Game Day Kaimin, February 3, 2001

Associated Students of the University of Montana
Simarron Schildt spent her youth playing hoops with boys two years older than her. Now she's all grown up and has become the most noteworthy sixth-woman in Lady Griz history.

Story by Courtney Lowery

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Playing with the big boys

"SHE HAS SUCH POISE AND GRACE. YOU CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE HER. IT JUST SHINES OUT THERE."

By Courtney Lowery

The East Glacier boys basketball team takes the floor at Browning Middle School gym. The players gather around their coach, preparing for the game. Starting line-ups. Tip off. The game begins.

Eighth-grader Sterling Schildt is matched up with a big guy. Sterling is intimidated. He is pulled from the game and a lucky 12-year-old checks in. Watching from the sidelines, he sees this player handle the big guy with no inhibition. He's a bit embarrassed, but can't help but to be a little proud — he just got pulled in favor of his little sister.

It was 1992 and Simarron Schildt had hit the big time. In her memory the Browning Middle School gym is enormous. To a sixth grade basketball player, this was the court that made big dreams come true.

Although her father first put a basketball in her hands in the third grade, Simarron says her first memory of really "playing" basketball is in a neighborhood Boys of East Glacier, including her older brother Sterling.

"If you were a girl in East Glacier, you had to play with season fondly."

"We lost every regular season game that year," he says laughing. "But we won the 8th grade tournament at the end of the season."

Even when they were losing, you can be sure the Schildts were looking stylish — Simarron in her tall socks and matching earrings and both sporting the ultimate gear — "rec specs."

Recreational spectacles — the safest form of vision corrective available. Wrapping around the head with a brightly colored band, they protect the eyes completely.

When Kareem wore them, they were cool, but when Simarron and Sterling strapped them on, they were anything but.

"It was like tunnel vision. You never really realize how much you use your peripheral vision until you get hit in the side of the head with a loose rebound and don't even see it coming," Sterling says. "Playing with rec specs is not a good experience, but we'd gotten our glasses broken so many times my Dad made us wear them."

Sterling says he endured rec spec jokes all the way to high school, even after he ditched them for his first pair of contacts. And although the bespectacled Schildts were teased about their gear off the court, players learned quickly to respect them on the court.

Both excelled in high school; both were recruited by college programs but didn't take any offers. Sienna and Sierra have just finished their last season at Browning High, and permanent fixture in the field house.

While other college students are lucky to see their parents once, maybe twice a semester, the eight-member Schildt crew crashes almost every weekend at Simarron's house. And that doesn't cramp her style.

"We have a lot of sleeping bags," she says laughing. "I love having them here. I'm pretty lucky."

Patrick Schildt ingrained a passion for basketball in his children early on in their lives. Being a college athlete and continually active basketball player, he was able to teach his kids the skills and inherently, his love for the game.

Shayna is a sophomore, showing exceptional promise, Simarron says.

In some ways, Simarron is the personification of the Schildt dream. At every home game, there is a section of Schildts in the Adams Center. They drive three and a half hours almost every weekend to watch Simarron play. Lady Griz coach Robin Selvig even referred to the Schildts as a "great part of the Lady Griz program," almost becoming a permanent fixture in the field house.

IF YOU WERE A GIRL IN EAST GLACIER, YOU HAD TO PLAY WITH THE BOYS.
Around the Sky

THE WEEKLY REPORT OF NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BIG SKY CONFERENCE.

Eastern Washington at Montana • Cal State Sacramento at Idaho State • Portland State at Montana State •
Cal State Northridge at Weber State

Casey Temple
GameDay Kaimin

While it may be a surprise the Lady Griz aren’t dominating the Big Sky this season, it’s no surprise that Idaho State is doing as well as it is, jumping to a 6-0 record in the conference.

Anyone who was in attendance at last year’s Big Sky Tournament in Missoula knew that the future was bright for the Lady Bengals. Idaho State, presently 13-4, returned three starters off the bench. Mandi Carver and guard Sarah Nelson are both averaging near 11 points a game.

