Game Day Kaimin, October 27, 2001

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Saturday October 27, 2001

The Kaimin is the daily student newspaper at the University of Montana

GameDay
KAIMIN
The Grizzly athletics

LAW & ORDER

Spend a weekend with the men you love to hate
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MONTANA VS. Portland State
Order from Chaos

GAME DAY KAIMIN SPENDS A WEEKEND WITH A CREW OF BIG SKY CONFERENCE OFFICIALS

TO SEE HOW THE MOST HATED, MOST IMPORTANT MEN IN FOOTBALL LIVE

BY BRYAN HAINES

Contrary to popular opinion, the qualifications to be a Big Sky Conference official do not include blindness or the IQ of a plant. In fact, the only way a person can ever test to become a referee is to have a current official invite them to a clinic held annually in Ogden, Utah in July. During the clinic, prospective refs study rules, mechanics and any technical changes made by the Big Sky. At the end of camp there is a rules test on which officials must score at least a 70.

"If they are good enough to become members, refs quickly find that they have been hired into one of the most scrutinized professions in the United States. Being an official or referee is a thankless job. It is one of the only careers in America where, instead of hearing compliments from one or two customers at a time, 20,000 or so bombard you at once.

Study Time

It used to be that officials would meet on a Saturday morning, go out and officiate the game that afternoon and then have a good time afterwards. No more.

"There is a lot more pressure put on officials than there ever has been," Ray Willette says. "We are constantly watching film, going to clinics, working in the off-season and trying to become better every game."

While Joe Glenn is laser-focused day and night on game film Monday morning following the week-end game, so are officials. All officials are sent a copy of game film from their game the week before. Once they get their film dissected every play, trying to find a hold they missed, or calls that should have gone another way.

"We are our own worst critics," Willette says. "When we walk off the field, we know we missed something or that we were lucky to be in the right place at the right time to make a call." While they may be their own worst critics after the game, during the 60 minutes of playing time, the job of critic is handed over to coaches, players and worst of all, the crowd.

Only one of these three matters to Willette, and that is the coach. Of the three, Willette said, chances are that only the coach has solid knowledge of the rules.

"When a coach says that you missed something, you really have to listen to them," Willette says. "Most of the time when he sees something, he knows what he is talking about." Although fans may not believe it, the crowd really has no bearing on the actions by the officials.

"The crowd is a non-play- er," Willette said. "There could be a guy who will sit at the top of the bleachers and say you missed a spot by six inches and then go out in the parking lot and not be able to find his car." So why do they do this? "Definitely the comradery with the guy," Stoddard said. "I wouldn't be doing this if we didn't get along and were having fun."

Leg work

It's now 1 a.m., three hours before kickoff, on a bright and sunny Saturday morning, and Washington-Grizzly Stadium is bare. Underneath the stadium, far down the tunnels that zigzag underground, officials are already prepping for kickoff.

Field judge Kevin Kiser, in his first year as a Sky official, sits on a stool reading his rule book while Willette adjusts the clip-on-microphone he'll use to broadcast penalties to the crowd.

On a dry-erase board, umpire Jared Weight and line judge Ken Edwards overcut blocking techniques used by St. Mary's.

When Willette and Weight

Continued on page 6
Vikings hope passing attack can pillage Montana

Griz look to avoid disastrous scorefest, overtime loss of '99

Carl Hennell
Game Day Kaarin

First, it was the nation's No. 2-ranked offense of Eastern Washington that took the Grizzlies to double overtime. Now, it's Portland State's fourth-ranked passing attack's turn to try its luck.

Led by junior quarterback Juston Wood, who ranks fourth in the nation in individual offensive yards per game, the Vikings (3-3, 2-1) are looking to end a Big Sky Conference record the same way it began. Seventeen conference games ago, in 1999, PSU beat the Grizzlies. It was the last time a conference foe caged the Griz.

