9-4-1999

Game Day Kaimin, September 4, 1999

Associated Students of the University of Montana

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As the 1999 college football season opens, teams across the nation are looking ahead, eager for a new schedule and a new start. For some of those teams, the term "new" has especially significant meaning.

The University of Montana Grizzlies have seven starters returning to an offensive unit that averaged over 400 yards per game last season. Still, the offense did see some major changes in the off-season. Those changes came directly at the top, where new offensive coordinator Bob Cole joins the Grizzlies in place of Brent Pease, who left UM to join the coaching staff of Northern Arizona University.

Cole, who came to UM from Portland State University last spring, has already proven himself in the Big Sky Conference. His PSU offense was the only unit in the league to average more yards than the potent attack of the Grizzlies.

Along with Cole, former Grizzlies Chad Germer and Mike Trevathan have joined the staff. Germer became the new offensive line coach, while Trevathan now works with the running backs.

But if there's any uncertainty about the effects of so many coaching changes, you can't see it in the eyes of head coach Mick Dennehy.

"I think the coaches have done a nice job of getting the offense ready to go, executing what we've got in to a point where we're pretty comfortable," Dennehy said during the final week of preseason practice.

Perhaps the most anticipated change for the Grizzly offense comes at the highly-
He sat quietly, his back to the wall amidst the sea of yelling, Pearl Jam blaring from the stereo, beer splashing on the carpet. He had no drink in hand, but many had been offered. Strange people slapped him on the back and shouted his name, but he simply smiled and waited until they moved along. At another time, maybe a year ago, he would have joined in the celebration, talked with one of the girls eying him across the room. He might have pounded one too many drinks, told some stories and tried to deny the guilt that ate away at his insides. It was still hard, being at this football party, but not really being there. But at least now he wasn't pretending to be someone he wasn't. Sometimes he would hear his teammates and friends laughing, or saying things behind his back. It will only make me stronger, he would think, lying alone in bed later that night, staring at another 3 a.m. clock.

They wanted him to join in, to get drunk and make a fool of himself like he used to, but now he knew better. "Tell us about the time you hooked up with those two girls the same night," they'd yell, and he would cringe at the memory. More women would stare, practically throw themselves at him. After all, he was one of the best Division I football players. He could have whomever he wanted. But he knew better. He knew God could take everything away with a snap of His fingers. Now that Adam Boomer had been given a chance to save himself, he vowed not to be that person he had hated.

"I used to think I could play both sides of the fence," Boomer would say later. "I was coming back as hometown hero, you know. I wanted everybody to say, Look at Adam Boomer. Look what he is doing with himself."

It didn't happen all at once, but eventually the knee, and then the soul and the spirit, healed. In spring, he found he could flatten runners on the field one second, reach down and help them up the next. He started over. He was no star at first. He sat second string, played hardly a down

Continued on page 8

I'D BLOW OUT MY KNEE AGAIN IN A HEARTBEAT IF I GREW AS MUCH AS I DID THAT FIRST TIME.

I'd blow out my knee again in a heartbeat if I grew as much as I did that first time," he says. It didn't happen all at once, but eventually the knee, and then the soul and the spirit, healed. In spring, he found he could flatten runners on the field one second, reach down and help them up the next.
I've always shopped Bob Ward's for quality of merchandise, customer service and product selection.”

Mick Dennehy
**Grizzly Offense**

**Marcus Wilson**
Outside Linebacker

**Numerical Roster**

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**Thuesen 65**

Montana wants to lock the ball better this season than it did last year under head coach Mike Thuesen. He lost two west-coast stands in 1998. The offense top line has lost its medicine in Justin Brannon and tackle Andy Petek, who is a walk-on. In the secondary, the Grizzlies are very deep, with six starters and three backups over 6-3.