No other factor is more important to winning basketball games than defense, for which Idaho State ranks tenth in the nation. The Bengals give up only 57.8 points a game and hold teams to 43 percent shooting. Knock in the fact that Idaho State averages seven rebounds a game more than the opponents and you can see why the Bengals are cruising through the Big Sky. Impressive victories over Cal State Northridge (78-68), Montana State (71-66) and Montana (67-62) just affirm that the team to beat now resides in Pocatello.

Before giving the Bengals too many props, GameDay should remind everyone that the regular season only positions teams for the tournament. And this year’s Big Sky is loaded with talent. Arguably six teams are talented enough to win the conference tournament. Behind Idaho State is a 6-2 Northern Arizona team that played Idaho State Thursday night to decide who’s the best team in the conference.

The Lumberjacks, who boast no offensive stars, are winning with defense. And they are winning on road trips without their head coach Meg Sanders, who doesn’t travel because she’s pregnant. Big Sky teams are shooting just 34 percent against NAU, including holding the Lady Griz to only 14.9 percent.

But Montana State found a way to win last Saturday in Flagstaff while shooting only 34 percent. Led by Big Sky player of the week Jessicas Blake, who knocked in 20 points and 12 rebounds, the Lady Cats (5-2 in the conference) won 65-58.

And the fact that Cal State Northridge beat Montana State 72-65 shows just how strong this conference is.

Led by an impressive four-man crew of Kristi Ricks (12.7 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 22 blocks), Shatasha Allen (9.9 ppg), LaShaunda Fowler (9.8 ppg) and Monica Hernandez (5.32 apg), the Matadors may be the Big Sky’s best offensive force.

On an interesting note, Cal State Northridge boasts players from such homes as Paris (Lynda Amari), Antwerp, Belgium (Daphne Verrept) and Belgrade, Serbia (Neda Milic).

Like the men’s side, Sacramento State and Portland State occupy the depths of the conference. It’s too early to say who has gotten used to Big Sky athletics.

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Montana vs. Eastern Washington

Top 25 NCAA-I poll

1 Notre Dame 16-0
2 Connecticut 17-1
3 Kansas 15-1
4 Duke 20-3
5 Georgia 18-3
6 Notre Dame 19-3
7 Louisiana Tech 17-4
8 Iowa State 16-3
9 Florida 17-2
10 Oklahoma 13-6
11 LSU 14-5
12 Penn State 15-3
13 GW Masonry State 14-5
14 Rutgers 13-1
15 Kentucky 18-6
16 Penn State 14-4
17 Clemson 14-3
18 UAB 17-7
19 Vanderbilt 10-6
20 Baylor 14-3
21 Texas 12-5
22 Oregon 13-6
23 Colorado 13-4
24 Villanova 14-4
25 Wisconsin 13-7

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— Chad Dandurand
22 Jamie Granger Guard
A junior from Stanwood Wash., Granger contributes five points per game, but makes sure her teammates are pouring in the buckets. Leading the team in assists with 62, Granger’s got the golden-guard touch for squeezing the rock in tight places.

13 Michelle Demetruk Guard
A 5-4 sophomore from the sugary community of Maple Valley, Wash., Demetruk had six assists last week against Sac State as the Eagles cruised to a 67-54 victory. She’s also sixth in the Big Sky in steals. The Griz best take care of the rock if they don’t want to go the way of the Hornets.

33 Molly Carlson Center
Carlson can be counted on by coach Pfeifer and the gang to pour in a handful of points night in and night out. At only 6-1, though, she’ll be challenged in the key by Laura Valley, who checks in at 6-3. If the Eagles are to come away with a win, Carlson will have to win the battle inside.

34 Janelle Ruen Forward
Ruen is a crafty sophomore from Post Falls with a bad habit of taking things that don’t belong to her. She’s third in the Big Sky in steals. Montana arenas are good to her, too (she went off for 15 the first time EWU played the Cats). Scary, considering her 49 percent shooting average.

25 Allie Bailey Forward
This junior from the popular vacation destination of Spokane, Wash., is a force on defence for the Eagles. Bailey is third in the Big Sky in rebounds and fourth in conference in blocks. In fact, the whole EWU team is big on rejection (it’s second in the BSC in blocks).

