

## Vermont's Blakely getting looks before NBA draft

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UAlbany fans are no doubt relieved to say farewell to Vermont star forward Marqus Blakely, the two-time America East Player of the Year, who finished his stellar career by leading the Catamounts to this year's NCAA Tournament.

However, it may surprise that Blakely is getting serious looks from the NBA as the draft approaches.

Vermont coach Mike Lonergan said today the 6-foot-5, 225-pound Blakely has workouts scheduled with no fewer than seven NBA teams before the June 24 draft.

"I think he has a legit chance to be one of the last 2-3 picks in the 2nd round," Lonergan wrote in an e-mail. "They are intrigued by his 7'0 wing span and think he can be a great defender."

At the very least, it seems likely that if Blakely goes undrafted he'll hook on with an NBA summer-league team.

While Blakely had a terrific college career with 1,875 points and 1,044 rebounds, his NBA prospects might have seemed slim because he was an undersized post player at Vermont with little shooting range and didn't appear to have a position at the next level.

However, he's a pro-level athlete — just ask anyone who saw his thunderous dunks — and a three-time America East Defensive Player of the Year. Although he was a tremendous help defender at Vermont, he needs to address whether he can guard perimeter players one-on-one at the highest level.

According to Lonergan, here's Blakely's NBA workout schedule:

Saturday: Golden State—he'll go up against Butler's Gordon Hayward, among others, at this workout

June 10: Los Angeles Clippers

June 11: Houston Rockets

June 17: Washington Wizards

June 18-19: Boston Celtics

June 20: Memphis Grizzlies

June 21: Milwaukee Bucks (date is tentative)

If Blakely were to be chosen, he'd be the first NBA draft pick from the America East since Hofstra's Speedy Claxton went in the first round (20th overall) to Philadelphia in 2000.