Can Jimmy
Come out and play?

After taking on a horse, his critics and a whole new attitude, is Junior receiver Jim Farris ready for a big-time year?

By Chad Dundas  Page 2

GRIZZLIES vs. Sacramento State
Waiting in the Wings

BY CHAD DUNDAS

The regulars at the Stockman’s Tavern in Missoula held court, right at the far end of the bar, between the poker tables and jukebox. They huddled in a tight, proud cluster, shooting Black Velvet straight up and mixing their vodka with blue Powerade. Their conversation meandered comfortably, repetitively, because they are the kind of men who have stories that deserve to be told again and again.

Eventually, maybe years from now, one of these regulars will set upon a moment of silence and throw his head back and say, “Remember when Farris raced that horse?”

There will be laughter; some folk will just shake their heads. Farris and that horse. It was the damnedest thing.

Only a handful of people were lucky enough to see the Montanas Grizzly wide receiver and the horse race firsthand. They gathered on a long summer day in the pasture of a ranch house outside of town to watch what they knew would be a great spectacle. It was the kind of event that just doesn’t happen anymore: Man vs. Beast. There was rampant speculation as to how it would go down. No one seemed to know for sure, but given the opportunity, a good majority of the crowd would probably have put their money on the horse.

A few feet away, Jim Farris stood in the dirt, wearing only a lightweight pair of shorts and his cleats. Farris, the two-sport phenom, the trash talker, the sleek, redheaded kid from Lewiston, Idaho, that everyone knew could blister through routes on the football field, was starting to have his doubts about this one. No one could blame him, since nearly everyone thought that this, this business of actually racing a horse, was madness.

“I was thinking to myself that only in Montana could you get yourself involved in something like this,” Farris says. “But this was just one of those things where I figured it was an opportunity to compete. I’ve always liked challenges like that. It really got me going because there was just such a big feeling of the unknown. Maybe for strength, maybe just to keep his mind occupied, Farris stretched in the dirt and warmed up and thought about Jesse Owens.

He’d seen footage once of Owens, aging but still lightening-quick, squatting down in his four-point runners’ stance next to a stallion. He remembered Owens, aching but still quickening, squatting down in the finish line first. No time at all to get out of the way of a charging horse.

“I beat the horse, I cross the line and I turn around and I just told him I thought he’d be surprised by how bad I was going to beat it,” Farris says. “But I think that I was half-way talking just to convince myself that I could do it.”

When it was time, Farris and the horse took their marks, both tense with anticipation. These moments before the start of a race stretch into eternity for any sprinter. This is the time that separates field events from team sports. In this instant, in the ear-splitting silence before the explosion, you are all alone. You live and die by your own abilities.

Then there isn’t any more time for thinking and you run.

The 40-yard dash takes just over four seconds. Not a lot of time, but the pressure is on, the horse is trying to run you down. No time at all to get out of the way of a charging horse.

“Two or three weeks before we would run 40-yard sprints in practice, I would start training,” Farris explains. “I would do speed drills in the field house, just by myself, at weird hours when no one would be around. I always had that drive to be the fastest.”

It turned out that, until he got to college, no one had ever told Farris that a kid from a lowly Idaho public school wasn’t supposed to be so indescribably fast. The work ethic, the dizzying speed and the lip service that went along with them first earned Farris a reputation in the Montana football program.

“Farris’ vocal nature on and off the field has garnered him his share of fans and detractors. By his own assertion, Jim Farris is the person he can be a hard man to really know, which he says has done as much as anything to affirm his status as a trash-talker.

Continued on page B
Big Sky defense begins with Hornets

Scott Heisel
GameDay Kamín

The University of Montana football team faces its first Big Sky Conference challenge Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium, and what a challenge it is.

Last week the UM defense had its hands full with a sharp-looking backfield from the University of South Dakota named Arnel White. White stunned the Grizzly fans just four minutes into the game with a 45-yard touchdown reception. By the end of the game, he had gained 218 yards of total offense.

