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Dufault competing with Athletes in Action

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The University of Colorado senior-to-be will play on the team departs May 19 with the team and begin a four-day tour.

The team will play a round-robin tournament May 25-30 against the Macedonia Under-20 national team, the Serbia Under-20 national team, and two professional players from Poland and Bulgaria. The team concludes its tour May 31 against the Kosovo national team.

The 6-foot-9 Dufault is a three-year starter at power forward and center for the Buffaloes and will be one of 10 players to play in all 38 games last season, averaging 6.6 points and 4.2 rebounds as he helped Colorado to the National Invitation Tournament's 24 wins.

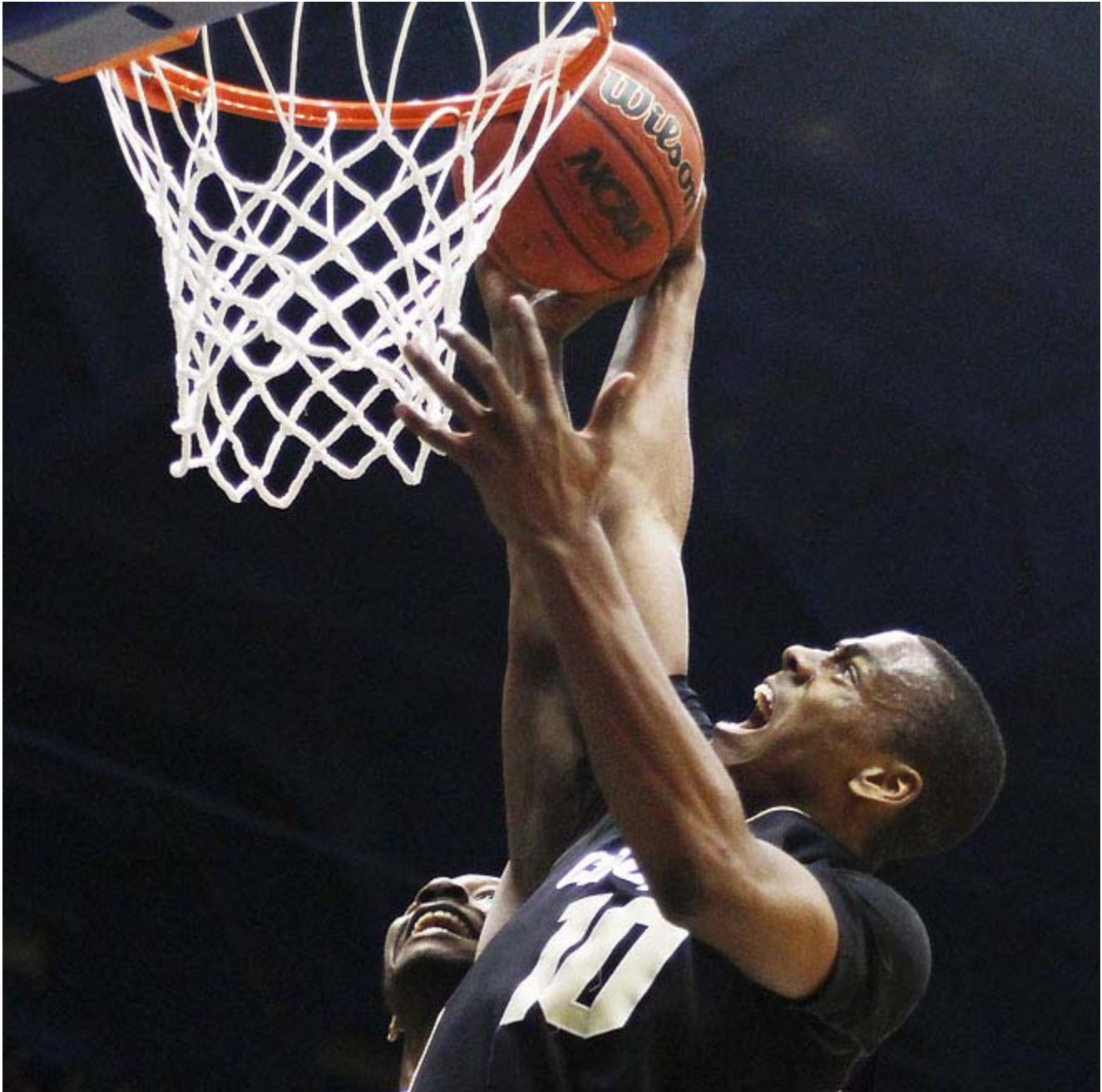
Entering the 2011-12 campaign, Dufault is among the school's all-time leaders in a number of categories including points scored (2,464); and 34th in games played (100). Dufault is also 46th in rebounding (370) and tied for 63rd in assists (100).

