

# Jack Buckmelter going public with desire to win state at Denver East

Coach Rudy Carey is placing heavy expectations on Buckmelter

By Neil H. Devlin

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Jack Buckmelter (2) of Denver East Angels drives on Jalen Guidry (10) of Rangeview Raiders during the first half of their class 5A sweet 16 game on March 4, 2015. (Aaron Ontiveroz, *The Denver Post*)

When Jack Buckmelter transferred to [Denver East](#) from [Colorado Academy](#) before his junior year, he was in search of change. He was looking to become part of his neighborhood school. He wanted to be a member of a team that would compete for a big-school state championship. And he wanted to prove to his parents that he could handle himself at one of Colorado's larger high schools. Growing his game, perfecting his outside shot, getting a chance to play in college, going against what usually is one of the state's best schedules and performing in front of the most loyal community following have been bonuses. Now a senior, the 6-foot-1, 175-pound Buckmelter, who was a starter for Class 3A Colorado Academy as a freshman, is centered on only one of them.

"It's my senior year. I hope we win state, and that's all I really care about," he said. "I'm just excited to play with the team. I think we'll be good. It will be a great experience." Longtime city figure and coach Rudy Carey is placing heavy expectations on the guard and is confident he can handle them. "Leadership," Carey replied when asked what he expects from a senior taking over his team's point-guard position. "He's our captain, a very good leader, and he has got to be the glue on how far we go." Buckmelter, whose father, Vince, played at East in the 1980s, averaged 14.6 points over 16 games for last season's Angels, who finished 17-11 yet still made it to the final four. He provided additional scoring to back up Brian Carey, Class 5A's leading scorer and The Denver Post's Mr. Colorado Basketball now at Texas Southern. This season, Buckmelter will be asked to do just about everything — run the point, provide outside and free-throw shooting, guard the opposition's best backcourt player and rarely leave the floor. "I worked a ton on my shot," Buckmelter said. "I could have shot it better last year. "But I've also been working a lot on my dribbling, being able to bring it up the court every time." Rudy Carey likes that he sees Buckmelter being "fully prepared." It will have to be displayed immediately — the Angels open at home Tuesday against an experienced Legend squad. Buckmelter, who primarily has been in private schools, can show gratitude about his new situation. "I love East," he said. "It's the best place and basketball here is such a sweet atmosphere. The whole community seems to care so much."