

CU's Bolen had his day at London Games

By Irv Moss *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

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DenverPost.com

Growing up in rural Louisiana, David Bolen discovered he could run faster than his peers.

"I recognized I had superior speed when I was searching for the Easter eggs," Bolen said, recalling his childhood during the Great Depression.

Bolen kept on running right to the University of Colorado and on to the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, where he became CU's first Olympian. But becoming a world-class athlete was only part of Bolen's story.

He also developed a world-class compassion for his fellow man that later overshadowed many things he accomplished on the Olympic track.

Bolen grew up home-schooled by his mother because the public schooling in rural Louisiana left much to be desired. When the family moved to Grambling, La., Bolen was enrolled in the public school system.

"We were at the end of the Depression, and there were a lot of rough days," Bolen said. "I knew my objective had to be getting an education."

After an outstanding high school career in track and field at Louisiana Normal High School, Bolen had basketball on his mind when he started college. Southern University in New Orleans offered him a basketball scholarship.

"I was a pretty good basketball player," Bolen said. "One day after practice, I went over to watch the track team practice."

It was then he met Gil Cruter, who set a world record in the high jump in 1938 while at Colorado. Cruter attended Denver West High School, excelled on the athletic fields and moved to CU.

When Bolen met him, Cruter was on the coaching staff at Southern after serving two years in the military. At Cruter's urging, Bolen left basketball behind, switched to track and field and followed Cruter's suggestion to concentrate on the running the 400-meter or 440-yard dash. In high school he competed at distances from sprints to the half-mile.

"I was quite versatile," Bolen said. "I could do it all."

Bolen's college days were interrupted by World War II.

He served in the military from 1943-46. When he became a civilian again, and with Cruter's advice, he enrolled at CU.

It wasn't an easy time for black athletes, who sometimes found their place on the team didn't include equal treatment with white teammates. On road trips, black athletes frequently had to stay in a different hotel than the rest of the team.

"I knew I had to leave the South and get into a school that had a solid track program and solid academic programs in business and economics," Bolen said.

While at CU, Bolen competed for coach Frank Potts in track and field from 1947-49. His times in the 400-meter run were among the best in the world each year. In 1948, he qualified for the Olympics and was ranked fourth in the world.

"I could run the 400 in the area of 46 seconds," Bolen said. "That would put me close to the world record."

Bolen missed an Olympic medal by one place, finishing fourth. But his experience in London in 1948, with visual evidence of World War II still all around, greatly affected him.

"To be a world-class athlete is something, but being in London increased my interest in the Olympics and what sports could do for world peace and prosperity and bringing people together," he said.

Bolen earned three master's degrees and went into the foreign service. In 1974, he was appointed an ambassador to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland by President Richard Nixon.

Three years later, he was appointed ambassador to East Germany by President Jimmy Carter.

Now 88, Bolen is spending his retirement years in Arizona. Family members still call him "Ambassador."

He has his track and field trophies, and in 2000, he was inducted into CU's Athletic Hall of Fame.

He also helps his alma mater with the Dave Bolen Olympic Scholarship Fund that supports CU athletes who make an Olympic team.

He watched the opening ceremony of this year's London Games with great interest.

"It made me feel proud and realize there are two positions that I've had that nobody can take away from me," Bolen said. "I'm an Olympian, and I'm an ambassador. I believe I contributed a great deal to my country."

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Perkins looks to catch on with Denver

Jim Benton | Posted: Friday, August 10, 2012 11:43 am

ENGLEWOOD - Anthony Perkins spent nearly 40 minutes signing autographs, posing for pictures and interacting with Denver Broncos fans after last Tuesday's practice at the Dove Valley practice facility.

Perkins, the former University of Colorado safety, was planning on being one of those fans a couple weeks ago when he got a call from the Broncos.

"A couple buddies and I were going to check out practice and we were on the way down and I got the call," said Perkins. "They asked me if I was in shape and ready to go and I said that I was."

Perkins, who went to Community Christian High School and played football at Northglenn High School, signed with the Broncos and has been working hard to try to make an impression.

"I'm very, very grateful to the organization just for giving me the opportunity," said Perkins. "I just feel very blessed to be in this position and have an opportunity. It is something that so many people dream about so it's something I'm not taking it for granted."

Perkins had planned on helping coach at CU but now he at least has a chance to play professional football like his grandfather, six-time Pro bowler and Dallas Cowboys Ring of Fame player Don Perkins.

"I'm glad to be in the position I am right now," said Perkins who grew up as a Broncos fan.

The Broncos summoned Perkins to add depth to the secondary and he's been trying to rally after the unanticipated signing.

"It's been a crazy deal," he said. "I've been playing catch up with the playbook and I've just been doing my best to show them I can compete. But it's been a great experience but at the same time it's been a grind."

"When you are in a rookie position you have to make the team somehow and the best way is with special teams. So, I've got to make sure I show them not only on defense but on special teams as well and that's going to give me a chance to stick around."

