

## Men's basketball: CU Buffs assistant Jean Prioleau wants head coaching shot

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After Jean Prioleau completed his career as a basketball player in 1999, he decided to give coaching a shot.

"I wanted to be involved in basketball," he said.

Fourteen years later, he has enjoyed a great deal of success and is ready to take the next step in his career. The associate head coach at Colorado, Prioleau is hoping for a chance at a head coaching position in the near future.

"I think I'm ready, yeah," he said. "At the end of the day, there are a lot of guys that are ready. It's just a matter of having the opportunity come to you."

Since the end of the 2012-13 season, Prioleau has interviewed for three head coaching positions -- he declined to name the schools with which he interviewed -- and was told he was the No. 2 choice for two of the positions.

"Both said that they felt like my time was coming," Prioleau said.

CU head coach Tad Boyle believes Prioleau's time is coming, as well. A couple of weeks ago, Boyle added the title of associate head coach for Prioleau with the hope that it'll help Prioleau land a head coaching position in the future.

"Being elevated to that position, first of all I'm grateful that coach has done that for me," Prioleau said. "It means he has a lot of confidence in me and he believes in me. It doesn't change my role; I'm still doing the same things, but it's definitely an honor."

He's certainly earned it, and earned the opportunity to run his own program.

Prioleau was a star player at Fordham University, leading them to the NCAA Tournament in 1992. He graduated with a degree in physics, but instead of using his degree, he played professionally for eight years, in the CBA and in Turkey and Italy.

In 1999, he was offered a chance to help coach at Fordham for a year. He jumped at the chance, knowing it would be just a one-year stint.

That year of experience, however, helped him land a spot on Mark Turgeon's staff at Wichita State. He spent five years with the Shockers, with Boyle also being a part of that staff during those years.

He then bounced around to Marquette, Iowa State and TCU. When Boyle was hired as CU's head coach in 2010, he brought Prioleau to Boulder with him. Knowing the Turgeon/Boyle system well, Prioleau didn't hesitate to move to CU.

"I'm lucky I've been able to be around coach Boyle and coach Turgeon because of how they coach and what they allow you to do as an assistant," he said. "They allow you to coach and to develop. Not every program is like that, in terms of the head coach allowing assistants to coach during practice.

"I think that's what developed the concept (of becoming a head coach) in my head."

At CU, Prioleau has worked with the guards. He helped Alec Burks take his game to the next level in 2010-11 and then coached Carlon Brown to a great season in 2011-12. Both are now playing professionally.

Among current Buffs, Prioleau has helped Spencer Dinwiddie develop into a projected 2014 NBA first-round draft pick. Dinwiddie averaged 15.3 points this past season, while fellow guard Askia Booker was second on the team with 12.4 points per game.

Prioleau said he most enjoys seeing "young men come in and graduate," as well as watching them develop as players within a system. He has also been able to develop several other skills needed to become a head coach, such as game planning and public speaking.

Of course, CU's success during his three years in Boulder will play a role in helping Prioleau become a head coach. Schools tend to hire assistants from winning programs, and CU, which hasn't enjoyed much success in its history, has had an NIT Final Four appearance and back-to-back NCAA Tournament trips during the past three seasons.

"Winning helps," Prioleau said. "You win, people are going to notice."

They're already taking notice, and it may not be long before Prioleau moves his wife, Janelle, and 2-year-old son, Elijah, out of Boulder.

"I understand the job that I have to do and we have to do here (at CU)," he said. "We have a good situation here; I'm happy here.

"But, I've always been in it to eventually be (a head coach)."

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