Game Day Kaimin, September 11, 1999

Associated Students of the University of Montana
GameDay
KAIMIN

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

GRIZZLIES vs. Sacramento State
The regulars at the Stockman's Tavern in Missoula hold court, right as at the far end of the bar, between the poker tables and jukebox. They huddle in a tight, proud cluster, shouting Black Velvet straight up and mixing their vodka with blue Powerade. Their conversation meanders 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 up a moment of silence and throw his head back and say, "Remember when Jim Farris raced that horse?"

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

Only a handful of people were lucky enough to see the Montanas Grizzly wide receiver and the horse race first-hand. 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.

"I was thinking to myself that only in Montana could you get yourself involved in something like this," Farris says. "But I think that I was half-way thinking 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 for Jim Farris to contemplate the fact that the horse never passed him. Scant moments for him to absorb the bewilderment of the spectators as he crossed 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 the horse is trying to run me down," Farris says. "The owner said it must of thought I was a steer or a calf or something and I was like I don't care what he thought, man, he just about ran me over."

The race, although unpublicized and sparsely attended, altered the perception of most all of those who saw it with their own eyes. For Jim Farris, the victory only served to reinforce the philosophy that he believed in all along: live right, work hard and always be prepared.

"I've always believed that hard work and determination, putting your time in, will make the difference," Farris says. "Basically I've always thought that I could beat and be better then guys who might have more natural athletic ability than myself, because I feel like I've always outworked those people."

His freshman season at Montana, Farris proved that his philosophy of preparation and constant training didn't apply to just game situations. He admits to actually practicing for practice.

"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 as inexplicably 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 the person 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.

**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.**
Big Sky defense begins with Hornets

Scott Heisell
GameDay Kaimin

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 backup from the University of South Dakota named Arnel White. White stunned the Grizzly fans just four minutes into the game with a 43-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 men in Division IAA and IAA history to post a better single-season total than the 2,260 yards gained by Roberts last season.

The mighty D-II lot averaged 150 pounds.

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Dallas Neil

OFF DEFENDERS

6-4, 230, SENIOR — FROM GREAT FALLS, MONT.

Dallas promises to figure into the new Grizzly offense in a major way. The depth of Montana’s double tight end sets should give the way for more catches for the senior Qb Neil. After sitting out much of ’97 with an injury, it’s clear that Dallas will look to make an impact this season. The highly-ranked Qcb wasn’t so steady last year, but he was pretty damn sure that he felt exactly where the line was against the country. That’s right, the head is so good that even the punter can roll.

Tyler Martin

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

6-2, 295, JUNIOR — FROM OLYMPIA, WASH.

“Tabor” was looking great in the preseason. Right until he was snapped one of his fingers so badly, he needed a pin inserted to help it set. Martin is a trooper and is playing with a cast for the next few weeks, but it’s damn hard to get running backs with one arm. Martin was a big part of the successful 1997 season. This year, on his way Saturday, will be important, as usual. Martin and Young are as great as come in the Big Sky — and maybe the country. Montana’s defense, and championship run this year, ends and starts with the big block in the trenches.

