	Reebok	8:29.27
3	Kyle Alcorn	Nike	8:29.44
4	Joshua McAdams	New Balance	8:30.78
5	Benjamin Bruce	Oregon TC Elite	8:37.22
6	Donald Cowart	Ragged Mountain Racing	8:39.13
7	Andrew Poore	Indiana University	8:43.95

Men's 3,000m Steeple



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The Salt Lake Tribune

Burks eager to compete for Jazz minutes

By Tony Jones

The Salt Lake Tribune

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Alec Burks the player has been over a decade in the making.

Division I colleges didn't fawn over him when he was coming out of high school in Kansas City, Mo. In fact, Kansas State and Colorado were the only two major programs that offered him a scholarship. He chose Colorado because he had a chance to play early in his career.

During his two years with the Buffaloes, he still went largely unnoticed. Sure, the people in the Big 12 Conference knew all about him, but his name was still a mystery on the national radar.

The result? Burks is a guy with a healthy amount of confidence in his game, and a healthy chip on his shoulder, the product of spending most of his basketball life being overlooked. As the second lottery pick of the Utah Jazz in Thursday night's NBA Draft, Burks promises to bring that same hunger to EnergySolutions Arena.

And if he does, expect him to break into Utah's rotation, sooner rather than later.

"I like that Coach [Tyrone] Corbin says it will be a wide-open competition for minutes," Burks said. "That's the way I like it. It's what I've been used to my entire career. I have to earn the right to eat."

Even being a lottery pick, Burks was still somewhat in the shadow of the much-hyped Enes Kanter, whom the Jazz snatched with the third overall selection. During Friday's introductory press conference at the Zions Basketball Center, Burks was soft-spoken, appearing almost shy when speaking to the media.

But Utah believes it may have gotten a steal with Burks, a 6-foot-6 shooting guard with uncommon versatility.

Burks instantly upgrades the athleticism in Utah's backcourt. He can get to the rim off the dribble, he can finish at the basket and he can pass the ball. Kanter, with whom Burks worked out with in Minnesota, was quick to praise his ability to pass and work the pick-and-roll.

"He's a freak athlete," Kanter said. "We played 3-on-3 during our workout, and he can shoot and pass the ball. He's someone that I enjoyed playing with."

And Burks is someone whom the Jazz are relying on to play multiple positions. Already, there is talk of pairing Burks and Gordon Hayward together in the backcourt when matchups dictate. Burks will

immediately be counted on to break down a defense off the dribble and to create mismatches when he has the ball in his hands.

The Jazz like the fact that he rebounds well for his position, and they think everything that he accomplished at the collegiate level will translate to the NBA.

“In today’s NBA, where you can’t put your hands on anyone, you need people like Alec who can get the ball all the way to the basket,” Utah general manager Kevin O’Connor said.

“He’s a very good athlete, and we like that he’s an exceptional rebounder for his position.”

Burks said that he’s worked hard to alleviate the one criticism of his game — the lack of a consistent 3-point shot. He took 500 shots per day during the draft process, and he’ll work with Jazz assistant Jeff Hornacek when NBA rules allow for teams to start working with their players.

In the interim, Burks said he will continue to work on his game in Las Vegas. His confidence and that chip on his shoulder are already in full bloom.

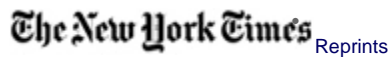
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Alec Burks file

- Was the Big 12 Conference Freshman of the Year in 2009.
- Was the Missouri player of the year coming out of high school.

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June 25, 2011

Some Runners Choose Not to Wait for a Family

By ISOLDE RAFTERY

EUGENE, Ore. — After taking second place at the 10,000-meter race at the USA Track and Field Championships on Thursday, Kara Goucher took her 9-month-old son, Colt, from her husband's arms and ran a victory lap with him around the track. He wore tiny gray Nike sneakers and sucked on his fingers.

"A few months ago, I told Adam, my husband, If I win, I want that memory of having him with me," Goucher said Friday. Although she did not win on Thursday — she finished 17 seconds behind Shalane Flanagan — she decided to run the lap anyway. After all, she had qualified for the world championships in South Korea.

"We have such short careers, so experiences like that are so limited," she said. "I thought, I'm just going to do it."

That was also Goucher's mind-set when she decided to have a child. In the past, most female athletes in track and field have waited until retirement to start a family. But Goucher and a small number of other competitive athletes have decided to simultaneously compete and be mothers.

For them, parenthood is more complicated than the usual work-life balance dilemma. Goucher purposefully gained weight and reduced her trainings to 30 miles a week from 100 to improve her chances of becoming pregnant.

Returning to competition, too, can be excruciating. Chaunté Lowe, the American record holder in the high jump, returned to the track Friday afternoon for the first time since her second daughter was born 11 weeks ago. When she failed to clear the bar three times, she buried her head in her hands.

"I want Chaunté to do really well, because she's a friend of mine," said Joanna Hayes, who won a gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles at the 2004 Athens Games. Now a coach and occasionally a sports commentator, Hayes took her 6-month-old daughter, Zoe, with her to Eugene. "It's very tough. Returning to competition two months after having a baby is a lot to ask of your body."

Hayes said she had noticed that more United States runners were choosing to have children. That may be because they see other women balancing babies and track, she said, or because contracts have become more lucrative. Elite runners can receive up to \$3 million or more.

But a contract comes with responsibility. Goucher ran throughout her pregnancy, and on the day she delivered, she lifted weights and went on a 50-minute run. Two and a half weeks after Colt was born, Goucher's coach called wondering whether she was ready to return to practice. She could not imagine even leaving her house.

"When I was nursing, he couldn't possibly understand the exhaustion I was feeling," she said of her coach, Alberto Salazar. "But I also knew that I needed someone to push me. There were times when I felt so sorry for myself, and if he hadn't been there, I wouldn't have run Boston."

When Colt was 3 months old, Goucher decided to wean him. She wanted to breastfeed him longer, but she was running 100 miles a week again and had grown too tired to breastfeed and run. She had prepared for this by pumping after she breastfed. She bought a freezer to hold three months of breast milk.

For fathers who run track, the stress lies in frequent travel.

Darvis Patton, a silver medalist in the 4x100 relay at the 2004 Athens Games, said he would have rather missed the 2009 world championships than skip his daughter's birth. His daughter, Dakota Rae, was born early, which allowed him to compete, and for the rest of the season, he wore the hospital bracelet from the day she was born.

Patton, 33, has incorporated another routine into his races — blowing a kiss to his daughter into the television cameras. At home, his daughter sits in front of the screen and says, in a singsong voice, "Run, Daddy, run." Patton's wife sends recordings of Dakota cheering him on to his BlackBerry.

He trades photographs and stories with other parent runners. He knew, for example, that Bernard Lagat had been playing **Nintendo's Wii** with his son and daughter at the hotel before Lagat won the 5,000-meter race. He also has a photograph of Hayes's daughter in his phone.

Patton and Goucher said that having children might have shifted their focus, but it did so from their tendency to obsess over things that do not matter now.

"If I have a bad workout, it would eat at me and eat at me the minute I got home," Goucher said.

"I don't obsess over the little things anymore. I come home and I don't think about it at all. I only think about Colt. It's been really good for me. It's mellowed me out."

Hayes, for her part, says she doubts she will compete again.

"These women are very good," she said. "They're not coming off babies and injuries. I don't want to take anything from Zoe, either."

But if she did make a comeback, she said, it would be for her daughter, so that she, like Colt Goucher, could run a victory lap with Mom.