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Sports > Grizzlies

MEN'S BASKETBALL: Keith Benson becomes Oakland's first NBA draft pick, taken 48th by Atlanta Hawks

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By staff reports

ROCHESTER — Oakland University's Keith Benson became the first-ever Golden Grizzly to be selected in the NBA Draft as the Atlanta Hawks selected the 6-foot-11 center with the 48th pick on Thursday night inside the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J.



Benson, a native of Farmington Hills, becomes the seventh player in Summit League history to be taken in the NBA Draft.

"I'm really excited to be picked by a playoff team and to be the first-ever player drafted from Oakland," said Benson. "It means a lot to me. They have a lot of good players like (Al) Horford, (Joe) Johnson and (Josh) Smith. I am looking forward to taking the next step in my life."

A two-time All-American and Summit League Player of the Year, Benson helped lead Oakland to a program-best 91 wins in four seasons and three consecutive 20-win seasons. He led the Golden Grizzlies to two straight Summit League regular season and tournament championships and back-to-back NCAA tournaments. Benson set the all-time league record with 371 blocked shots en route to being named Summit League Defensive Player of the Year.

"I'm really happy for Keith Benson," said Oakland coach Greg Kampe. "This is a dream come true for him and his family. To see a young man that I have so much respect for reach a goal in his life is very exciting."

Benson is the only league player to surpass 1,500 points, 1,000 rebounds and 300 blocked shots, finishing with 1,903 points and 1,103 rebounds. He received the 2010 Lou Henson Award, given to the nation's top Mid-Major collegiate player and is as a three-time all-league performer.

Rawle Marshall is the only other Oakland player to play in the NBA, signing as a free-agent in 2005 and played for the Dallas Mavericks (2005-06) and Indiana Pacers (2006-07).

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