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## CU men's hoops a potential NCAA tourney team?

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

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I see where at least one college basketball preview magazine is bullish on the Colorado men's team to make the NCAA Tournament.

Athlon Sports' 2010-2011 College Basketball Preview projects the Buffaloes to make the newly expanded, 68-team field by finishing sixth in the Big 12 Conference standings.

Athlon predicts the Buffs will fail to win a game in the NCAA Tournament as one of its "One and Done" selections. But reaching the NCAA Tournament would be a big step for first-year Buffs coach Tad Boyle, the former Northern Colorado boss. Boyle replaced Jeff Bzdelik, who left for Wake Forest.

Colorado, 15-16 last year including 6-10 in league play, has not reached the NCAA Tournament since 2003, when David Harrison, Michel Morandais, Stephane Pelle and Blair Wilson led the Buffs to a 20-12 record (9-7 in Big 12). CU fell in the first round to Michigan State.

Wrote Athlon: "Boyle, a Kansas alum and Colorado native, knows the Big 12 and should light a fire under a group that left its former coach seeking toughness. No one is booking March Madness trips in Boulder. But unlike most years, such a trip is conceivable."

Colorado features two potential all-Big 12 guards, senior Cory Higgins (18.9 points per game) and sophomore Alec Burks (17.1).

"Boyle inherits two studs," Athlon wrote.

I also picked up the Sporting News' college basketball preview. It projects CU to finish eighth in the Big 12 but said a higher finish and an NCAA Tournament bid are possible.

"Yes, Colorado hoops should be good, perhaps even NCAA Tournament-good for the first time since 2003," wrote Blair Kerkhoff of the Kansas City Star, who did the Big 12 preview for the Sporting News.

Competition in the Big 12 figures to be challenging as usual. I have not seen a copy of Blue Ribbon's college hoops preview. But I'm told that three of Blue Ribbons' five preseason first-team All-Americans hail from Big 12 schools: guards LaceDarius Dunn of Baylor and Jacob Pullen of Kansas State and forward Marcus Morris of Kansas.

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