Although the Vikings boast a powerful offense, their three losses — by a combined total of 10 points — have been attributed to a trend of starting games slowly. "It usually takes a team with a bunch of transfers half of a season to get," said Griz coach Joe Glenn, who is 19-3 in two years as the Griz skipper. "I don't know how good they are yet. I'm faked out on them. I'm real concerned."

Glenn's concern is well-founded. The Vikings are running on all cylinders with an assortment of injuries. "He's got good speed," said PSU coach Tim Walsh. "(UM's) tradition wins. We've got to able to put some heat on them with a four-man rush," said Glenn. "We're improving in the defensive trenches. Six of our seven sacks against the 'best offensive line in the conference' came from our front four. Hopefully, defensive end Herb (Fernandez) can get his stance elongated as a pass rush specialist. It's going to take a lot of fresh guys in there because I have a feeling we are going to see about 50 balls going up in the air."

Although PSU's strength is its passing game, it has found a new weapon on the ground in a 5-foot-11, 196-pound freshman. Running back Ryan Fuqua saw his first action three weeks ago and ran for 112 yards in the second half. In his first career start last week, he rushed 28 times for 208 yards and three touchdowns. "He's got good speed," said Glenn of the back who is averaging 7.9 yards per carry. "The thing that impresses me is how fast he busts to the corner and then he's gone."

On the other side of the running game is Yohance Humphrey, running against the conference's second-to-last rush defense. He rushed for 194 yards against them last year. This year, Humphrey ranks 13th in the nation with more than 130 yards rushing per game. With 814 yards this season, he needs 363 yards in five games to oust last year's performance from first place for the Griz single-season rushing record. "There is no doubt that Yo Humphrey is the key to the game," said PSU coach Tim Walsh. "If he can run and keep it out of our offense's hands we are in trouble. Unfortunately, Humphrey is running behind an offensive line with an assortment of injuries. "I guess every team is a little banged up at this point in the season," said Glenn."

"But the one place we couldn't afford to digging up was the offensive line. We are beat up and paper thin," said Glenn. "As much as Glenn would love to give the ball to Humphrey 50 times per game, he knows the Vikings will be gearing up to stop the run. "Edwards has got to play better than he did in the second half last week," said Glenn. "But you couldn't play much better than he did in the first half. We were planning to get Neill in the game, but when John came out flat in the second half, we wanted to make sure he had his confidence back before we took him out."

"(UM's) tradition wins them games, and their field may be the only Big Sky venue that wins games for the home team," said Walsh, of the 56,838 fans that have crowded Washington-Grizzly Stadium this year in three games. The Griz have won five of the last six meetings with the Vikings and lead the series 18-10. "This is going to be a real litmus test for us," said Glenn. "Everybody's banged up a little. I'm just glad we are on the field."

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## Offense

**Thatcher Szalay**

**Offensive guard**

- 6-5, 295 senior from Whitefish, Mont. 

Big Thatch got pretty hot under the collar when the trash talking lumberjacks started running their mouths about being the "best D-line in the conference." Rightly so, we think. There’s no question that he has earned the top spot for the Griz in the boat. He is just one of the players who would make Harry Blackstone envious. Vince (of course) leads the Montana defense in tackles with 60, nearly 20 more than anyone else. This week he’ll have to help out with some tight pass coverage to stop PSU's somewhat high-powered attack. We also wouldn’t mind seeing a Wood fella enter the Griz’s disappointing football bowl.

**Vince Huntsberger**

**Strong safety**

- 5-11, 190 senior from Libby, Mont. 

Vince’s play has finally been out of the booth this season for the Griz. Last week, his strip of quarterback Preston Parsons was some sleight-of-hand that would make Harry Blackstone envious. Vince of course leads the Montana defense in tackles with 60, nearly 20 more than anyone else. This week he’ll have to help out with some tight pass coverage to stop PSU’s somewhat high-powered attack. We also wouldn’t mind seeing a Wood fella enter the Griz’s disappointing football bowl.