Other players selected to the team include Cory Jefferson and A.J. Walton of Baylor, Jordan Juenemann and Wilbekin, Indiana State's Jake Kitchell, Mercer's Langston Hall and Northwestern State's William Mosley. The tour is managed by basketball operations Tim Maloney.

The squad is one of eight Athletes In Action international-touring men's and women's basketball teams this season.

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Bucks show interest in Burks



AP

The Bucks are interested in Alec Burks, who led the Big 12 in scoring as a sophomore at Colorado during the past season.

Colorado shooting guard led Big 12 in scoring last season

By Charles F. Gardner cgardner@Journalsentinel.Com

May 19, 2011 | [\(5\) Comments](#)

Chicago - Alec Burks does not shoot the ball from deep the way Chauncey Billups does.

At least not yet.

But the 6-foot-6 shooting guard has been working out with Billups and learning from the veteran New York Knicks point guard while getting ready for the NBA draft.

Burks, who led the Big 12 in scoring as a sophomore at Colorado during the past season, is one player drawing the interest of the Milwaukee Bucks as they prepare for the June 23 draft.

Burks was one of the first players the Bucks interviewed at the annual NBA draft combine being held in Chicago on Thursday and Friday.

"Chauncey is a great shooter; everybody knows that," Burks said. "He just shows you pointers and techniques, what you should do to become a better shooter."

Billups starred at Colorado and wanted to help Burks, who averaged 20.5 points while leading the Buffaloes to a 24-14 record and the NIT semifinals last season.

"He told me to take it all in stride," Burks said of the draft process. "He said there are a lot of people who would love to be in this situation, so never take anything for granted."

Burks said he interviewed with four teams on Wednesday night: the Bucks, Sacramento Kings, Portland Trail Blazers and Houston Rockets. And he had more interviews scheduled Thursday.

He did not participate in the basketball drills portion of the combine workouts Thursday on the advice of his agent, Andy Miller. But Burks said he would take part in the agility tests scheduled for Friday.

Bucks general manager John Hammond, coach Scott Skiles and members of the basketball staff are in Chicago to evaluate draft prospects and get to know them better. The Bucks are able to interview as many as 18 players in 30-minute sessions at the Westin Hotel in downtown Chicago.

"It was a great meeting for me," Burks said of his interview with the Bucks. "They liked me a lot. I liked their staff a lot.

"I liked their system, where they're going and their players."

The Bucks have needs at several positions, and shooting guard is no exception. Milwaukee has veteran John Salmons as its starter, but 31-year-old Michael Redd is an unrestricted free agent and coming off two left knee surgeries.

Carlos Delfino and Corey Maggette both can play shooting guard or small forward.

But a team that ranked last in the NBA in field goal percentage and scoring clearly could use an

offensive boost.

Burks is known as an athletic player who can slash to the rim and get to the foul line, and he said he would be able to handle the ball or play a bit of point guard if necessary.

He said he has modeled himself after Detroit Pistons guard Tracy McGrady.

"I'm like a young T-Mac when he was in Orlando," Burks said. "He was on TV a lot when I was young.

"In his Orlando days he was very versatile. He could shoot, pass, dribble. He did anything his team needed to win."

Burks knows experts have questioned his shooting range.

"I'm really working on my jump shot a lot, proving to people I can shoot the ball from NBA range," he said. "I'm just working every day at it."

Burks was not highly recruited out of high school in Kansas City but said that drove him to excel against Big 12 competition.

"Just keeping that chip on my shoulder, I wanted to prove to everybody I could play at this (NBA) level," Burks said.

Billups quickly took an interest in Burks during his freshman year at Colorado, and the two developed a bond.

"He's been a great role model in my life," Burks said. "He showed me the ins and outs of the league. He showed me how to be a better college player.

"He told me to make the best decision for me (on entering the draft) and I took that advice to heart. He told me it's a business, it's grown men out here, not kids like in college."

Time to talk: Among those confirming they had interviews scheduled with Milwaukee were Kansas twins Marcus and Markieff Morris and San Diego State forward Kawhi Leonard.

Marcus Morris is a 6-9 power forward who projects as a small forward in the NBA and could be a top-10 pick. Markieff Morris is a 6-10 power forward and is expected to be selected late in the lottery or the middle of the first round.

"At Kansas, it was tough to tell if we were different players because our 4 and 5 (positions) are interchangeable," Marcus Morris said. "Before going to Kansas, I never played down low.

"I have a natural feeling of playing from the wing, being able to float and shoot it, not playing with my back to the basket. If a team wants me to play the 4, then that's what I'm going to have to do.

"I'm a versatile player so I can play the 3 and the 4."

