

## Men's basketball: Early indications are that Andre Roberson should return to CU Buffs

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There have been NBA scouts at most of the games Andre Roberson has played at Colorado.

When he was a freshman coming off the bench, they showed up in droves to get a good look at Alec Burks and Cory Higgins to a lesser degree.

When he was a sophomore, they evaluated Carlon Brown while starting a file on Spencer Dinwiddie.

This season there were some intriguing young Buffs added to the roster and plenty of pro prospects on opposing teams for scouts to take notes on from the Charleston Classic through the Pac-12 schedule and into the NCAA Tournament.

During CU's 92-83 loss at then-No. 3 Arizona on Jan. 3, the Camera asked a respected vice president of basketball operations of an NBA team in attendance the multi-million dollar question:

Should Roberson enter the draft this spring or return for his senior season?

"We always want players to go back and work on their games if they can," the longtime NBA executive said. "At the end of the season, it will be very obvious what (Roberson) should do."

The general consensus among NBA scouts is twofold:

Roberson is not going to be a first-round pick this summer and won't be in a deeper 2014 draft unless he can demonstrate dramatic improvement on the offensive end of the court.

Roberson's unique skill set -- the 6-7 forward has a Rodman-like ability to rebound the ball and can defend multiple positions -- should lead to employment in the NBA, even if he has to take the road less traveled (second round, undrafted free agent, D-League or Europe) to realizing his hoops dream.

After CU's season ended with a loss to Illinois in the NCAA Tournament, Roberson said he would take some time to talk to his father, John, and head coach Tad Boyle before making a decision.

"It's a terrible way to go out, or even end your career, one and done in the NCAA Tournament," Roberson said after the Buffs erased a 16-point halftime deficit with a 21-0 run before eventually getting eliminated by the Illini.

The deadline for underclassmen to declare for the NBA draft is April 28.

Most prospects, including Pac-12 player of the year Allen Crabbe, a junior from Cal, don't plan to announce a decision until that date arrives.

It's important for coaches, parents and players to gather as much feedback as possible to project where, or if, the player will be selected. Only first-round contracts, which are for two years with team options for the third and fourth years, are guaranteed.

Boyle has applied for an evaluation of Roberson by the NBA advisory committee, which consists of general managers, assistant general managers and player personnel executives who have extensively scouted college games.

"They were accurate with Alec," Boyle said of the service. "They projected him as a late lottery pick or a mid-first round pick and he was late lottery."

The evaluations obviously don't include the player's individual workouts for teams in May and June, which can have an impact on where players are chosen.

There are different paths that can be taken to the NBA.

Burks, the 12th overall selection in the 2011 draft, made a smart financial decision. His three-year rookie contract is worth \$6.3 million.

This season Burks, who thoroughly enjoyed his college experience for two years and returned to Boulder during the NBA All-Star break this winter to cheer on the Buffs, is averaging 7.4 points and 2.3 rebounds for the Utah Jazz.

Chris Copeland, a 6-8 forward who played for the Buffs back in the Ricardo Patton era, played professionally in the D-League, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium after graduating from CU in 2006.

This season Copeland, a 29-year-old rookie, finally broke into the NBA and is averaging 7.2 points and 1.8 rebounds for the New York Knicks.

One of the reasons Roberson and many of his teammates chose CU out of high school was because of their belief in Boyle.

"I feel like I can trust coach Boyle," said Dinwiddie, who will likely have to make his own draft decision next spring. "He's just a very honest man. Whatever he says, you can pretty much take it to heart."

Internet mock drafts are not always to be taken to heart, but Roberson isn't showing up in the first round of the prominent ones.

ESPN's Chad Ford ranks Roberson as the 54th best prospect this season and projects him being taken in the second round or going undrafted should he come out.

NBADraft.net does not include Roberson in its 2013 mock and has Dinwiddie as a lottery pick (ninth overall) and Roberson as a second-round pick (37th overall) in 2014.

Roberson was CU's third-leading scorer this season behind Dinwiddie (15.3 ppg) and Askia Booker (12.4 ppg), averaging 10.9 points while shooting 48 percent from the field and 32.8 percent from behind the arc.

Scouts would be drooling over Roberson, the Pac-12 defensive player of the year, if he could put together performances like the one at Stanford (24 points on 9-for-13 shooting) more often as a senior.

For the third consecutive season, Roberson led the Buffs in rebounding (347), steals (67) and blocks (41). Boyle's first recruit at CU averaged 6.7 points and 7.8 rebounds coming off the bench as a freshman and 11.6

points (51 percent from the field) and 11.1 rebounds as a sophomore.

The NBA draft will be held on June 27 at Madison Square Garden in New York.

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