

## Men's basketball: CU freshman Jenkins has something to prove

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Chris Jenkins and Alec Burks.

On signing day last November, Tad Boyle put the two names in the same sentence.

The Colorado head coach isn't promising that Jenkins will be an NBA lottery pick or lead the Pac-12 in scoring.

But Michigan State might regret ignoring Jenkins the way Kansas coach Bill Self acknowledge he made a mistake in not looking at Burks.

"Alec was a kid that showed up every day, whether it was workouts, practice, or games, with a chip on his shoulder. And that is what made him so great," Boyle said. "I see that in Chris. He has a fire in his belly, and that will serve him very well throughout his career here."

When told of the comparison to Burks, an All-Big 12 first team selection as a sophomore and the 12th pick in the 2011 NBA draft, a wide smile spread across Jenkins' face.

The 6-7 freshman from Detroit has the build and skill set to continue CU's recent tradition of stellar play on the wing, which was established in spectacular fashion by Burks, Cory Higgins and Carlon Brown.

"I'm glad that he categorized me with Alec Burks and them. I really take that to heart," Jenkins said. "I do have a chip on my shoulder and something to prove. That's how I was raised, to always give your best effort no matter what. So I play hard."

Jenkins said Michigan State's 2012 class was locked up during his sophomore season at Detroit Jesuit High School. He was recruited hard by assistants Mike Rohn and Tom Abatemarco and committed to Boyle following his junior season.

Jenkins emerged into an all-state player as a senior, averaging 20 points and nine rebounds while shooting 67 percent from the field, including 40 percent from 3-point distance.

The Michigan Wolverines finally tried to keep Jenkins home, but it was too late.

"I really trust Tad Boyle. He's a really good coach and he knows what he's doing," Jenkins said. "I trust coach (Jean) Prioleau, coach Rohn, coach Abatemarco, coach (Rodney) Billups, everybody. I trust the team around us.

"We're really young with our experience, but we're a good batch of kids and everything. I think we're going to build a good chemistry around each other."

Chemistry? Actually, Jenkins, who is enrolled in summer school at CU and working out with his new teammates, plans to major in biology with the hope of going to medical school after graduation.

Or course, if he were to develop into the next Burks there might be another dream job available.

For now, Jenkins is just hoping to crack a long, athletic rotation that will likely include Spencer Dinwiddie, Askia Booker, Andre Roberson, Xavier Johnson, Josh Scott, Jeremy Adams, Sabatino Chen, Wesley Gordon and Shane Harris-Tunks.

"I think we're going to be something in the next couple years," Jenkins said. "We have big expectations of winning the Pac-12. They won the Pac-12 last year and they want us to win it again this year. I actually think we're going to have a good chance of winning with the experience and the youth."

"When our chemistry gets together, we'll be good."

CU's six-man class includes three in-state stars (Gordon, Scott and Xavier Talton) and two high school teammates from the high-profile Mater Dei program in Santa Ana, Calif. (Johnson and Eli Stalzer).

The kid from Hockeytown certainly has the ability and mental makeup to help Boyle put CU basketball on the national map.

"The thing I like about Chris the most is he wants to be a player and he is committed to being a player," Boyle said. "He's got a great basketball body and he can really shoot. Like all freshmen, he needs to work on his defense, but the upside he's got is exciting."