

The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah Jazz notes: Alec Burks enjoying crazy dream of life in NBA

By Brian T. Smith

The Salt Lake Tribune

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Denver • Alec Burks used one word to capture all his feelings and emotions: crazy.

A year ago, Burks was a sleek, athletic guard for the Colorado Buffaloes. Now he's a backup wing for the Jazz.

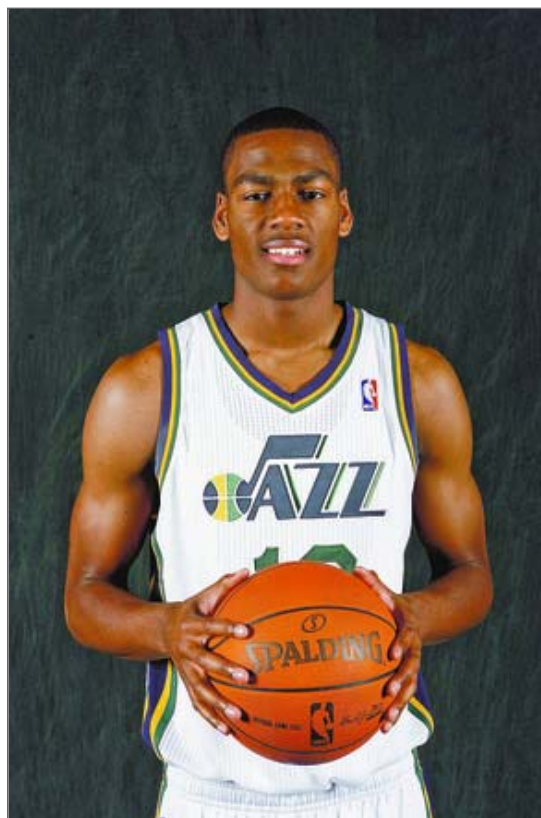
The No. 12 overall pick of the 2011 NBA Draft played six scoreless minutes Tuesday in Utah's 2011-12 season opener, recording two assists and one rebound in a blowout road loss to the Los Angeles Lakers.

He then spent pregame warmups Wednesday working out on the same Pepsi Center floor that friend and ex-Denver guard Chauncey Billups once roamed.

It's been a long, crazy trip for the 20-year-old Burks. And it's only just begun.

"I could be in school right now — Christmas break, really," said Burks, prior to tipoff Wednesday night against the Nuggets. "It's a great feeling. I'm living my dream out right now."

Burks is still devoted to the Buffaloes. So are his friends. Where most NBA players are hounded for ticket requests whenever they make their rookie



Francisco Kjolseth | The Salt Lake Tribune New Jazz recruit Alec Burks, a promising 19-year-old prospect is poised to help the Utah Jazz. June 25, 2011.

debut in a once-familiar state, Burks expected few well-known faces to show up Wednesday.

Why? The Buffaloes were hosting New Orleans in nearby Boulder, Colo.

“I’d rather them support the Colorado team,” Burks said.

Young fouls

Just because 20-year-old power forward Derrick Favors made his second consecutive start Wednesday doesn’t mean he’s fully NBA-ready.

Favors has wowed everyone from Jazz coaches to fans with his potential and rightfully earned his spot in Utah’s first unit. But foul trouble still plagues the second-year stud.

He recorded four fouls in 19 minutes against the Lakers, and two of the penalties came in the game’s first 7 minutes.

“He’s going to learn. He’s a young guy,” coach Tyrone Corbin said. “He’s got to learn the referees. He’s got to learn when he can be aggressive. I like the fact that he [goes] after the ball. He makes some fouls — they’re young fouls.”

No change

Despite hinting after the loss to the Lakers he might tweak Utah’s starting lineup, Corbin decided to stick with an initial rotation of Devin Harris, Raja Bell, Gordon Hayward, Favors and Al Jefferson against the Nuggets.

Corbin felt the Jazz let themselves down during a disappointing season opener, and he’s content having power forward Paul Millsap come off the bench for now.

“We didn’t play as hard as we play in practice, quite frankly,” Corbin said.

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cu football

Former CU Buff Alec Burks scores 15 off bench vs. Nuggets in second game as pro

Posted: 12/29/2011 01:00:00 AM MST
Updated: 12/29/2011 01:21:02 AM MST By
Christopher Dempsey
The Denver Post

Posted: 12/29/2011 01:00:00 AM MST
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NBA life agrees with rookie Alec Burks. He smiles all the time. He's aggressive on the court. That much hasn't changed for the former University of Colorado star.

And as luck would have it, the schedule dictated his return to the Front Range in just his second game as a pro with the Utah Jazz, which lost 117-100 Wednesday night against the Nuggets at the Pepsi Center. But Burks scored 15 points in nine minutes off the bench.