**Drew Miller**
Outside Linebacker

**Defense**

**Marcus Wilson**
Outside Linebacker

**GameDay Kaimin, Saturday, September 4, 1999**

Wilson was a second-team all-conference linebacker last semester and an all-American candidate in 1999. His 68 tackles were third on the team last season and the Big Sky. Wilson and Adam Boomer should easily be two of the best linebackers in the Big Sky this season. Wilson is a tough, hard-hitter. But he had some battles with injuries the past year, which impacted his production and ability to contribute to the successful Western offense with a shoulder injury. Wilson is only the second African-American to start for Montana, something that will have a profound change in the future.
Montana vs. South Dakota

South Dakota

South Dakota vs. S.D. Offense

C Kaseem Gaines 15
S Wade Mitchell 16
O Wyant Haines 41
E Scott Larson 74
N Joe Anderson 95
M Raj Clark 44
F Rory Trippett 19
W Ryan Winters 47
S Russell Burwell 23

South Dakota vs. S.D. Defense

C Josh Stamer 5
Q Jameel White 4
F Eric Tarasewicz 13
T Jamal White 4
P Peter Martin 3
Q Miguel Regalado 56
T Troy Shively 62
G Justin Bridge 66
W Steve Young 9
S Scott Larson 74

Offense

Jameel White 6-2, 260, JUNIOR from WASHINGTON

Jamal White spearheaded South Dakota's offense in 1998. He piled up 1,636 yards in total offense in 98.

The University of South Dakota can be reached on the web at www.USD.edu
**Big Sky gets best I-AA TV deal, but...**

**Matt Gouras**  
*GameDay Kaimin*

This year, the Big Sky boasts perhaps the best television contract of any NCAA Division I-AA conference in the country. Unfortunately, this does not mean big bucks. Nor does it mean lucrative network coverage. No, no Keith Jackson-announced fall specials.

What they get is five games covered on Fox Sports Northwest. This subsidiary of the Rupert Murdoch-owned broadcasting giant has agreed to telecast Big Sky football action, and they have agreed to do it free of charge. For a Division I-AA conference, this is a godsend.

"It's the best one in Division I-AA," said Doug Fullerton, Big Sky Conference commissioner. Many conferences at this level are forced to pay for the privilege of having stations broadcast their games. Some are even relegated to quasi-public access stations, he said.

Getting TV time at this level is tough, agreed Eric Capper, the Big Sky Conference's assistant commissioner in charge of media relations. Most schools aren't outside of their immediate region, he said, and many schools in the conference have Division I schools in their state that are quick to snatch up the TV time — and the TV money.

The lack of a more prominent state school is what separates the University of Montana from the rest of the Big Sky — and almost every other Division I-AA school. There are no bigger fish to grab the fan base.

"The University of Montana has the best local TV contract (in the conference)," Fullerton said. "I wish we could cultivate that same interest everywhere."

The Grizzlies have a local TV deal that generates about $15,000 in revenue, said Dave Guffey, UM's media relations director. If it is a good year in Big Sky Football and Fox is able to sell a lot of ads, UM could get a little more from the conference TV deal, Fullerton added. This has not happened in a couple of years, though.

To even get five games on Fox, the conference had to be flexible. They scheduled two Thursday night games — avoiding competition for airtime among a myriad of Saturday college football contests. Even at that, it's the best deal going. "Fox broadcasting our games has been a great relationship," Fullerton said of the eight years the network has picked up Big Sky games.

"Sure, the Grizzly offers are not exactly overflowing with TV money, but at least the Big Sky gets some games on the tube. The biggest advantage, from our standpoint, is that it's just another avenue to promote the conference," Capper said.

The Fox deal will broadcast games not only on Fox Sports Northwest, but also on Fox Sports Net Rocky Mountain and Fox Sports Net Arizona, reaching six million subscribers in Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. By comparison, the Pac-10 gets $30 million in revenue for its national and regional deals with Fox and ABC. In addition, many Pac-10 schools heap lucrative local TV contracts on top of that princely sum.

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Alas, the Big Sky is not-so-big-time Division I-AA college football. But it could be worse. The Big West, a Division I conference and home to Big Sky defectors Idaho and Boise State, has no state TV contract at all.

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**Welcome Back U of M Students!**

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- **Who's close to campus?**
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Matt Thompson 28

Matt Thompson, an All-American defensive back for the Griz and a journalism major, he is a welder. Matt's father is a welder, so Matt's like a clone variable appearing periodically in GameDay Kaimin.