The Hornets of Cal State Sacramento bring an equally electrifying running back to Missoula this week, providing an early test for the Grizzly defense. Junior tailback Charles Roberts shocked the nation last season by breaking the all-time Division I-AA single-season rushing record. Future NFL Hall of Famers Barry Sanders and Marcus Allen are the only two others to pick up where they left off last year. Roberts’ landmark rush more than most other fans in the Big Sky. It came on a 16-yard touchdown run against the Grizzlies late in last year’s game at Sacramento. UM prevailed that day 31-16, but head Griz coach Dick Denneny isn’t likely to forget Charles Roberts any time.

CONTINUED ON PAGE B

Big Sky Buzz

Half or Whole

American
cotto salami, bologna, provolone cheese

Italian
cotto salami, Italian salami, pepperoni, provolone cheese

Cheese
monterey jack, swiss, provolone

Veggie
monterey jack, swiss, provolone, black olives, mushrooms, green leaves

Tuna
tuna w/ celery & pickles

Chicken Salad
white meat chicken, celery, green onions, curry
turkey w/ monterey jack cheese

Ham
lom w/ swiss cheese

Roast Beef
roast beef with monterey jack
turkey, salami w/ provolone & mustard

Beach Comber
turkey, roast beef, swiss, monterey jack

Bobcat Special
ham, italian salami, mustard & provolone

Dragon Slayer
ham, turkey, pepperoni, mustard, jack & swiss

Ken’s Special Steak
All of the above w/ lettuce, onion, tomatoes, mayo, vinegar, oil & spice

Cheese Steak
chopped beef, barbeque sauce & onion

Pepper Steak
chopped beef, barbeque sauce, onion, jack cheese

Grizzly Special
chicken breast, provolone, onions, monterey jack

Mushroom Steak
mushrooms in barbeque sauce w/ mixed provolone

South of the Border
turkey, pepperoni, provolone, lettuce & tomatoes

Downtown Chicken
white meat chicken, lettuce, provolone, black olives

*61% Data from 1988 UM CORE Survey (N=1059)

The University of Montana

The worst that can happen is that you book that seemingly small-time school and lose. Montana State almost suffered that fate before pulling out a come from behind victory against Chadron State, prevailing 20-10. Two Big Sky teams, though, did not succumb to the urge to pad their schedules. Testing the Eastern I-As, the University of Montana pulled off the upset, Eastern Washington fell to Idaho, 45-21.

Portland State decided to christen their heralded offense against Fresno State and mustered just six points. Both of those schools are quick to make up for these first week scheduling snafus, though. Eastern Washington will play D-II Central Washington and Portland State hopes to polish off Western Washington.

So, heading into week two, the Big Sky holds a heady non-conference record of 6-2. Confidence is high and pollsters are impressed.

Big Sky beats up Division II

Matt Gouras
GameDay Kamín

In college football, opening week is ripe with mismatches. It's an opportunity to post a better single-season record. Future NFL Hall of Famers Barry Sanders and Marcus Allen are the only two others to pick up where they left off last year. Roberts’ landmark rush more than most other fans in the Big Sky. It came on a 16-yard touchdown run against the Grizzlies late in last year’s game at Sacramento. UM prevailed that day 31-16, but head Griz coach Dick Denneny isn’t likely to forget Charles Roberts any time.

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The weekly report of news and highlights from the Big Sky Conference

Cal Poly at Northern Arizona • Cal-State Northridge at Kansas • Weber State at Wyoming

Central Washington at Eastern Washington • Fort Lewis at Idaho State

Western New Mexico at Montana State • Western Washington at Portland State
Montana Grizzlies

Offense

Tanner Hancock

Off the Bench at Receiver

Molden 17

Chase Raynock 74

Grizzly Offense

Nate Sanders 20

Thatcher Szalay 73

Drew Miller 7

Matthew Thuesen 65

Grizzly Defense

Matt Thuesen

Jimmy Farris 8

Leif Thorsen 79

Damon Parker 27

Kamakana Kaimuloa 67

Justin Brannon 99

Tyler Martin 92

Ethan Kaimin

Bryan 95

Rylan Jollymore 51

Kelley Bryant 95

Andrew Petek 37

Calvin Coleman 13

Montana Grizzlies

GameDay Kaimin, Saturday, September 11, 1999

Dallas Neil

Grizzly Defense

6-4, 230, senior from Great Falls, Mont.