## Defense

**Vince Huntsberger**

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If it’s been a few weeks since Johnny Montana took a total effort to put together 80 solid minutes of football. This week will no doubt be rocky at the Oregon side. The Claw and Co. will have to be on their game this weekend as the conference’s seventh-ranked pass defense will be tested.

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Viking Defense

Juston Wood Quarterback
6-1, 192 junior from Portland, Ore.

We will not make jokes about Juston's last name. Juston has enough trouble on his hands trying to fill the shoes of PSU golden boy Jimmy Blanchard. So far, though, Juston's done an admirable job. He's the conference's big tall passer and the leader in total offense. It doesn't hurt that he's big big! Terry Charles has to be, but GOK still thinks Jon's Jimmy Blanchard.

Marcus Green Linebacker
6-2, 230 junior from Pasadena, Calif.

As the leading tackler on PSU's somewhat off-brand defense, Marcus Green has got to carry a lot of weight for the Vikings. Green is currently sixth in conference in tackles with 59, averaging just under 10 tackles per game. Oddly, he's also one of four players of PSU's two-deep depth chart from Pasadena, Calif. Not only that, all of these players also graduated from John Muir High School. Weird, eh? Of course, was America's most famous and influential naturalist and conservationist.

GOK is sure he'd be proud to know his high school has a hall of a team.

NUMERICAL ROSTER
Can the 'Cats keep rolling?

Ian Costello
GameDay Kaimin

Javier Garcia better be ready.
The senior kicker from Idaho State is fresh off his two-for-two field goal afternoon in the Bengals' 27-28 loss to Utah State last weekend. For his effort, Garcia was named the Big Sky Conference special-teamer of the week for the second time this season.

Garcia has won the game for the Wildcats late. Last year it was a field goal. The last two meetings this season.

Weber State have been decided by a field goal. The last two meetings.

Weber State kicker.

Eddie Johnson leads the league in field goal percentage. Weber State offense, ranked third in the league, in check.

It's gonna be five in a row for the Hornets who lose another heartbreaker.

GDK Prediction: 23-20, UC Davis in overtime.

In a battle that may feature a Big Sky record for punts in a game by one team (coincidentally the old record is held by Idaho State who punted 14 times in a game against Idaho in 1973). Idaho State and Weber State kicker.


Montana State vs. Northern Arizona
It's up or shut up time for the two teams meeting in Bozeman this weekend.

Montana State still seems to be looking for someone to believe in them, even though they are 3-0 in the conference and tied for first place with Montana. Northern Arizona, after talking so much trash before getting beat by the Grizzlies last week, are still trying to figure out how, according to what they thought, the better team lost last week.

Northern Arizona, at 2-2 in the Big Sky, is in desperate need of a conference win to stay in shouting distance of the leaders.

Weber State could go a long way to shutting-up doubters with a win over the 'Jacks on Saturday.

GDK Prediction: Northern Arizona talks too much about how they are legitimate contenders. NAU keeps wondering how the better team got beat... again. 12-19, Montana State.

Cal State Northridge vs. Eastern Washington.

Okay, so it's not a Big Sky Conference game. But Northridge was a conference member just a short time ago and they appear that they won't be playing football much longer, so GDK figured a little press was appropriate, for old times' sake at least.

Too bad for the Matadors that the only thing that can attract press to their 1-5 season is the fact that they are going to visit Jesse Chatman.

Chatman is again coming off an offensive player of the week performance, this time against Sacramento State. On 39 carries, the senior from Seattle, Wash., set a school record, rushing for 298 yards in EWU's 42-35 win over Sacramento State last Saturday.

At 2-2 in the Big Sky, Eastern Washington still has an outside shot at the conference title. They need to take care of their own business and get some help, but they still have a chance. That won't slip by Chatman who currently leads the nation in rushing, averaging 185.5 yards a game.

GDK Prediction: Chatman and Co. take care of their own business just fine. 32-16 EWU.

Sacramento State
The 2-5 Hornets host 5-2 UC Davis Saturday afternoon looking to end their four-game losing streak. Sac. State can't seem to get a break, losing to Eastern Washington last week in overtime, and won't get one this week.

