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GRIZZLY FOOTBALL RIVALS NOT BIG
25 YEARS AGO LIKE THEY ARE TODAY

MISSOULA-- To be a good college football lineman today, a guy has to have three things: tremendous size (like at least 225 or 230 pounds), remarkable speed and agility, and often, above average intelligence.

Even a back these days has to have at least the latter two, and often the first, to compete effectively without risking his life.

But 25 years ago, things were different. The biggest lineman usually didn't weigh more than 215 or 220 pounds, and the backs were lucky if they hit 185.

At that time, the University of Montana (then Montana State University) was a member of the Pacific Coast Conference, and looked forward to grid contests with Southern Cal, California, Washington, Washington State, Oregon State and Idaho, and could often hope to play on an even par with these schools. The 1942 Tips also played Brigham Young University, Montana State College (now Montana State University) and the Mather Field Flyers.

The comparative sizes of these teams, both in numbers and weights of players, varied little.

The burly Grizzlies of 1942, with 22 of 30 from Montana, ranged from the smallest man, 157-pound quarterback Dick Bowman of Casper, Wyo., to hefty guard Butch Nyquist of Scobey, 5-9 and 215 pounds.

Things were bad enough in 1942, with many of the experienced Grizzlies in the service, without having to go through three coaches. Head Coach Doug Fessenden went to help Uncle Sam before the season even started, and he was succeeded by George (Jiggs) Dahlberg, who also went to serve in 1942, and finally Clyde Carpenter, who remained for the duration of the '42 season.
BYU was the smallest team the Tips faced that year, with not one Cougar weighing more than 200 pounds. The biggest man on the BYU roster was tackle Edwin Ure, 6-3,199, from South Summitt, Utah. There were 10 Cougars in the 160-170 range, the smallest being Bill Smith, a 5-9, 164-pound halfback from Los Angeles.

Of BYU's 52 players, only half were from Utah, so the cry of "Let's use Utah boys" was probably ringing loud and clear back in 1942. The junior college player was on the scene, including one from Weber Junior College, the school that has since grown into a four-year institution and has rated top ten honors among small colleges for the past two seasons.

One of the beefier units the Grizzlies had to tangle with in 1942 was the Mather Field Flyers, whose 35-man squad featured 12 horses carrying 200 pounds or more. Their Flyer Goliath was Pvt. Everett McDonald, a 6-2, 250-pound tackle hailing from Anaheim, Calif. Their midget crew consisted of two 165-pounders, both ends.

The 34-man Washington State University roster in 1942 held only eight out-of-state names, but one of the "aliens" was the biggest man on the squad. That was 6-3, 225-pound tackle Keith Manning of David City, Neb., one of 11 Cougars weighing more than 200 pounds. Tiniest Cougar was Benton Bangs, 170-pound halfback from Chelan.

WSU's cross-state rival, the University of Washington, had one less player than the Cougars, but the Huskies had managed to do something the Cougars couldn't-- recruit players from Montana. There were two of them in 1942, Neil Brooks, a Livingston full-back, and Leonard Larson, a Great Falls guard.

Seven of the Huskies tipped the scales at 200 pounds or better, the biggest being 248-pound tackle Don Deeks, a sophomore from Portland, Ore. The Huskies boasted three players who weighed only 170 pounds.
Twenty-one of Idaho's 30 players in 1942 were home-staters, and five on the squad were toting 200 pounds or more. The big Vandal that year was Milford Moses of Boise, 6-0, 212 pounds. He towered over tiny Charles Plastino of Jerome, Idaho, a 5-8, 165-pound halfback.

Back on the West Coast, Oregon State had a 41-man squad, with 23 Oregonians and four Montanans. Treasure State emigrants to OSU in '42 were Bob Heximer and Bill McInnis, both of Great Falls; George Zellick of Lewistown, and Robert Kennedy of Glendive, the smallest Beaver at 152 pounds.

Oregon State had 13 over 200 pounds, with the biggest being Paul Evensen of San Francisco, packing 235 pounds on his 6-3 frame.

The Grizzlies renewed a rivalry with California in 1942, a rivalry that had been dead since 1930. The Tips traveled to Berkeley to match skill with a 36-man squad, all from California, and 30 weighing less than 200 pounds.

The Bears showed off 6-3, 212-pound center Brunel Christensen of Alturas as their biggest man. Halfback Walt Gordon, a home-town kid, was the smallest at 160, and the Bears had a fullback weighing only 165 pounds.

Southern California also managed to make off with one Montana player in 1942, Helena fullback Earle Parsons, one of three out-of-staters.

Of the eight from USC that were 200 pounds or more, the biggest was tackle Norm Verry of Visalia, a 233-pound tackle. Smallest Trojan was Howard Callahan at 157 pounds.

Football has grown since 1942, and so have teams and players. The 200-pound plus lineman is no longer something to show off, but instead something to get more of, from simple necessity.

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