Game Day Kaimin, February 16, 2001

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Jared Buckmaster struggled with a digestive disease, poor eyesight and mononucleosis. Now he's Montana's go-to guy and he still doesn't understand what all the fuss is about.

By Ryan Divish

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Masterpiece

MONTANA vs. Idaho State
Nothing Special

Senior forward Jared Buckmaster might be the best player Montana has, but off the court he doesn’t act the part

Story by Ryan Divish

It seems pointless to write this considering he probably won’t read it.

Jared Buckmaster hasn’t read an article in any newspaper concerning the Griz basketball team yet. Why start now? He doesn’t watch television highlights of himself although occasionally he’ll watch the Don Holst show to see how uncomfortable his teammates look on TV.

The last time he picked up a stat sheet was around the third game of the season. He doesn’t know how many points he averages per game and doesn’t care to learn.

So why even write it? Why bother telling the story about a person who is more concerned with the graduate management admission test he is taking on Thursday than talking about himself and his career?

Because regardless of what he thinks or says, Jared Buckmaster is worth writing about, even if he doesn’t read it.

Adversity

Defined loosely it means a stroke of misfortune. It’s something that Buckmaster knows well and has dealt with. At the age of eight, he was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. It is the same affliction that his mother, Jan, and his brother, Justin, suffer from. It is a sensitivity of the small intestine to gluten, a protein found in most cereal grains but not in corn and rice. These cereal grains include wheat, rye, barley and occasionally oats. If Buckmaster were to ingest the gluten in a bagel for example, it would irritate his small intestine and lead to deterioration of the tiny finger-like villi that are found on the lining of the small intestine and are essential for food absorption.

This isn’t something he can cheat on, no matter how big of a pain in the ass it is. No gluten means no gluten. So even if his friends were eating a pizza, he couldn’t just have one slice.

“If I get into (gluten) I don’t know it,” Buckmaster says. “If I ate a piece of pizza, I don’t think I would get sick. But a couple days later I would be thinking about the food and I just wouldn’t feel well. Basically what would be happening is my small intestine would be trying to fix itself.”

Because of this process, any of the vitamins from the food Buckmaster consumed would not be absorbed into his body.

“It basically destroys my immune system,” Buckmaster says. “So every time I get into gluten my immune system gets shot because my body isn’t able to get what it needs.”

And there are long term effects that Buckmaster is very aware of because of his mother’s battle with the disease.

“I’ve seen how much it affected my mom’s life,” Buckmaster says. “She has had cancer three times and it’s mainly due to celiac disease. So I know that if I am not careful I am going to pay for it.”

And while it may not seem that big of a chore to the average reader, just think about how much gluten you consume in one day and remove it. And then try and eat a meal.

“I eat a lot of rice and a lot of corn,” Buckmaster says. “I buy some special foods. When we’re on the road, I eat a lot of mashed potatoes and chicken.”

Buckmaster’s diet seems healthy compared to the typical college student’s in which the four food groups might as well be tacos, pizza, burgers and beer.

Griz head coach Don Holst feels the disease kept Buckmaster from putting on the weight that Holst and his staff wanted.

“Can’t eat bad and put on weight,” Holst says. “His diet is so healthy it doesn’t allow him to put weight on and gain the strength we wanted.”

Playing Time

Despite Buckmaster’s diet problems, he was completely healthy otherwise and turned himself into a solid college prospect at Portland’s Jesuit High School. As a senior he averaged 20 points and eight rebounds per game while being named an all-Metro League selection and team MVP his junior and senior year.

He came to Montana in a recruiting class that included juniors Shane Christensen and Buckmaster’s current roommate Travis Greenwalt.

Continued on page 7
Around the Sky

Casey Temple
GameDay Kaimin

With three weekends of regular season Big Sky basketball left, Cal State Northridge and Eastern Washington are battling for the regular season championship and the honor of hosting the Big Sky Tournament. The best game of the remaining regular season, and what should determine the Big Sky Championship, will pit Eastern Washington against Cal State Northridge on March 1 in Cheney, Wash.

Eastern Washington sat atop the Big Sky for much of last season until the Griz won 10 of their last 11 games, including a season finale in Cheney, to steal the regular season championship from the Eagles.

But this year, the Eagles are hoping to sneak away with a championship themselves. Going into Friday's game against Portland State, Eastern Washington was tied for first with Northridge with a record of 8-3. To add to its prospects of having the Big Sky title in its possession in Cheney, Eastern has defeated the Matadors already this season in Northridge, 89-75.