Unlucky, however, was the fact that CU also played Wednesday. So it was difficult, if not impossible, for some Buffs fans to see Burks play for the Jazz. Burks understood.

"I hope more are supporting them than are supporting me," he said before the game.

Burks, who has put on 10 pounds

of muscle, said he is learning the NBA game.

"It's going good so far," he said. "Just learning

every day, getting better."

Burks hasn't played much for the Jazz. But the 12th pick in this year's NBA draft isn't concerned about his playing time, though he admits not knowing when he will play has been his toughest adjustment so far.

"You work hard, you play," Burks said. "That's how it is. ... You just don't know the playing time. In college, I knew I was going to play. I knew I was going to start. Here, you have to learn what your role is."

Jazz coach Tyrone Corbin said he is pleased with what he has seen from Burks, an all-Big 12 Conference selection as a 6-foot-6 sophomore guard.

"He's learning to play at a different level, and he's got to do it a little more consistently," Corbin said. "He's a very, very versatile guy."

For now, Burks is soaking up every minute.

"This is what I left school for eight months ago," he said. "To live my dream."



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Alec Burks Q+A

Jazz rookie reflects upon his return to Colorado.

by Cub Buenning / [@cubbuenning](#)

This past April, Alec Burks was putting the finishing touches on a more than solid sophomore season at the University of Colorado. The Kansas City-native was hearing the word "lottery," so passing on his final two collegiate years wasn't the most difficult of decisions. With the 12th pick in the first round, the Utah Jazz selected the 6-6 guard; more than justifying his decision to depart.

Fast-forward a few months and suddenly the wide-eyed kid is in Tinseltown preparing to play the Lakers at Staples Center followed a night later by a return to the Mile High City in a face-off with the Denver Nuggets. Prior to tip, the rookie took a few seconds to sit down with SLAMonline.

SLAM: Talk about this first week of being an NBA player, things are legit now, you're in the big leagues.

Alec Burks: It's been cool; it's been great for me! It's why I left school (Colorado) eight months ago, to live out this dream. So, it's great to me.

SLAM: Do you have any people coming down from Boulder for this one?

AB: I don't think really anyone is coming out, because there is a Colorado game tonight, so I would rather they supported "The Buffs."

SLAM: You were a sophomore in college last year and now you are in the NBA, in Denver, playing against the Nuggets.

AB: It's crazy, man. I could be in school right now. Well, I'd be on Christmas break, but it's a great feeling, I'm living my dream out right now, I'm just glad.

SLAM: What did you take from your first piece of action (previous night in L.A. against the Lakers)?

AB: I learned that it's a grind, but at the same time, it's the NBA; everyone is more physical and faster. Mostly, I was more athletic than everyone in college, but out here, everyone can do the same thing that I can, so I just have to adjust to it. But, I feel like I'll be fine.

SLAM: Have you been keeping close tabs on the Buffs this year and what they have going on up in Boulder?

AB: Yeah, of course, I have. They are working hard, but they are going through some issues right now, but they are working hard, and I gotta respect that.

SLAM: You have spent your whole life being "the man," and not having to worry about getting minutes. How do plan on handling being a rookie and not knowing what kind of floor time you will get on a nightly basis?

AB: I've been waiting for this my whole life. I'm a grown man; this is a job and I'm going to stay ready and whenever my name is called, I'll be ready.

SLAM: What is it like playing for Coach (Tyrone) Corbin?

AB: He's real cool, I mean, he was a player, and I love playing for those guys. They understand the game more because they played it. I love coaches like that.



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SLAM: So this team, there is a nice mix here but with a lot of young guys that is probably more built for the future. How do you approach that when we know you all want to win every game?

AB: You're right. We compete every night; we all want to win; that's the goal. But we also know that the future is bright and we have a lot of players that are under 22 and are really good, so I think our future is really bright for us too.

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One Response to "Alec Burks Q+A"

Enigmatic Posted: Dec.29 at 5:50 pm

Cub!

I had meant to ask you about Burks for our Q&A and completely forgot. Good to see you got at him.
Shutout to Ty Corbin too. DePaul in the house.

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Utah Jazz: Alec Burks puts on a late show in return to Colorado

By **Jody Genessy**, Deseret NewsPublished: Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2011 11:23 p.m. MST

8 commentsPRINT | FONT +-

DENVER — Alec Burks had a solid, albeit short, college career at Colorado.

His family remains in Missouri and the Buffaloes hosted New Orleans on Wednesday, so the Pepsi Center wasn't exactly Burks Fan Club Central.

Too bad.

Burks didn't enter the Utah Jazz's 117-100 loss to Denver until about 10 minutes remained, but he put on a show in his short stint.

A night after making a scoreless NBA debut in L.A., Burks exploded for 15 quick points against the [Nuggets](#) with layups, dunks, even an outside shot.

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If the rookie was excited about that, it didn't show in the locker room.