Perkins had a blithe response when asked what he was told by the Broncos after he agreed to terms.

"You had better come out and compete," he joked. "They didn't really say that but I know this is the best of the best and you better come out ready to go."

Many yarns could be recited about undrafted players becoming regular contributors on NFL teams.

"There's plenty of stories of that happening," said Perkins.

"As far as I'm concerned. I just want to come out and get better every day. What I can worry about is just showing up every day."

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Q+A: Alec Burks

Discussing the future of the Jazz at adidas Nations.

by Nima Zarrabi / [@NZbeFree](#)

"Again, he's such a nice young man. But you want him to have that killer instinct. You want him to step on the floor and just feel that I'm the best player on the floor right now, because he's capable of doing so much. But I think over time he'll get there."—Utah Jazz assistant coach Sidney Lowe, Salt Lake Tribune, July 13, 2012.

Don't let that shy, friendly smile fool you—Alec Burks is ready to become a nightmare for opponents on the hardwood. The Utah Jazz rising second-year pro capped off his rookie campaign with a wonderful showing at the Orlando Summer League in July, posting per-game averages of 19.5 points and 3.4 rebounds while shooting 45 percent from the floor in five starts. Burks' play earned him first-team honors in the Orlando League, joining Austin Daye, Miles Plumlee, Lance Stephenson and Andrew Nicholson.

His showing in Orlando was a nice extension to his lockout-shortened rookie year, where he came off the bench in 59 games for the Jazz to average 7.2 points per contest.

Having recently turned 21, Burks expects to transcend this coming season. SLAMonline visited with the 6-6, 200-pound swingman this past weekend during adidas Nations pool play in Garden Grove, CA.

SLAM: How has it been playing the big brother role with the youngsters at adidas Nations?

Alec Burks: It's great. I was coaching here last summer. It's been cool, they just want to hear what it's like to be in the League—how you made it and how hard you had to work. I tell them what they need to hear so they can be the next one.

SLAM: You had a nice showing in summer league this year. What was that experience like for you?



AB: It was great. I felt like I got more game experience and showcased more of my game that I've been working on since the season's been over. So I feel like it was real good.

SLAM: What aspect of your game did you focus on improving this summer?

AB: I feel like I worked on everything. I didn't just want to pick one area and my other areas lack. So, I feel like I had to work on everything to get better.

SLAM: How would you evaluate your rookie season?

AB: I feel like it was up and down. At first I didn't think I was getting as much playing time as I should. But we had some injuries and I had a chance to show my talent and I felt like I was good toward the end.

SLAM: What was the most difficult aspect of your rookie year?

AB: Probably the learning process. I thought I was going to play a lot more than I got. The adversity—that was probably the biggest learning adjustment. You're coming in like the man and you're thinking you're going to be the man again. It's not like that; you got to build your way up again.

SLAM: Not getting the minutes was frustrating.

AB: It was, but I understood. I still had to pay my dues. It was probably more frustrating for the people around me that thought I should be on the court. I look back and I understand it will make me a better player.

SLAM: You have said that you would like to have the same type of growth that Gordon Hayward and Derrick Favors showed during their second year. What did you mean by that?

AB: Gordon and Derrick took big leaps during their second year and they became great players. I'm just trying to do the same thing. I want to take what I learned during my first year and become a better player my second year.

SLAM: What has the team expressed to you regarding your role this year, will you have a chance to start?

AB: I got a chance, starting is up for grabs and I plan to take that and just be a bigger contributor than last year, show my growth as a person and as a basketball player.

SLAM: Utah has some nice pieces. You have a young frontcourt and now Mo Williams has been added as well. What does he bring to your team?

AB: We all know Mo's a great player, great leader, great vet. I think he's going to come in and add toughness to our team, make us better than we were. You're right, we do have a young frontcourt and the future is bright for us too.

SLAM: Who were some of the guys you competed against last year that may have opened your eyes on how much harder you have to work in the League?

AB: There's a lot. It's Kobe, Dwyane Wade, James Harden—they showed me that if I keep working hard, maybe I can be at their level.

SLAM: Some critics thought Harden was drafted too high and wasn't going to explode the way he did.

AB: They didn't at all. But he kept working and got better every summer before the season. He's shown what he can do.

SLAM: You guys are the only professional sports team in Utah. How's that work out?

AB: We're like the Beatles there. Everybody knows you since we're the only team in town. They love the Jazz out there. They pack the arena every game and it's a great experience.

SLAM: Can you go to a restaurant in SLC without anyone noticing?

AB: It's crazy. They're tweeting, taking pictures, want autographs. But I love it when somebody knows me because of what I love to do.

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Basketball_iQ Posted: Aug.11 at 11:59 pm

This kid is gonna be a good one.. Book it. I think he has more tools than harden does. And has the advantage of being a starter in utah where as harden won't eve get off in okc bc of westbrook

Andre Posted: Aug.13 at 11:22 am

There are 2 pro teams in utah... ReAL Salt Lake

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