Like last season when the Eagles surprised the rest of the conference with their play, Eastern once again taught the Big Sky a lesson about underestimation. "They have done a great job all year," Portland State coach Joel Sobotta, who has lost three in a row against Eastern Washington, said on the Vikings' Web site. "They have guys from last year who experienced winning, and winning on the road in particular." Those guys are guard Aaron Olson and forward Chris White, who have been playing gutsy basketball for first-year coach Ray Braswell.

Brian Heine, who leads the Big Sky in scoring (20.9 ppg) and rebound (9.2 rpg), and Jeff Parris (15.7 ppg), Markus Carr (14.7 ppg), Lazosky (13.4 ppg), Justin Burrell (14.7 ppg), Justin Brown (11.9 ppg) and Aaron Rich (9.4 ppg). Weber State, meanwhile, has four players who weigh more than 240 pounds and has three players from basketball mecca northwest Indiana.

Northern Arizona's (12-10, 6-5) success can be attributed to the play of Cory Schwab, who is averaging 16.5 points a game. Montana State (14-10, 6-5) has the trio of John Lackey (11.4 ppg, Justin Brown (11.9 ppg) and Aaron Rich (9.4 ppg). Weber State, meanwhile, has four players who weigh more than 240 pounds and has three players from basketball mecca northwest Indiana.

While there's a dog fight at the top of the conference, things are getting just as interesting at the bottom. UM, Idaho State and Portland State are all within one game of the sixth and final conference tournament spot.

Portland State appears to be in as good of shape as anyone. The Vikings have three of their final five games at home and one of their road games is against Sacramento State. "We have to protect our home floor if we want to be in the postseason tournament," Sobotta said on the Viking's Web site. "But Northridge will need to ride the shoulders of forward Anthony Lackey if they want to see the postseason. Lackey is the only Viking player to average a double digit scoring average at 15 points a game. And though Idaho State seems to be on a roll after defeating Northridge 89-84 a week ago, we're putting GameDay's money that the final spot will belong to the Griz.

How can Montana State be the best three-point shooting team in the nation and still be the only reason Sacramento State has a notch in the win column? The Hornets won a 70-62 decision earlier this month against the kitty-cats. At least they have a victory, something the Bobcats couldn't seem to come up with in football.
Bengals

Overhead at the
Probable Sts

11 Jordie McTavish Guard
McTavish, a transfer who has genuine final four experience from his days with Utah, has been the Bengals’ most threatening player this season. Mr. McT (as we’re pretty sure he’d be called if he was a 7th grade science teacher) leads ISU in nine statistical categories.

30 Tim Erickson Guard
Tim runs second in most ISU stat categories. Must be rough not being the big dog anymore. This week collegeinsid­ er.com published a column “written” by Erickson. In it, he said the Bengals are “playing well as a team” this season. Yeah right, Tim, last time we checked “team” isn’t spelled “Jordie McTavish.”

21 D’Marr Suggs Guard
Last month at Santa Clara D’marr tied the ISU record for three-point field goal percentage (.857). Suggs scored a season-high 32 in that game against the Broncos. He could be a significant deep threat against the Griz, if that bum McTavish would pass him the ball.

34 Rashad Kirkland Forward
Like McTavish, Kirkland transferred to ISU from another school. Rashad came from New Jersey. He’s a solid player, but has a problem with fouls, eliminating himself from three games so far this season. If the rowdy Griz crowd can get in his head, perhaps he could be lured into early foul trouble.

43 Doug Silva Center
At 6-11, Doug Silva is the lone starting big man on what amounts to a rather diminutive ISU team. The Griz have been relying too much on their outside game lately, and if they want to work the ball inside against the Bengals there’s only one way to go. Straight through Silva.

Head Coach: Doug Oliver
Assistant: Jay McMillin
Louis Wilson

BENBALS

50 Chad Tracy Forward
The Bengals rely heavily on their starters to do most of the work, but when they go to the bench they get a bulk of help from Tracy. Labot, though, it appears as if he’s been on something of a cold streak. Let’s hope it continues.

Doug Oliver Head Coach
Oliver, a graduate of San Jose State, has amassed a record of 14-39 during his two years as ISU’s head coach. Just between you and GDK, it’s just fine with us if the Griz are able to carve another notch in coach Ollie’s loss column.
Adams Center

Montana vs. Idaho State

The Holster is one animated dude during games — he runs the floor more than some NBA big men. No matter what the score it's a stone cold lock that jacket will be off and Coach Holst won't remain on the bench for long.

