

colorado classics

Colorado Classics: Blair Wilson made his mark in CU basketball history from long range

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The Denver Post

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Even with his name in the University of Colorado men's basketball record book, Blair Wilson isn't sure that he's firmly etched in the program's historical highlights. Eight years after he played his final season, he still is CU's all-time leader in 3-point field goals made (257) and attempted (679).

Wilson struggled as a freshman, but he eventually lived up to the billing he brought from Westminster High School, where he was an offensive machine. He finished his CU career ranked 17th in all-time scoring. The 6-foot-6 guard also made his mark on defense with 119 steals, ranking 10th in CU history.

Wilson knows he isn't exactly a household name among area college basketball fans, but he believes the longevity of his 3-point school record speaks for itself.

"I proved to all the doubters I could play at that level," Wilson said. "In my opinion, the 3-

point record says a lot."

Wilson was at his best as a junior in the 2002-03 season, hitting 83 of the 3-pointers he attempted. The Buffs won 20 games in a season for only the third time, posting a 20-12 record. They played in the NCAA Tournament, where they lost to Michigan State 79-64.

"Without a doubt that was a special year," Wilson said. "It put Colorado on the college basketball map for the first since time Chauncey Billups played (for the Buffs from 1995-97)."

There are several reasons Wilson looks back at his junior season with fondness. For the first time, the Buffs went undefeated at home in the Big 12 Conference (8-0). By beating sixth-ranked Kansas 60-59, No. 3 Texas 93-80, No. 22 Missouri 89-68 and No. 20 Oklahoma State 68-56, they became the first CU team to whip four nationally ranked teams in the same season.

CU fans signaled their approval by flocking to the Coors Events Center. The Buffs' average



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home attendance that season was 8,995, their best mark in 20 years.

Wilson was a model of consistency his sophomore through senior seasons, averaging 12.3, 12.9 and 12.3 points. But it was no secret that Wilson and coach Ricardo Patton didn't see eye to eye at the beginning of his CU career.

"We never developed a great coach-player relationship," Wilson said. "I think it was remarkable what I was able to do playing in a system that really wasn't my game."

Wilson was a sharpshooter at Westminster, where he set the state high school scoring record of 2,349 points while being coached by his father, Steve.

"They tell me I was dribbling a basketball when I was 2," Wilson said.

His mother, Bette, verified that information.

Wilson said he and his father had normal player-coach differences of opinion at times, but overall he enjoyed playing for his dad.

"It was great," Steve Wilson said. "He listened all the time and just loved to play basketball."

Blair believes that being able to shoot a basketball with accuracy is a "natural gift." But he also remembers putting in hours and hours of practice to perfect his technique on a jump shot, knowing it would be his ticket to college. He visited Notre Dame, Wyoming, Iowa State, Utah and Kansas State before picking Colorado. The decision came down to a preference to play where his family could watch him play.

After leaving CU, Wilson entered law enforcement. He's now an officer with the Westminster Police Department.

"I had a friend who was a police officer and I rode along with him on his shift a couple of times," Wilson said. "I liked what was involved in his job and decided to go that way."

Wilson discovered that his Division I playing mentality didn't fit well with the available basketball competition of pickup games after college.

"It was tough to find competitive games," Wilson said. "I played in a couple of leagues. I still have a competitive mentality, but I'm able to play for fun."

And when he's playing, he thinks back to what might have been.

"If the NBA had called, or if there had been the right opportunity overseas, I might have jumped on it," he said. "Sometimes I look back and think, 'What could have happened?'"



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Wilson, after all, can still hit the jump shot.

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Wilson bio

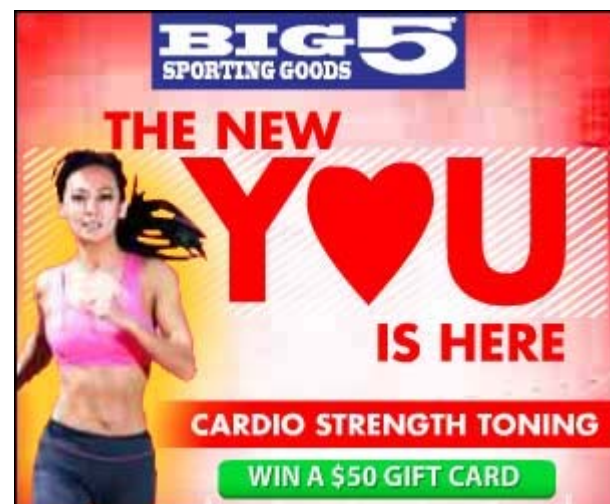
Born: Nov. 20, 1981, in Lake Wales, Fla.

High school: Westminster

College: University of Colorado

Family: Wife Tara, daughter Diam

Hobby: Physical conditioning



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