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Grizzlies way ahead of last year in almost every statistical area

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MISSOULA—

Comparisons are usually frowned upon in any kind of sports, but when a team like the University of Montana has bounced from a 1-8 record in 1966 to a 6-3 mark in its first nine games in 1967, comparison of nine-game statistical totals for the two seasons can be interesting.

A quick glance shows that Montana is well ahead of last year in three important areas, perhaps the most significant of which is first down totals.

In 1966, for nine games, the Grizzlies had picked up only 99 first downs, and had given up 174 to opponents (remember, the same schools provided the substitution, but substitute Utah State for Portland State).

This year, the Silvertips and their opponents each have amassed 132 first downs, indicating a stronger Grizzly offense and defense.

The other two important areas are net yards rushing and total offensive yardage. In 1966, the Grizzlies managed only 1280 yards on the ground, while giving up 1523. Although they've given up a few more yards this year (1578), the Grizzlies of 1967 have outgained the 1966 contingent by 718 yards rushing with 1998.

In total yardage, the Grizzlies have again given up more this year: In total yardage, the Grizzlies have outgained last year's squad by 659 yards (2460 to 1801), while giving up fewer to opponents (2604 to 3055).

The only real discrepancy in the comparison is in net passing yardage. Last year, the Grizzlies passed for 521 yards, although this year's team has more completions, while passing for 492 this season. In pass defense, this year's team has done better, giving up 1026 yards through the air compared to 1532 last year.
Scoring is also an area which should be compared. Last year's Grizzlies scored only 51 points on seven touchdowns, four extra points, one field goal and one safety. The 1967 Bruins have 126 points on 18 touchdowns, 13 extra point kicks, two points on a passing conversion, and one field goal.

The 1966 Grizzlies gave up 236 points in nine games, while this year's group has allowed only 96 tallies in the same number of games.

Last year's leading rusher picked up 501 yards, while this year's leader, fullback Bryan Magnuson, has 717. An interesting thing to note is that last year, Magnuson wound up with minus four yards on 13 carries.

Last year's total offense leader stood at 501 yards, while two 1967 Grizzlies have already surpassed that by more than 200 yards. Quarterback Ed Steiner has 760 total yards (331 rushing, 429 passing), and Magnuson has his 717 yards, all from rushing.

The 1966 leader in pass receiving wound up with 11 catches for 128 yards and no touchdowns. In 1967, Ron Baines leads the Grizzlies with 18 catches for 254 yards and five TD's.

The 1967 Grizzlies have intercepted 15 passes compared to 9 in 1966, and it must be noted that 1966 opponents threw 43 more passes than the 1967 foes have.

Comparisons, in this case, aren't meant to ridicule the 1966 team, but to show the vast improvement that has come about in one short year. Grizzly fans are hoping that the same type of improvement can be shown again in 1968.