Historic rivalry makes top state collegiate sports contest

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MISSOULA--Saturday's Montana v. Montana State gridiron classic on Dornblaser Field will be by more ways than one a singular event in the Montana annals of great collegiate sports events.

This is the last of the classics to be scheduled for Dornblaser field. Next year the contest will be on Montana State's home sod. After next season and 47 years of service, Dornblaser field will be retired from Grizzly pigskin action.

University officials report the new gridiron south of Campbell Field is expected to be in use for 1968 football action.

Saturday's battle also brings to the 66th contest the spirited gridiron rivalry between Montana and Montana State.

Ever since Montana's first team in 1897, organized and coached by chemistry prof Fred Smith, Montana has maintained a commanding leadership over its opposition from over the hill.

Montana has won 41 of 65 encounters. Eighteen wins have gone to Montana State and there have been six ties.

Following a local season of three scoreless ties its first year, the Grizzly club defeated Montana State 18-6 after a gate of $250 was guaranteed to get the "Aggies" to climb over the mountains.

Montana's coaching staff provided solid leadership those days by entering into the game. The game, somewhat new to Montana, was reported in the local Missoulian by its society reporter.

BIGGEST WIN

Just seven years later, in 1904 the Grizzlies ran up the biggest score in history over Montana State 79-0. One of the early sports enthusiasts recalls the Grizzlies used
two managers and a cheerleader in the fourth quarter of that classic.

Limping with injuries in 1920, the Grizzlies defeated the Bobcats 28-0 for Montana's first homecoming crowd in the new Dornblaser stadium. It was named after 1912 Grizzly captain, Paul Dornblaser, who was killed in World War I action.

In 1926 the two rivals played their first game in Butte, where they were destined to play their classic for a number of years. At that contest the Grizzlies spearheaded a 27-0 skunk job over the Bobcats.

A 20-year revenge proved sweet to the Bobcats who victored 14-12 in 1929 for their first win since 1919.

The Montana v. Montana State classic continued uninterrupted until the war years of 1942-45. It was resumed in 1946 with a Montana win, 20-7. The Grizzlies conquered again in 1950 at the last conflict to be staged in Butte, 33-0.

UNDER SKYLINE RULES

Beginning the last decade and a half, the Grizzlies insured no more active participation by coaches, cheerleaders or managers. In 1951, after transferring from the Pacific Coast Conference to the Skyline Conference, Montana skunked Montana State 38-0 on Gatton Field in Bozeman.

The following year, 1952, the Bobcat victory hopes perished 35-15 in the first Cat appearance on Dornblaser since 1924.

The Grizzlies continued to victor 1953--32-13, 1954--25-21, and 1955--19-0, but the Bobcats got frisky in 1956 and broke their eight year losing streak with a 33-13 triumph.

Montana State took the 1957 verdict in Bozeman, 22-13; the 1958 contest 20-6, by breaking a three quarter, six-all tie; and to an even better victory of 40-6 in 1959.

The Silvertips called a 10-6 halt to the Bobcat rampage in 1960. The Cats bounded back, 10-9 in 1961. Grizzlies rallied behind 115 yards of rushing power by the great Terry Dillon to reverse a Bobcat lead, 36-19 in 1962, the last Grizzly victory to date.

The Bobcats have proved themselves champs over the last three years with three wins 1963--18-3, 1964--30-6 and 1965--24-7.

In the past fifteen years the Silvertips from Montana have won seven encounters to the eight victories for the Cats from Montana State.

Cats are favored this season with a 7-1 record compared with the Grizzly scoreboard of 1-6. However, there have been plenty of upsets in this historic classic; Grizzly fans hope Saturday will be another.