Grizzly Defense

Dallas Neil promises to figure into the new look Grizzly offense in a major way. The dual of Montana's double tight sets should open up the way for more catches for the senior Qb Matt Farris. After setting up mat of

Bryant are as good as it comes in the Big Sky - and maybe the country. That's right, the Griz are so good that even the punter is explosive as he averaged 30 yards on look returns and even

Tanner Hancock 1

Bryan 95

Here's something to check out. Kelley Bryant in the Grizzlies' second leading scorer. Like Tyler Martin, Bryant is a load for defense. But he's not only loaded with skills to stuff Charles Roberts, but with a high explosion with which we can see the size (170) and speed (5-10) of a weekend.

Berger 17

Both had a look at his explosive ability as he averaged 30 yards on look returns and even kicked for 30 yards.

Offense

Tanner Hancock

6-2, 235, junior from Olmerta, Wash.

"Tabor" was looking great in the pressen, right until he escaped one of his fingers so badly he needed a pin inserted to help it set. Nasty.

For two weeks, it's been hard to get running backs with one arm. Martin was a big part of the Grizzlies' success in a loss last year, so his play Saturday will be important, as usual. Martin and Bryant are as good as it comes in the Big Sky - and maybe the country. Montana's defense, and championship run this year, ends and starts with the big boys in the trenches.

Casey Ryan

Here is something to love to see the big and fast rush attacks.

Jason Miller

Bryan 17

Grizzly Defense

Boomer Adams 11

Here is something to love to see the big and fast rush attacks.

Grizzly Defense

Rylan Jollymore 51

Kelley Bryant 95
**DIVISION I-AA POLL**

HUNTINGDON VALLEY, Pa. (AP) — The top 25 teams in the Sports Network Division I-AA football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and records through Sept. 5.

**Record**

1. Georgia Southern (44) 1-0
2. Massachusetts (3) 0-0
3. Montana (2) 1-0
4. Appalachian State (1) 0-1
5. Illinois State 1-0
6. Hofstra 1-0
7. Hampton 1-0
8. Delaware 1-0
9. Northern Iowa (1) 1-0
10. Troy State 0-0
11. Southern 1-0
12. Richmond (1) 1-0
13. Florida A&M 0-1
14. Tennessee State 1-0
15. Northwestern State 0-1
16. McNeese State 0-1
17. Jackson State 1-0
18. Western Illinois 1-0
19. Youngstown State 1-0
20. Lehigh 0-0
21. Northern Arizona 0-0
22. Connecticut 1-0
23. Murray State 1-0
24. William & Mary 1-0
25. South Florida 0-1

**Editor's Note:**

Here at the Kaimin, we love football and we thought fans deserved more in terms of programs this fall. That's why for each home football game, the Kaimin, the University of Montana's student newspaper, will publish an in-depth look at the Griz as you may, or may not know them. It's something you won't find anywhere else and certainly not for free. Collect them, trade them, give them to your friends. But inside these pages, you'll find Griz football like you've never seen it before ... from the inside.

- Kevin Van Valkenburg

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MAYTAG was growing up in the valley of the onions. John Volek coached in my hometown at Natalie Portman. The 13-game losing streak that befuddles nemesis, a pest. It is almost as powerful as entered the Big Sky. Hornets’ head coach determination, the fire and the magic. To witness me as a ball boy. He saw the fall of ‘97, on the brink of manhood, the orange-haired boy would come back to Joe, who went on to play at MSU. Greatly today. I grew up idolizing his son. The origins of the Matt Thompson Factor begin long before Sac State even entered the Big Sky Hornets’ head coach John Volek coached in my hometown at Walla Walla Community College while I was growing up in the valley of the onions. My father being a coach as well, we were great friends and Volek is a man I respect greatly today. I grew up idolizing his son Joe, who went on to play at MSU. I also grew up with his other son Billy who now starts at quarterback for Fresno State. Even though I was just a tyke when he was around, he knew me well. Like a defenseless character in an off-tackle running play a huge part in our team’s victory. We broke the huddle and lined up, ready for our first snap of the day. The center snapped the ball and I bolted off the line, angling down toward the husking linebacker. As I got closer I realized I had no idea I was closing in on him. I struck with the full force of my 158 pounds. To my surprise he went crashing to the turf. Once the cowbells cleared, he looked up to find me still looming over him. Within a sec- ond, another defensive player pushed me in the back. I heard him yell, calling me names and telling me to “never do that again to my boy.” I remember trying force a laugh.