"It's good to always see the floor," Burks said. "Scoring doesn't matter, wins count. We lost, so that's all that matters."

Coach Tyrone Corbin liked that Burks scored while running the floor and getting to the rim. While talking about Burks, Corbin even hinted the young shooting guard could be up for more P.T. after playing a combined 15 minutes in his first two games.

"We'll evaluate everything," Corbin said. "We'll see where we are and we've got to get effort from everybody on both ends of the floor and not just scoring."

The 20-year-old didn't get offended he wasn't bugged for tickets nor worry that his Colorado return fell short of the homecoming hysteria Gordon Hayward experienced in

Indiana last season.

"I'd rather them support the Colorado team," Burks said.

The Colorado team from Boulder, of course.

Being in the Denver NBA arena, just 27 miles down the turnpike from his old campus, was a surreal experience for the would-be junior. And he received a warm ovation from the Colorado crowd when he finally got in.

"This is why I left school eight months ago," Burks said. "It's crazy. I could be in school right now, on Christmas break really. It's a great feeling. I'm living my dream out right now. I'm just glad."

Corbin has high hopes for his athletic talent. Playing opportunities will come.

"He's learning to play at a different level and he's got to do it a little more consistently," Corbin said. "He's a very versatile guy, and he's very skilled and can really rebound for a guy his size."

Burks, the No. 12 pick in June's draft, has found out quickly how different the NBA game is than college ball.

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"Everybody's physical, faster," he said. "Mostly I was a lot athletically better than people in college, but here everybody can do the same things I can. So you need to adjust to everything. I feel like I'll be fine after that."

Burks is friends with ex-Buff and former Nugget [Chauncey Billups](#), but he never had a rooting interest in Denver's NBA squad.

"If they weren't from Kansas City," he said, smiling, "they weren't my favorite team."

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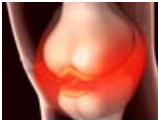
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Sky Blue FC Adds Nikki Marshall to Roster

by Sky Blue FC - Press Release

12/29/2011 - 11:42 a.m.



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Versatile Defender/Forward Bolsters 2012 Squad

Somerset, N.J. (Thursday, December 29, 2011) – One day after announcing that U.S. National Team defender Becky Sauerbrunn has joined its roster, Sky Blue FC of Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) has confirmed the addition of defender/forward Nikki Marshall. The former first round selection of the Washington Freedom is the all-time leading goal scorer at the University of Colorado, where she registered a total of 42 tallies during her college career.

"I am personally very gratified that Nikki Marshall has decided to sign with Sky Blue FC," said head coach Jim Gabarra, who previously made the Colorado native the seventh overall pick in the 2010 WPS Draft. "She is a player who we have been trying hard to get signed this offseason, and I look forward to working with her again to continue the development of her game. She has the ability to be a big contributor in WPS and possibly to the national team in the near future."

Marshall had the most decorated career in program history when she played for the University of Colorado, leaving the school as the owner of 17 school records. She burst onto the college scene in 2006, recording 17 goals and eventually being named the Soccer Buzz Freshman of the Year. The following season, she again led the Buffaloes by tallying nine scores, despite the fact that she was playing defender. She then moved back up top for her remaining two years at Colorado, registering eight more goals each season. Her standout college resume then made her a first round selection of the Washington Freedom, where she started all 24 matches of her rookie campaign at defender under Gabarra before the team was relocated to Florida as magicJack in 2011. After starting this past season with the Boca Raton club, she made 14 appearances with the Boston Breakers after it acquired her via a trade in June.

"Nikki brings a great deal of pace and athleticism to our back line," assistant coach Emma Hayes remarked. "She is an experienced WPS player, and we expect her to be pushing to get on the U.S. National Team this season with strong performances at Sky Blue FC. We are delighted to have her on board."

On the international landscape, Marshall has played for both the U-20 and U-23 sides of the U.S. National Team, capturing MVP honors in the final match of the 2008 U-20 FIFA World Cup that saw her team claim the Gold Medals.

NOTE: All player signings are subject to WPS approval.

Current Sky Blue FC Roster:

Goalkeeper Karina LeBlanc; Canadian National Team

Defender Anita Asante; English National Team, Won 2009 WPS Championship with Sky Blue FC

Defender Candace Chapman; Canadian National Team, Two-Time WPS Champion

Defender/Forward Nikki Marshall; Third Year Pro, All-Time Leading Goal Scorer at University of Colorado

Defender Becky Sauerbrunn; U.S. National Team

Midfielder Carolyn Blank; New Jersey native, Started 17 games for Sky Blue FC in 2011

Midfielder Amanda DaCosta; Second Year Pro, Four-Time All ACC selection at Florida State

Forward Gemma Davison; English National Team, Won 2011 WPS Championship with WNY Flash

Forward Manon Melis; Dutch National Team All-Time Leading Goal Scorer

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