Head Coach: Jocelyn Pfeifer
Assistants: Anna West, Lynn Kennedy

EWU

Overhead at the Probable Sta

EWU

Eastern Washington

EWU

Jocelyn Pfeifer Head Coach
Pfeifer is in her third year as the Eagles head coach and as the EWU Web site will tell you, she’s an advocate of “up-tempo, high-pressure” basketball. We’ll see if her team can deliver in hostile Dahlberg Arena. The first Giso/Eagles clash this year resulted in a 58-45 UM victory.
Montana vs. Eastern Washington

There must be something in the water in Malta. Keller not only follows in the footsteps of other M-Ettes to kick booty for UM, following suit as well. In her Lady Griz debut, she poured in 13 points. She's a solid ball handler and was second on the team last year for rebounds — and she ain't towering over anybody, she's just tough.

She's quick, she's spunky and she's only a freshman. At the helm of UM's ship, this girl is showing maturity beyond her years. Between Brooklynn and LeAnn Montes, the Lady Griz are looking at years of strength at the point.

Moving into eighth place for Lady Griz all-time scoring, Cooper is making her way to legend-dom. Selvig tends to look to Lauren for on the court leadership — as do her teammates. She's got a pretty shot and a sharp drive and she can hold her own in the paint, a deadly combination.

What were we telling you about Malta? You'd better be listen'in to us when we talk about the Malta girls — they are the epitome of tough, smart and talented. Linda, already a three-time All-Big Sky selection, is coming back from a painful foot injury and is already back as the second leading scorer shooting 41 percent from the field.

Valley gives the Lady Griz size and strength in the middle. When the gals on the outside get all stoved up, they can go to the "Valley of doom." Look out, EWU girls. You don't want to be flying into her key unannounced.

The big news for Robin Selvig this week is his induction into the Hall of Fame, but all Bob is looking to concentrate on is the next contest. Bob is only one of 15 coaches working over the 500-win mark. Although struggling this year, Selvig is notorious for mid-season spurts.

LeAnn fills in at point guard, taking on a big role at crucial times and doing it well. She's an excellent defender, quick on her feet and handles the ball well. The three is nuthin' but another shot to this girl, so watch her on the outside.
Lady Griz look for second victory over Eagles

Bryan Haines
GameDay Kaimin

Montana plays host to Eastern Washington Saturday night in the second game of a three-game home stand, and both are in must-win situations. Montana, mired in a six-game shooting slump, must have the win to stay alive in the race for the Big Sky Conference title. Eastern meanwhile, has its sights set on gaining a berth in the conference tournament March 8-10.

Montana won the first meeting, 83-58 in Cheney, Wash., as the Lady Griz used a late run to put the game away. Leading only 46-43 with a little over five minutes left, Montana scored 12 of the final 14 points to secure the conference win. Lauren Cooper was one of three Lady Griz in double figures, scoring 12 points. Cheryl Keller and Landa Cummings each added 10 in the win. Masked in the victory was the first of a string of losses to come.

Grizzlies have struggled a little throughout the year that thought we couldn't win a game somewhere other than Dahlberg Arena. Indeed, teams are playing our best basketball against us in conference, but instead put together a tremendous run to win the regular season title and host the Big Sky conference tournament. This year UM has had the proverbial target on their backs with many teams gunning for them after they suffered losses to the Griz last season.

"There is a real sense of urgency," Holst said. "Because we have now have game left to qualify for the tournament and we have only two wins." Holst believes seven wins in conference will be good enough to secure a spot in the Big Sky tournament, but even with remaining nine games left on the Grizzly schedule, only four are at home. Simple math determines that the Griz must win a game somewhere other than Dahlberg Arena.

"It's really crucial that we go on the road and get a win," Holst said. "We can't just think we'll win our four remaining games at home and limp into the tournament. The ultimate goal is not only make the tournament but to get at least one win on the road, win the four remaining games at home and build some momentum so the Grizzlies are playing their basketball when the tournament rolls around."

"We're working toward getting our share of wins ... getting into the tournament," Holst said. "I guarantee that this group of kids will be so excited to play in that tournament that they'll be jumping out of their skin. And I don't think anybody is going to want to play them."
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

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"No, I don't think so ... I really can't even guess."
And when you mention her Sixth Player of the Year Award she received last sea­
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"Awards don't really mean anything to me."

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