The 6-7 Leonard has been rising on many draft boards after a standout season with the Aztecs and said he thought he could go anywhere from No. 4 to No. 15.

He averaged 10.6 rebounds as a sophomore and has a reputation as a strong defender.

"I'm working on staying on balance and shooting a lot," said Leonard. "I'm working on ball handling.

"Milwaukee is a good team and I think I could transition into the team. I play defense. I have goals set when I get to the NBA."

Find this article at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/sports/bucks/122275034.html>

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NBA draft combine: Colorado's Alec Burks has similarities to Chauncey Billups

BY VINCE ELLIS

DETROIT FREE PRESS SPORTS WRITER

11:50 AM, May. 19, 2011|

CHICAGO -- Shooting guard Alec Burks has a lot in common with former Detropot Piston Chauncey Billups.

Both went to Colorado. They share agent Andy Miller. And when you consider that Billups has played for six NBA teams, Burks has a 20% chance of being drafted by a team that employed Billups.

Burks said today, at the first media session at the NBA predraft combine, that Billups is "a great dude, a good person to know."

Burks, who met with the Pistons on Wednesday night, is here, along with more than 50 other prospects who hope to hear their names called during the NBA draft June 23.

Burks got to know Billups as soon as he showed up at the Colorado as a freshman. Burks admitted that his familiarity with Billups led him to pick Miller as his agent.

Notebook: Cleveland State point guard Norris Cole said he is scheduled to come to [Detroit](#) for a predraft workout next week. ... Point guards Brandon Knight (Kentucky) ,

Shelvin Mack (Butler) and Kemba Walker (Connecticut) and shooting guard Klay Thompson (Washington State) met with the Pistons on Wednesday night. Brigham Young shooter Jimmer Fredette said he will meet with the Pistons either tonight or Friday night.

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Thursday, May 19, 2011

Billups is a Mr. Big Shot in Las Vegas

By Jared Zwerling

Chauncey Billups is not used to sitting out May. Out of the 11 times the Knicks point guard has been to the postseason, seven of those appearances extended at least into the latter part of this month. So it's rare to see the playoff veteran in Las Vegas this time of the year alongside his locally-based trainer, **Joe Abunassar**.

But Billups himself is not working out just yet. His left knee is still not 100 percent after it suffered a strain during Game 1 of the Knicks' first-round series against the Celtics. Instead, [he's assisting Abunassar](#) with four of his youngest clients: some of the top guard prospects in next month's draft, including **Kawhi Leonard**, **Alec Burks**, **Josh Selby** and **Malcolm Lee**. (In ESPN.com draft expert **Chad Ford's** [latest mock draft](#), he has Selby going to the Knicks at pick No. 17.)

Yesterday, Billups took some time out of the players' morning session at Abunassar's Impact Basketball facility to speak with me about his mentorship role, draft memories, the labor negotiations, returning to the Knicks and his offseason plans.

How's it going out in Vegas?

Oh, it's cool. It's going cool.

It's probably better than all the rain we have out here.

It's still raining out there?

Every day. It's supposed to rain through next week. It's like being in the Amazon rainforest.

[laughs] That's crazy.

How are you enjoying the spring heat in the desert? What is it, like 100 degrees?

It's not that bad. It's actually only like in the 70s out here right now. But last week, it was in the 90s. But it's nicer than that s--- though.

How long are you spending out there?

I just kind of been in and out. I don't really come out here and spend a lot of consistent time until after I start training. But I've just been coming in to help Joe with a couple of his guys.

Do you help him out usually every summer?

Nah, this is the first time I did it, man. Most of the time, I'm still in the playoffs by now.

I know you're working with several guard prospects. What kinds of things are you teaching them?

A lot of times, these college guys are just really good players. The NBA game is totally different from college, as far as sets, pick-and-roll stuff. I'm trying to explain to them that some of those gaps, the openings that you see in college when you can get all the way to the basket, close up in the NBA. You gotta be a lot more efficient because guys are more athletic, guys are faster, and those gaps just close up faster. So you gotta be able to make quick reads, whether you're passing or making a play. I'm just trying to give them some of the mental aspects of the game that you don't get unless you're out there.

Do you extend your teachings to the film room?

Pretty much on the court. We stop and talk through a lot of different things. These guys are really good. All of them have a chance to be awesome, man, to be honest with you. Josh Selby I'm really impressed with. He's been awesome, man. All of those guys got a chance to be really good.

As they prepare to embark on the interview process, what advice do you give them about meeting with GMs and coaches?

I kind of give them just a little knowledge on just going in there and being able to say what you mean and have them hear what you say. When you talk to these people, don't be intimidated, look them in the eye, give them good handshakes when you meet them -- little things like that. It's just not about the interview process; it's about real life. The things that you do on a day-to-day basis are not just with GMs, not just when you're trying to impress somebody; this is the way that you should be at all times.

