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## CU coach Bzdelik interviews for T-wolves job

By Chris Tomasson  
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University of Colorado basketball coach Jeff Bzdelik has interviewed for the Minnesota Timberwolves head coaching position. (Photo from Newscom)  
 LAS VEGAS — University of Colorado basketball coach **Jeff Bzdelik** is being looked at again by the NBA.

Bzdelik confirmed to the Rocky Mountain Independent on Thursday afternoon that he has interviewed with the Minnesota Timberwolves about their open head-coaching position. A source close to the situation earlier had told the RMI that Bzdelik interviewed this week with Timberwolves general manager David Kahn at the NBA Summer League in Las Vegas.

"While I was out in Las Vegas, there was conversation with Minnesota," said Bzdelik, who was in Las Vegas from Monday through Wednesday. "Any further conversation would require permission from the University of Colorado."

Bzdelik called it an "unexpected" conversation with the Timberwolves. He said he primarily went to the summer league to see former Buffaloes star **Richard Roby** playing for Oklahoma City.

Bzdelik **coached the Nuggets** in 2002-03 and 2003-04 before being fired midway through the 2004-05 season. He unexpectedly led the Nuggets to the 2004 NBA playoffs, their first appearance in nine years, and had an overall record of 73-119. He has been Colorado's coach the past two seasons.

Bzdelik, who was a longtime NBA assistant and scout before joining the Nuggets, was interviewed for the Chicago Bulls head position last year. That job eventually went to Vinny Del Negro.

Kahn has interviewed numerous candidates to replace the Timberwolves' **Kevin McHale**, who was let go after the season. Among those thought to be frontrunners are ABC analyst and former NBA point guard **Mark Jackson**, Dallas assistant and former NBA head coach **Terry Stotts**, Los Angeles Lakers assistant and former NBA head coach **Kurt Rambis** and Houston assistant **Elston Turner**.

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### ARCHIVE

July 2009						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
« Jun						

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# CU's Bzdelik has conversation with NBA's Timberwolves

## Bohn convinced men's basketball coach staying put

By Neill Woelk

Thursday, July 16, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — Colorado basketball coach Jeff Bzdelik had an informal conversation with Minnesota Timberwolves officials about their head coaching vacancy earlier this week, but CU athletic director Mike Bohn said he is convinced that Bzdelik remains committed to the Buffs.

“Jeff called me and told me that it was an informal ‘bump’ at a summer league where he was monitoring the progress of some of our players and some of our former players,” Bohn said. “He said it was a very casual conversation.”

Bzdelik spent three days this week in Las Vegas, where he watched some former Buffs compete in an NBA summer league, and also met with current Buffs Cory Higgins and Trey Eckloff, both of whom were attending a skills camp there.

“I was there for three reasons: one, to talk basketball with people who know the game,” Bzdelik said. “Two, to support some of my players who were there improving their game.

“And three, to protect our interests. Unfortunately, in our business, there’s not a great deal of integrity in some circles, and some coaches are always trying to tamper with other players.”

While there, Bzdelik said he had an “unexpected” meeting with Timberwolves general manager David Kahn.

“The conversation came up about their opening and we talked about it,” Bzdelik said. “That’s what there was to it.”

Among those who have officially interviewed for the Minnesota job are Houston Rockets assistant Elston Turner and Portland assistant Monty Williams. Former NBA guard Mark Jackson, Dallas assistant Terry Stotts and Lakers assistant Kurt Rambis are also believed to be among the front-runners for the position.

Knowing that news of his conversation with Kahn would become public, Bzdelik called his players Thursday to inform them that he remains committed to Colorado.

While he would not rule out any further conversations with the Timberwolves, Bzdelik sounded very much like a man determined to continue the rebuilding process in Boulder.

“Our guys are busting their butts this summer,” Bzdelik said. “I honestly believe we are coming close to turning that corner. I feel great about our future, and I know our guys feel the same way.”

Earlier this summer, Bzdelik also spent some time with longtime NBA coach Larry Brown, who has seen the Buffs play several times during Bzdelik’s tenure.

“He offered some sound advice,” Bzdelik said. “It was a great meeting.”

NCAA rules prohibit Bzdelik from watching current players work out at camps. But he did have the opportunity to meet with Higgins and Eckloff after their daily workouts.

“I want to support our guys,” Bzdelik said. “I want them to know that we’re in their corner.”

Bohn said he believes Bzdelik will be at CU next season.

“Jeff has been completely transparent with us,” Bohn said. “He remains as excited as he’s ever been about Buff basketball. His commitment and work ethic to move this program north are at an all-time high.” Bohn said.

Bzdelik, who spent most of his coaching career in the NBA, including a head coaching stint with the Denver Nuggets, has his name pop up periodically in searches. Last year, when the Chicago Bulls were looking for a coach, his name surfaced in connection to the vacancy.

“Speculation about interest in Jeff from any NBA team is a constant issue, based on his coaching ability and stature nationally,” Bohn said. “He’s respected not only at the college level but at the professional level, and speculation will always be a part of that.”

Bzdelik had two successful seasons at Air Force prior to taking the CU job in 2007. Before that, he was the head coach of the Denver Nuggets for 2½ seasons.

He is 21-42 (4-28 in the Big 12) in two years at Colorado.



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