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GRIZZLIES TAKE 2-3 SEASON RECORD INTO EVANSVILLE INVITATIONAL

MISSOULA---

Basketball resumes for the University of Montana Grizzlies this weekend when they compete in the Evansville Classic Tournament in Evansville, Ind. Friday and Saturday nights.

The Grizzlies open against host University of Evansville, and the Purple Aces, one of the top 10 small college teams in the nation this year, will provide formidable opposition for Ron Nord's young, but eager Silvertips.

The other two teams, Florida State University and George Washington University, will tangle in other opening-round action Friday night.

Winners and losers of the first two games will meet in the consolation and championship games Saturday night.

Coach Nord and his assistant Bob Cope will take 12 of the 14-man Grizzly squad to the Midwest. His starting lineup will probably be forwards Greg Hanson and Mark Agather, center Don Parsons, and guards Rick Johnston and Ron Moore.

Others making the trip will be guards Stan Yoder and John Cheek; forwards Steve Brown, Ray Dirindin, Max Agather, and Sid Rhinehart, and center Tom Jones.

In the latest small college polls, Evansville was fourth-ranked on one and third-ranked on another. Since that time the Purple Aces have defeated Texas Wesleyan, the University of Southwestern Louisiana (previously ahead of Evansville on the polls), and Augustana College of Sioux Falls, S.D., the same team the Grizzlies beat in Missoula 94-79 Dec. 9.

Florida State and Evansville would have to be considered the favorites to make it to the championship battle Saturday night because of previous performances before the tournament.
Florida State's Seminoles are 5-3 going into the tourney, with big wins over Florida Presbyterian, Samford (104-89), Louisiana State (130-100), Richmond (114-91) and Rutgers (87-77). Losses were to Ohio State, Florida and Marquette.

The Purple Aces have won six of seven starts, with their only loss a 116-88 shellacking at the hands of Utah State. They have beaten Sam Houston (118-84), Lamar Tech, Seattle (78-66), Texas Wesleyan, Southwest Louisiana and Augustana.

George Washington has the worst record, 0-8, of any team going into the tournament, but their competition has been as tough as or tougher than that faced by the other three entrants.

The Colonials have been beaten by an average of 24 points per game by the likes of Syracuse (108-68), Maryland (84-53), Richmond, William and Mary, Houston (86-61), Mississippi State, The Citadel and Navy.

Grizzly mentor Nord gave his charges a two-day breather during the Christmas holiday, but had them back on the court Tuesday for more drills.

"We think we'll be right in the thick of things against Evansville Friday night," Nord said. "We aren't going back there to settle for a consolation spot by any means."

The Grizzlies left at 7 a.m. Thursday and were scheduled to arrive in Evansville at 7 p.m. CST that same day. They will leave Evansville at 9:30 a.m. Sunday and are scheduled to get back to Missoula at 7:30 p.m. MST.

The Grizzlies dive headlong into Big Sky Conference action following the tournament, with road games against Weber State twice and Idaho State once before returning home to face Gonzaga University Jan. 12 and 13 in the Adams Field House.