Looking back on your pre-draft process to actual draft day, what memories stick out for you?

Just nerves. When I first announced [I was entering the draft], I was projected between nine and 15, or something like that. The harder I worked, it was like I just kept climbing the ladder, climbing the ladder. The day the [ping-pong] balls drop, which feels like yesterday, you start to see what teams need. Then it kind of becomes a little more clearer of three or four teams that you might go to. Before I worked out for teams, I prepared for them for two and a half months, man. Then I had one workout and I invited all these teams. The different GMs and coaches stepped up and said, "Alright, we want to see him do this; we want to see him do that." And I had just an awesome workout because I was ready; I was prepared. And then from then on, it was just like go to the draft, I went and met with a couple of teams, but it was just like nerves, man. Hopefully I got to live my dream, but I was just so nervous; I didn't know what to do.

Sweaty palms, an extra towel with you on draft day?

[laughs] Of course, man.

During your time working with the prospects, has it made you thought, *Maybe I should be a coach or GM evaluating talent after I'm done playing?*

I mean, I already had that interest anyway. I just know I gotta great eye for talent and I think also I can develop talent. Just being in all the situations that I've been in, I kind of already have that a little bit. [This experience] just kind of validated it for me, like this is what I want to do. These young kids look up to me and I don't take that lightly. I'm actually honored for it and I don't take that lightly. I use that; I don't misuse it.

Out of the trainers you've worked with or heard about, what separates Joe's training styles and philosophies from the others? Obviously [his client roster](#), headlined by Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce, Chris Bosh, Kevin Love and Danny Granger, speaks for itself.

Joe is so good because one, he takes time out to learn your specific game, and to learn your specific deficiencies. When you work out with him, it's not like everybody's going to do the same exact workout. Your workout is pretty much tailor-made for the things that you need in your game. There might be two or three guys that need the same thing, so ya'll might work out and do the same thing. And if it's only you that has to work on one particular thing, then you're going to do your own personal workout. I like that about Joe. The other thing that I like about Joe is he's big on nutrition and knowing how to eat and knowing how hard to work and what days to slow down. He's not just, "Alright, let's get on the court and let's grind for two hours." It's not like that; you're getting the whole package with Joe.

Do you ever have that temptation in New York City to get one of those hot dogs or pretzels on the street, though?

[laughs] Oh, no question. I have a lot of cheat days. I don't eat great all the time, but I know when it's time for me to buckle down, it's time for me to do what I do and keep my energy levels up. I know what to do, and that's through my experience with Joe.

What's the talk like out in Vegas with the labor negotiations going on? Is there some optimism?

I think you're going to hear stories back and forth, but it's been quiet out here. A lot of these young guys don't really know anything about that. They just hope there's not a lockout. They don't have a clue about none of this stuff yet.

I was talking to Nets point guard Deron Williams a couple of weeks ago, and he said he's already looking into playing overseas. Does a Plan B even register with you?

At this point, I'm just kind of taking it easy, man. I'm going to let this process evolve however it will, and hope for the best. I'm not really thinking about the lockout right now and I'm not thinking about if I'm going to play overseas or any of that kind of stuff. I'm just happy to be home [in Colorado], spending time with my family and enjoying the summer.

By the way, congrats on the Knicks picking up your option last month. What are your thoughts on coming back?

I'm just excited to be coming back and hopefully our team evolves into a championship-caliber team, depending on what other moves we make. I feel like we took a big step this year and upgraded the talent on the team. We have to start getting the proper pieces around and everybody locking in for a great cause.

Speaking of moves, what type of player do you think the Knicks should look at with their 17th pick in the draft? Does someone specifically come to mind?

There's a lot of guys that have been impressive, but I can't really say because there are a lot of guys that I haven't seen. But I'm sure we'll get a really good player at that position.

How are you feeling since hurting your left knee in the postseason?

I'm feeling better, but I'm not 100 percent yet. I'm getting there, but I can't get on the court and really like grind, grind. I'm still not ready to do that yet, but I'm getting better though.

When do you think you'll be able to hit the court more aggressively and start scrimmaging?

I don't know, man. I'm going to come back up to New York in the next couple of weeks and have a repeat MRI with the doctors and make sure it's healing properly.

What are your plans for the summer? Taking any crazy adventure trips?

[laughs] Nah, I'm taking it easy, man.

Will you be working out with Amare and Carmelo at all?

Maybe later in the summer, but everybody's just kind of enjoying themselves right now.

Have you gotten a chance to watch the playoffs?

Oh yeah.

The Bulls' defense really impressed me in Game 1.

Oh, man. I'm telling you, defense wins, brotha.

You can follow Jared Zwerling on [Twitter](#).