I started walking toward the huddle when I realized the offense was running off the field. Sac State had tackled our running back in the endzone for a safety. It had been a perfect play—at least for me. To this day I can honestly say that I played a perfect game. There is no doubt in my mind the Matt Thompson Factor played a huge part in our team’s victory that day. Like a defenseless character in an X-Files episode, the Hornets fell victim again.

The legend continues. On our football team, we always speak in terms of “we did something.” Never “I did it by myself.” So I’m somewhat embarrassed to spin this tale, recreate the legend in print. But the editors of Game Day Kaimin begged me for hours to let the story be told. There may be greater performances to come in the future by other players, but when men sit in bars years from now and talk of what my career was, surely they will speak of Sac State. 

So now that you know the history of the Matt Thompson Factor, you can see why the Grizzlies will go into Saturday’s game with confidence. True, coach Cole has an excellent offensive game plan, the Griz defense will be ready to swarm Charles Roberts, and the fans will be rowdy as ever. As the sun dips lower in the sky and the clock winds down, perhaps good fortune will find my way. Perhaps the second string will take the field, their uniforms clean and pressed. And maybe the legend will grow. Maybe, despite the obvious fear in the Hornets eyes, the Matt Thompson Factor will rise once again.
I’m real outgoing. I have a lot of energy and I like to joke around. The people that I care about know what I’m really all about and that far overshadows anybody on the outside that says they don’t like the person that I am.”

Whether Farris can back up his bravado has never been an issue. From day one it’s been clear that he has the right stuff, snuggling inter-team honors every year he’s been with the program and pulling down the longest touchdown pass in Grizzly history (93-yards) against Portland State in ‘97.

“I think there’s a smoke screen that I’ve put up and maybe that other people have added to,” Farris says. “I don’t let a lot of people get super close to me, to the point where they know what’s really going on in my heart and in my head.”

Farris also says he is mainly concerned with the people he keeps close to him, not those who choose to cast stones from a distance.

“People tell me that before they knew me they thought I was cocky and full of myself,” Farris says. “It does bother me a little bit, but I know that it’s probably my fault. The people who do know me know that I never look down on anyone, but I believe that I can do anything. I’m just really outgoing. I have a lot of energy and I like to joke around. The people that I care about know what I’m really all about and that far overshadows anybody on the outside that says they don’t like the person that I am.”

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At the genesis of his career with Montana, Farris was eventually able to use the temporary derailment as a positive, running track for UM in the spring and learning to take the good with the bad.

“It took me awhile to get over it,” Farris says. “I ran track to help me get through (those feelings). I kept a lot of it inside. That injury was probably my motivation to take a different standpoint on football this season. I still train just as hard and it’s still my number one priority, but I’m more at ease with it now. It’s just a game, it’s something I should have fun with. I’m more at peace with myself and I know I’m playing better because of it.”

He’s already turned heads, caused controversy and etched his name into local barroom legend. This year, if he accomplishes what he’s capable of then maybe, years from now, the boys down at Books will have some stories to tell about what Jim Farris did in a Montana uniform as well.

The Horns are hoping that Roberts won’t have to carry the entire load this season. Newcomer Ricky Ray, a junior college transfer from Shasta, Calif., should see his first start as a Hornet Saturday in Missoula. The 6-5, 200-pound junior was voted the 1998 California Junior College offensive player of the year and has completed over 60 percent of his passes throughout his college career.

Defensively, the Hornets returned six starters to a unit that allowed just 218 passing yards per game. This could turn out to be one of the most compelling elements of the day considering UM averaged over 310 passing yards per game last season and showed no signs of slowing during last weekend’s match up with USD.

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