The Meetings — The first couple of days all we do is have meetings and eat. I dare you to try to imagine all the things we meet about. We have a meeting for the introduction of all the players, we get introduced and receive a long speech from the athletics director, sports information director, compliance coordinator, dining services cook, head of custodial services and any other person who coordinates, directs or advises at UM. We meet to fill out paperwork. We even meet just because we have nothing better to do. As stimulating and interesting as each of these meetings is, I'd rather try memorizing the periodic table of elements.

Don't get me wrong. If you enjoy two-a-days you're not playing football. But really, the meetings are the easy part. Between meetings and practice field it seems to be infinite and soon you lose track of time. The practice field is even worse. The run (actually closer to a walk) is no farther than 30 yards, but with a damp jersey and aching legs it seems closer to 200 miles. The coaches are there waiting in the tunnel to greet the fans at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

I'm going to be very excited and focused, Miller said. "But I also am going to be having a whole hell of a lot of fun."

Unlike the Grizzlies, the Coyotes of South Dakota are returning their starting quarterback. Peter Martin, a 6-2, 200-pound senior, looks to improve upon his standout performance of last season.

Martin completed 53.3 percent of his passes for 1,697 yards. That is the third-best single season total in school history on a team that went 1-8. The Coyotes "blew out" South Dakota State three times last season, 55-22, 27-14 and 38-21, respectively.

Miller takes over the reins for UM after returning their starting quarterback. John Austin was named head coach of the Coyotes last December. Austin returns to his alma mater, where he played three different defensive positions during his career from 1975 to 1979.

Nine of the team's 11 assistant coaches are also in their first year with the program. Austin brought some talent with him from Iowa as well. Senior linebacker Raj Clark joins the Coyotes after three seasons with the Hawkeyes. Clark was named CBS-TV Player of the Game in the 1997 Sunbowl game against Arizona State University.

Because of all the changes, the UM coaching staff barely knows what to expect from USD. That may give them even more incentive to prepare in every way.

"I know that they're really excited about the new program and turning it around and feel that they've got the right kids to do it," Dennehy said. "Hopefully our guys are mature enough to understand that they can't just show up and play. Hopefully they understand that they've got to be ready. And I think that they are."

The wait is over. It's time to find out.
in UM’s first game in 1998.

Frustration crept in, but it wouldn’t break him. Linebacker coach David Reeves kept telling him to be ready, and Adam kept waiting.

Then the starting middle linebacker, Rylan Jollymore, went down with a knee injury. “Freak thing, really, hate to see it happen,” coach Dennehy would say.

But suddenly there was Adam Boomer, No. 42 in maroon and silver, blond hair messed up this way and that, blood dripping from his elbow, turned loose like a kid in a candy store, tackling everything in sight.

He became the heart of a defense that battled its way to a playoff berth.

His 103 tackles led a defense whose starting lineup he couldn’t even crack at the beginning of the season. He was voted honorable mention All-Big Sky, and some felt he deserved more.

“I thought Adam was as good as any linebacker in this league last year,” Dennehy says. “But there is not a year that goes by that a player from our team doesn’t get overlooked. Hopefully the satisfaction of his teammates knowing that he did a good job is more important than getting a certificate.”

He was 21 years old and had arrived. At home in Idaho, they saw. They didn’t need to be reminded. Look what Adam Boomer is doing, they said. Look what he’s become.

He heard none of it.

“Being a leader of this team is something I’ve always wanted so bad to do,” Adam says. “But God allowed me to do it with a humble heart.”

Three years ago, Marshall receiver Randy Moss parted UM’s defense as if he were Moses at the National Championship game. Adam was there, a redshirt freshman, painfully looking on. Since then, it’s been one-and-done for UM in the playoffs. But Montana now has its best chance since ’96 to walk with the country’s elite.

Starting Saturday, Adam Boomer will be right in the mix of that run, the long pink scar on his knee the physical symbol of a longer spiritual journey.

And now Adam Boomer sits at that party, in the tired La-Z-Boy chair, back to the wall, his teammates indulging in celebration. Two-a-days are over and the real season has begun.

And as he sits there, making the harder choice, the women and booze surround him. He doesn’t look down on those people. Many are his friends. Many are just like he was.

And perhaps if those same people who watched him play on Saturdays, perhaps if they saw him now, they would say what he always hoped they would.

Look at Adam Boomer. Just look at what he’s doing with himself.