



Bzdelik to add 3 in 2009

Recruits hail from Down Under, Los Angeles, Missouri

By Ryan Thorburn

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Jeff Bzdelik can't wait to introduce the five freshmen on his roster to the fans at the Coors Events Center on Friday when Colorado opens the 2008-09 season against Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

Nate Tomlinson, Austin Dufault, Toby Veal, Trey Eckloff and Ryan Kelley are expected to help this coaching staff win big in Boulder before they graduate.

"What's refreshing about them is they want to be coached, they want to do the right thing, they're very innocent," Bzdelik said recently. "You can mold them the way you want to mold them."

All of the above are here because Bzdelik wanted them to be here. Same story for sophomore starters Cory Higgins and Casey Crawford. And even for Ricardo Patton holdovers Jermyl Jackson-Wilson and Dwight Thorne, who have embraced the new brand of basketball.

"I'm really excited about this year," Bzdelik said. "I love coaching these players."

Before this team takes the floor for the first time, Bzdelik plans to take another positive step in the rebuilding process by officially welcoming three more players to the program as part of next year's recruiting class.

Alec Burks, Shane Harris-Trunks and Keegan Hornbuckle are expected to sign letters of intent today to play at CU.

Per NCAA rules, Bzdelik is not allowed to talk about these prospects until the ink hits the paper, but here's a brief introduction of each future Buff:

Burks is a 6-foot-4 shooting guard from Grandview, Mo., who committed to CU over Kansas State after visiting Boulder and Manhattan. He is a skilled left-handed player who is capable of playing point guard and should be a good fit for CU's system because of his ability to shoot from distance and slash to the basket.

Harris-Trunks is a 6-11 center from Sydney, Australia, who committed to CU after a recent visit in which he was able to spend time with Tomlinson, an old mate from Down Under. The big guy, who also received interest from Washington State and Gonzaga, will bring the Buffs some much-needed size and is considered to be a good shot blocker whose body is ready for the Big 12.

Hornbuckle is a 6-6 small forward from Los Angeles who committed to CU despite being recruited by Arizona before Lute Olson's recent retirement due to health issues. He is a smooth shooter with deep 3-

point range and the ability to finish above the rim in transition.

The Buffs will probably add at least one more player to the class during the spring signing period.

Bzdelik is obviously building the program with players he recruits out of high school who will be at CU for four years. The second-year head coach, whose team is predicted to struggle again in the Big 12 this season, was asked at the team's media day if he was a patient man.

"No, I'm not. But I have my eyes focused on the big picture here," Bzdelik said. "Quick fixes don't equate into a solid foundation that will last a long, long time."



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