Don Holst Head Coach

22 Kyle Keyes Guard

After sitting out the majority of two consecutive seasons Keyes is back in the lineup for Montana and ready to contribute. Kyle was instrumental in the Griz's win against Sac State last week, clocking in with six assists and 11 points.

24 Brent Cummings Forward

Cummings is Holst's newly appointed "defensive stopper." Last week he held MSU's Justin Brown to four points and earlier this season he limited NAU's Corey Schwab to eight points. Not bad for a tender-footed sophomore from Pullman, Wash.

33 Jared Buckmaster Forward

GDK has long admired Buck's stylish knee-highs. This year we've also been pretty darn happy with his play as well. He's stepped up this year to become Montana's No. 1 outside threat. With the GDK cover story on his side, we expect big things this week.

34 Ryan Slider Guard

Slider can flat out fly. When it comes to rim-rocking, earth-shaking jams, we don't know anyone better. Ryan played his best game of the season last week, hitting a clutch three-pointer to put the Griz up in OT against the Cats. Hey, when you've got hops like Slider, the sky's the limit.

50 Dan Trammel Forward

Trammel, a JUCO transfer, debuted for Montana this season and has quickly become the Griz's most-talked about player. He possesses what Holst calls the "most explosive" athletic ability on the team and has shown flashes of greatness in the maroon and silver this season. Look for Trammel and Silva to go to war inside.

40 Travis Greenwalt Center

Travis was key last year in the Griz's late run to capture the regular season title. In 00-01 he's already been Montana's leading scorer in six games. Shutting down Greenwalt will be key for the Bengals if they have prayer of getting a win in the Adams Center.
Grizzlies need win to stay in running for tournament seed

Ian Costello
GameDay Kaimin

Apparently, for the University of Montana men's basketball team, March Madness is being temporarily preceded by February Frenzy.

The Grizzlies currently find themselves on the outside of the conference tournament bubble with four games left on the regular season schedule.

With the Griz a game and a half behind sixth place Idaho State, head coach Don Holst is well aware of what his team needs to qualify for the Big Sky Tournament.

"We want to run the table," Holst said following the Griz's overtime win against Montana State on Saturday. "Like to" wins have virtually turned into "must wins" for the Grizzlies, who came into this weekend with a 4-7 conference mark. One more conference loss could spell trouble for the Grizzlies' postseason dreams; two conference losses would be devastating. A fact that has led Holst to preach to his players a one-game-at-a-time attitude. An attitude that must be in place Friday when the Griz host the Idaho State Bengals.

"You want to avoid putting pressure on your players that it is do or die time," Holst said. "We understand that there is very little margin for error in terms of getting into the tournament." Getting into the tournament is a goal, but a long-range goal.

Saturday night, for Montana, the goal is to get one back from the team that handed the Griz their worst loss of the season, 97-69, Jan. 18 in Pocatello.

In that game the Bengals used a lethal outside attack, shooting 16 of 28 from beyond the arc, to blow open a game that Idaho State led by only six at halftime.

"They have a three-point barrage crew that makes them totally different to prepare for," Holst said of the Bengals. "They'll shoot a lot of threes, and (Jordie) McTavish is the key.

Whether he duplicates his performance of five weeks ago, McTavish will most certainly be one of the keys for the Griz defense that saw him shoot six of eight from three-point range and score 25 points.

The Montana defense will be relied on to stop both McTavish and his shooting buddies who burned the Grizzlies in the first game, and to keep the ball out of the hands of 6-11 senior center Doug Silva.

"Our guards are the key. They are going to have to play tough, on-the-ball defense," Holst said. "But our inside guys have to be ready to, because they are not going to get any (double) help from our outside guys."

For the seventh-place Grizzlies to continue their current two-game winning streak and stay in contact with a Big Sky Tournament seed (only the top six teams in the conference qualify for the postseason tournament) the Grizzlies must top sixth-place Idaho State.

"We feel we are better than our record," Holst said, adding that they have dropped several games in the closing minutes that he feels they should have won.

Taking care of one game at a time means beating Idaho State. Then, and only then, Holst and the Grizzlies will start looking toward the next game.

Montana finishes its regular season with the game against ISU; a road trip next week with stops in Los Angeles to take on league-leading Cal State Northridge; and Flagstaff, Ariz. to take on Northern Arizona before returning home to host Sac State in the regular season finale on March 1.

"We would certainly like to have our last game of the season mean something," he said.

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Holst holds on to the hope that a trip to the tournament will still be a possibility two weeks from now.