It's gonna be five in a row for the Hornets who lose another heartbreaker.

GDK Prediction: 23-20, UC Davis in overtime.

when working as a graduate assistant

Weber State offense, ranked third in the league, in check.

So the kicker just might be the kickers. Garcia is leading the league in field goal percentage and WHU's Jason Zar has already scored 33 points this season.

Not to be outdone are the teams' punters. ISU punter Wyatt Kann is averaging a solid 37.8.

By the end of the season, Garcia will probably need Garcia to knock out the water, allowing a league-worst 522.1 yards per game, but Idaho State's offense has been sluggish all season, and is currently ranked fifth in the league.

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Scouting Report:

No. 4 Rhode Island Rams

Chad Dundas
GameDay Kaimin

The Division I-AA Top 25 poll can be a curious, can­
tankerous beast. At times it is as stodgy and literal as a
seventh-grade science
teacher. Other times, it
seems as prone to ridiculous
flights of fancy as a JV
cheerleader.

Example: At this point in
the season, it would take a
near act of God to extradite
the casual fan to know what
another No. 12 Appalachian State.

25. The Rams and the top-
7-0 teams in the poll. It's
quite a turnaround for
Rhody, which
then 3-8 last year
and was picked to
finish in the
Atlantic 10 cellar
again this season.

But are the Rams
real or are they
just darlings of the
poll? Who knows.

Second-year head
coach Tim Stowers,
who came over from
Georgia Southern
by way of an assis-
tant job at Temple,
is an early favorite for
couch-of-the-year
honors. The SportsNet-
work
calls his turn
around of the Rams
the "most impor-
tant in the division" and
GDD is inclined to believe it.

Stowers installed a
GSU-style, ground-and
spread offense at
Rhody and senior backs
David Jamison, Vince
Nedinorzy and Moses Tajong
have capitalized. The Rams
have rolled up 1,968 yards
rushing, averaging just over
281 yards per game.

Jamison leads the rush-
ers, collecting 213 carries,
most double the attempts
that Nedimyer and Tajong
got combined. Jamison, a
5-foot-10, 215-pound New
Jersey native, last year
became just the fifth back in
URI history to rush for more
than 1,000 yards.

To open the season, URI
downed I-AA powers
Delaware and Hofstra
and have since been on a roll of
close games; six of their
wins came by an average
margin of 4.5 points. Aside
from a 57-7 blowout of
Hampton, the Rams have
had some nailbiters. Rhody
needed a come-from-behind
effort to best William and
Mary 34-31 on Oct. 9.

This week the Rams go to
Virginia, to take on the
Richmond Spiders and then
have tough games against
Maine and U-Mass to close
out the year. URI might have a hard time staying
unbeaten but should be able to
get into the I-AA playoffs,
where the ground-controlled
running game will fit right in.

If they can continue to
inch their way up the charts,
perhaps the Rams will get
the first round bye in the
playoffs after a strong finish in
the Atlantic 10 cellar
again this season.

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Continued from page 2

Willette is going over game management to make sure things do not get out of hand on the field.

"In a game like this, it is important to be on top of your game and make sure nothing happens in the first two series after halftime," Willette says. "Emotions will be running high on the field, and we don't want something to happen, say, a fight."

In the second half, Montana keeps the ball on the ground, happy to drain the clock and play reserves. The officials begin to blend into the field, and for a while go basically unnoticed. Heading into the fourth quarter, it looks like the crew will make it out of Missoula without being chewed out or ripped on too badly by the crowd.

But at the 11:02 of the fourth quarter, reality set back in.

Following the boos from Stoddard's penalty, Willette marches off the 15 yards, sets the 25-second play clock. The UM student section starts in on the obligatory "bull-shit" chant.

The outcome of the game isn't in question, and most in the crowd are deciding what post-game party to attend, but the seven men glad in black and white toil on. There are 11 minutes left, and they still have work to do.

Mike Colson/UDK

Big Sky refs work with the same crew week after week, year after year.