Numerical Roster

Probable starters in BOLD

1    Tanner Hancock
2    Michael Smith
3    Trey Young
4    Jeremy Watkins
5    John Edwards
6    Andy Thompson
7    Drew Miller
8    Jim Ferris
9    Jason Miller
10   Chris Lumpkin
11   Tjiahan Delaney
12   Nick Walker
13   Calvin Coleman
14   Jeff Sloat
15    Eli Martin
16    T.J. Oelkers
17    Steve Sanders
18    Yohnace Humphrey
19    Rick Davis
20    Brandon Chen
21    T.J. Sherry
22    Tony Brown
23    Damon Parker
24    Matt Thompson
25    Chad Dixon
26    K)
27    Jeromy Jeffy
28    Dallas Niell
29    Jon Niemann
30    Brad Olszewski
31    Dan Driewerter
32    Andy Petek
33    Jake Spencer
34    John Ferguson
35    Jason fcrc
36    Courtney Johnson
37    Vincent Hunterbesser
38    Dan Ottlie
39    Jeff Nikolaisen
40    Brad Westin
41    Ryan Johymore
42    Chris Webo
43    Chris Comons
44    Riley Pasco
45    Marcus Wilson
46    Jeremy Olsens
47    Corey Mettes
48    Jermaine Brooksborne
49    Casey Ryan
50    Derek Decker
51    Matt Thuesen
52    Brian Poli
53    Kamakana Kamukana
54    Paul Nicklo
55    Golly Short
56    Dylan McDuffie
57    Thatcher Bailey
58    Chase Raymond
59    Eric Koeber
60    Jam Schmidt
61    Leif Thorsen
62    Bruce Sundberg
63    Rody Zavitz
64    Travis Walker
65    Randy Akina
66    Chet Tolisa
67    Jeff Moncey
68    Brad Nordheim
69    Curt Cotter
70    D.J. Cotter
71    Tyler Martin
72    Justin Oden
73    Kelley Bryant
74    Casey Robinson
75    Herbert Freeman
76    Jason Francis
77    Justin Brannon
vers. Sac. Defense

Gaboureil 9
Elton Gaboureil
Probable starters in BOLD

Anthony Daisley 43
Tommy Williams 19

vers. Sac. Offense

W
Gary Austin 21
Scot Towne 12

T
Steven Choi 76

G
Lonie Paxton 73

C
Terence Wagner 70

Q
Ricky Ray 17

R
Jon Osterhout 79

Charles Roberts 32

Conley 67
Mike will be the only way for Charles Roberts to make a move to the first team. As usual, Robby Alston and Donnie Biddleton can get him off the field. Players and starting orders for the Oklahoma State Cowboys before the game.

Lamont Webb 3
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Record</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Georgia Southern</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Brown</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Hofstra</td>
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<td>24.</td>
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<td>South Florida</td>
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Griz Receiver Ritu Molden weaves through South Dakota defenders during last Saturday’s 45-13 win over the Coyotes.

**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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sometimes it just isn’t fair. When Sac State comes to Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Saturday, it won’t be a fair contest. Yes, the Grizzlies will have all pistons firing with the likes of Drew Miller, Marcus Wilson and Vance Hunsberger on the field — but that isn’t it. Certainly the hostile crowd of 19,000 will provide a home field advantage, but that isn’t the specific advantage I speak of either. The reason the Grizzlies will come out on top Saturday goes much deeper. It is something that haunts the Hornets like the Blair Witch — something that will mystify and strike fear in them.

Enter the Matt Thompson Factor. For the past two seasons the Grizzlies have trounced the Hornets (52-10 and 31-16). And at the crux of each of those victories has been the Matt Thompson Factor. It has been a thorn in their side, a nemesis, a pest. It is almost as powerful as great friends and Volek is a man I respect to witness me as a ball boy. He saw the orange-haired boy would come back to Little did he know then that this short, tery and legend surrounding the Matt Thompson Factor has been the Matt Thompson Factor.

When I reached the ripe age of 20 in the fall of ’97, on the brink of manhood, the Matt Thompson Factor began long before Sac State even entered the Big Sky. Hornets’ head coach Factor begin long before Sac State even entered the Big Sky. Hornets’ head coach 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 I bolted off the line, I didn’t know I was closing in on him. When I reached the ripe age of 20 in the fall of ’97, on the brink of manhood, the Grizzly receiving corps was plagued with a rash of injuries. With no other option, I was forced into a starting role at the “H” position for the Homecoming game against... you guessed it... the Hornets.

With 3:10 left in the fourth quarter, the second team offense hit the field. Most of the Sac State first team defense remained in the game, giving the seniors just a few more snaps before their collegiate careers ended. The play came in — an off-tackle running play to my side. My job on this play was to come down and block the outside linebacker. 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 he 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 cobwebs cleared, he looked up to find me still looming over him. Within a second, 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 defensesless 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

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"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."

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, sweeping inter-team honors every year he's been with the program and pulling down the longest touchdown pass in Grizzly history (83-yards) against Portland State in '97.

At the genesis of his career with Montana, Farris was a diving defender rolled over on his ankle.

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