Men's NCAA-I ESPN Poll
1 North Carolina 21-2
2 Stanford 22-1
3 Duke 22-2
4 Michigan State 19-3
5 Illinois 19-5
6 Kansas 19-3
7 Syracuse 19-4
8 Arizona 17-6
9 Florida 16-5
9 Iowa State 21-3

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The more you hear, the better we sound.
He was originally supposed to red-shirt his freshman year, but head coach Elaine Taylor decided his team needed a little more firepower to overcome some early injuries. Buckmaster, in his first game against Valparaiso in Big Island Classic in Hawaii on Nov. 28, 1997. He had been an 18-year old for less than a month.

He ended up playing in 27 games and starting 15 of them, averaging 7.2 points per game. His future seemed bright. His sophomore year he fully expected to start and play a lot of minutes.

He had gone back to Portland interning on and off. And 20 he had gained before freshman year. He busts his ass in the weight room and, sure enough, got up to 225 pounds. It was the most he had weighed and he was stronger than ever.

But mononucleosis struck him down early in his sophomore season. Instead of playing 25-30 minutes per game, he was sleeping 15-16 hours a day.

He attended class when he could, slept in between, never went to practice and slept some more. It was frustrating. It seemed to take all his energy to lift his body out of bed and even more to put his clothes on, let alone elevate for a jumpshot or fight through a screen.

Hell, even walking to class was an ordeal.

"It was terrible," Buckmaster says. "I don't think I've ever fully recovered from it. I lost quite a bit of weight but even if you had strength and muscle you can't use it. It was like you were so tired and drained you just wanted to die."

Maybe he should have redshirted. That year wasn't much fun, anyway. The Griz were playing in the cramped Sentinel Gym. Holst hadn't been guaranteed his job and the Grizzlies suffered through an agonizing seven-game losing streak in the heart of the season.

However, Buckmaster gutted it out anyway. He played in 25 games, but never more than 15-20 minutes at time and averaged 5.0 points per game.

"I found out later (if we would have decided to, I probably would have gotten a redshirt year," Buckmaster says. "But not then."

The effects of mono still haunt him today. He was never able to get back to 225, settling for 215 instead. And he's still not what they used to be.

Vindication

Buckmaster came back for his junior year healthier and with a sense of purpose. The team that struggled to a 13-14 record and missed the Big Sky Tournament the year before had a strong core returning with Matt Williams and Mike Warhank as senior leaders.

Picked to finish no better than sixth, the Griz made believers out of the rest of the Big Sky by winning the regular season title. It was everyone's sweetest revenge for Buckmaster when the Griz clinched it on Eastern Washington's home floor. After all, it was the Eagles who ended Buckmaster's chances at the Big Sky tournement a year before in Missoula.

"Playing through all of that sophomore year and to see us come so far to be able to enjoy it was my best moment so far," Buckmaster says.

He was back to getting solid minutes and with opposing teams focusing their efforts on Williams and Warhank, Buckmaster flourished. He shot over 51 percent from behind the three-point line in conference games and scored in doubled figures nine times while leading the Griz in scoring three times.

Fans were reminded of Buckmaster's freshman year when he would launch a feathery jumper from 20 feet away with textbook form and precision.

It is almost sickening to see how easy his jumper looks from the wing. Nobody's jumper should look that natural. The smooth release, the perfect rotation, the arc that makes the ball seem to stay up there for three minutes on end. And the result which almost always is a resounding snap of the net as the ball passes through, never seeming to touch the rim.

"I always liked to perfect my form," Buckmaster says of his counts of days of shooting during his youth. "If I figured if my form was down my shot would have a better chance of going in."

The Odd Couple

Basketball is different than other sports because there are only 12 players on a team. The sport demands so much teamwork and closeness that those 12 players are closer to each other than, say, the 70 on a football team.

You are with the same 11 other people for practices, road trips, weight lifting and meals. Every day for the better part of a school year.

Next thing you know, you're living together, too. Buckmaster and Travis Greenwell have been roommates since their freshman year. And while neither will admit to being a neek-freak like Felix Unger or messy like Oscar Madison, they, as Buckmaster admits, basically are around each other for 24 hours a day during the season since they both are business administration majors and have the same class schedules.

That much time around each other and you'd think that fisticuffs would be running rampant between the two. But it hasn't happened once. Not even after intense games of PlayStation baseball which Buckmaster says he always wins and Greenwell reluctantly confirms.

Greenwell has already taken his graduate management admission test and both of them are hoping to get their masters in business administration. They both have the same dry sense of humor which consists largely of making fun of each other's girl problems, Greenwell's inability to set charts and have him read it without his glasses for the better part of a year, contacts. It's hilarious."

Contrary to stereotypes about an athlete's "big man on campus" lifestyle both Greenwell and Buckmaster prefer the "big man on the couch" lifestyle. An exciting night might consist of watching TV or playing PlayStation.

Realization

Senior season hasn't been a dream for Buckmaster. He's had some rough spots during the season trying to fit in new players with last year's returnees. There was a season where players have to take on roles they may have never played before it is the true full court press.

He's has the target on his back, which means every team's top defender - will be him. He simply has to know he can shoot and they know he can post up smaller guys. They make him work for every shot he taken.

They bang him and bump him, hit his elbow when he takes a shot, and at times just leave him.

The losing eats at him, like the granite. He can't sleep after losses. He continuously replays each possession and each shot in his head over and over again and, as if he could change the outcome if he thought about it long enough.

"After we lose games, me and Tray go home and talk about it 'til way too late and don't get any sleep," Buckmaster says. "I can't sleep after we lose a game because you know how important it was and for me being my last year. There aren't many opportunites left."

To make matters worse, he even went through a slight shooting slump early in the conference season. He made a few shots but he missed some that he would normally knock down with his eyes closed. The low point came when he shot 1-11 from the field in a loss to MSU. To buck up, with his final miss coming on a three-pointer that would have won the game.

Buckmaster has been asked to be a leader — to be vocal is something he never has had to do since coming to UM. But through it all he has remained poised, never losing his cool. With exception of voicing his displeasure with three or four minutes on the floor, Holst says Buckmaster is a pretty cool customer on the court. It's that poise that Holst believes makes Buckmaster such an important member of his team.

"I had a talk with him a week ago and I told him you need to be my glue and hold this team together. To not be part of the problem but to be the solution," Holst says. "And in the past two games he has been so important. He might not have been Ole's player of the game but he has been important in terms of his poise in tough situations and a calming presence on the court."

He knows his college career is coming to an end. The realization came right before the season started. While it hasn't been exactly what he thought it would be like, Buckmaster remains positive. He knows how good this team can be. They just need to relax and remember they are basketball players, not robots. To go out and play loose and aggressive and make plays. If they can do that, the Griz can make the tournament.

"Everybody knows we can do it," Buckmaster says. "But we haven't proven to anyone yet, we haven't shown we can do it all year. We just haven't figured it out for long periods of time."

If the Griz are to have any chance in these last four games, they will need Buckmaster to be both the leader and the presence that he has been throughout his career.

And, no matter what he says or thinks, is worth writing about.
Lady Griz look to spoil Bengals’ perfect Big Sky record

Bryan Haines
GameDay Kaimin

It has been almost a month since Idaho State came into Dahlberg arena and stunned Montana.

The Lady Bengals, sparked by junior Mandi Carver’s 24 points and 14 rebounds, upset UM 67-42. It was the first time that the Lady Griz had lost a conference game at home in over nine years.

Friday night Montana will be looking to return the favor. With a sweep of Montana and Montana State this weekend, ISU would clinch the school’s first ever regular season Big Sky Conference title. Head coach Bob Selvig would love to put off that celebration for at least a week.

"Idaho State is playing the best ball in the league right now," Selvig said. "We are looking forward to going in there and knocking them off."

To do that though, UM will have to reverse its road fortune. While Montana has been rock solid at home, posting an 11-2 record in the Adams Center, its level of play has fallen off sharply on the road. Montana is 4-5 away from home and has dropped its last three road games.

And if Selvig and company are going to win this game, they are going to have to shoot the ball better. Conceding 115 points in the last two games is no way to win.

"When you don’t shoot the ball well, you are not going to beat many teams no matter how good of defense you play," Selvig said. "When you don’t shoot the ball like they are capable of, they are virtually unbeatable. Lauren Cooper is leading the ladies in scoring at 13.6 a game and has 12.3 a game.

When Carver isn’t beating you, they have a lethal one-two punch with Carver. You pay too much attention to ISU’s post play, guard Sarah Nelson will make you pay. Due to the constant double teams on Idaho State’s posts, Nelson has been getting great looks at the hoop and is knocking in 10.9 points a game. She recently scored 28 points against Cal State Northridge as Idaho State beat NAU 63-56 and CSU 75-59.

Leading the way is Dillon, Native Carver. A top candidate for the conference player of the year honors, Carver is tearing through the league. She is averaging 13.9 points per game and 10 rebounds a contest.

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