IN THE SHADOWS

Senior defensive tackle Curt Colter watches and waits to heal from a leg injury while doing all he can to stay in the game.

by Courtney Lowery
"The quiet leader"

"I'M NOT A STANDOUT PLAYER. BUT I'VE DONE MY JOB."
— INJURED SENIOR DEFENSIVE TACKLE CURT COLTER

Changing defensive tackle Kyler Noel. "He has his own mindset. He'll just go out there and do whatever he sets his mind to."

He's consistent. He forms what the Grizzlies have always been famous for — a strong, almost impenetrable line. Everybody knows, you just don't run against the Griz."

But nobody seems to know the faces that make that wall.

Why? Because most are like Colter's: easy-going, laid-back, a bit quiet. Colter, he's a bit goofy. His teammates call him Beefcake. Noel says he does a stellar Chris Farley impression. He's the go-to guy when it comes to sense of humor.

"He just lightens things up," Noel says.

But even from the sidelines, Colter is still an asset. His mental game has always been his strongest, he says, and his five years of experience staring at the wall. He joke's and players below him take note.

"He's pretty bad," he says, showing a deep confusion on the left side of his thigh. "See." Indeed, his leg ripples in places where there should be no ripples and the whole thigh is a reddish blue. Then he shows his knee. As he pushes above his kneecap, the fluid squishes back and forth. It makes your stomach turn just a little, but not his.

"Tell you," he says proudly, like a little boy showing his new black eye. He just knows he's tough, and you don't question.

For a man of his size, at 6-2, 295 lbs, sitting gingerly does not come easily, but the pain shooting through his eyes says he has no choice in how he sits anymore. "It's pretty bad," he says, showing a deep confusion on the left side of his thigh. "See." But on the plane, ready to go, and even had the possibility of earning a thing. He knows he'll be back, regardless.

But it's there, behind the scenes that Colter shines. It's week by week, hoping that one of the many injuries to his left will heal.

"It's been a whole project," he says with a laugh, lifting the brace on his knee.

Colter sits gingerly. For a man of this while sincerely talking about looking something on the left side of his thigh. "See." But frankly, he's not questioning anything. He knows he'll be back, regardless.

It all started last spring with a run-of-the-mill injury. The fluid kept building and he sustained a large deep bruise to his upper thigh. "It's time. It'll just take time. It's not going to heal overnight," Colter says.

It's only a few more games before he's ready. Anything to keep his defensive tackle position back. But on the plane ride to New York to play Hofstra, the altitude took its toll and the fluid in his leg came back. He got in on a few plays in New York but then a week later, the fluid kept building and he sustained a large deep bruise to his upper thigh.

"Yeah, it hurts," he says. "I couldn't sleep for a week."

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Glenn to see familiar faces against the Bears

Bryan Haines
GameDay Kaimin

Standing across the sidelines from the Griz on Saturday will be the Northern Colorado Bears, but they will be more than just another opponent for head coach Joe Glenn.

To many of the players starting for the Bears, Glenn's house was a place to eat pizza, shoot hoops and shoot the breeze with him and his son, Casey. The Bears' coaches were, at one time, winning national championships with Glenn, or playing under him.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect and actually love for this team coming in here," Glenn said. "I am a little bit closer to these players than just a coach and player. I am kind of a father and a friend."

Glenn held the head coaching job at Northern Colorado for 11 years before coming to Montana.

Many of the starters on this year's UNC team are men Glenn recruited to come and play for him at Colorado. Many of those same players were also over at his house goofing off with his son, who was on the UNC team for two years and would have been a senior on this year's team. He now plays for Carroll College in Helena.

"I don't think it will make too much difference for us," said Ray Dalton, the Bears' head coach. "It is just our players playing their players."

Glenn knows that putting those emotions aside and getting ready to play won't be easy for either of them.

And Dalton said he isn't going to change anything just for Saturday's game. The Bears are going to try to establish the run on offense in order to open up the passing game.

One wrinkle that the Grizzlies will have to prepare for is the Bears' use of two different quarterbacks. A red-shirt senior, Mark Passard, who was recruited by Glenn, will start for UNC. Passard threw for two touchdowns and 172 yards as the Bears beat Western Washington 31-0 last weekend.

Junior transfer Steve Cutlip will also see action behind center Saturday. Cutlip, who played last season at Colorado State, fired a 65-yard touchdown strike against Western Washington and had 135 yards passing as the two split time.

Both will play about half the game against the Griz, Dalton said, even though Cutlip suffered bruised ribs after taking a sack last week.

If Northern Colorado is to establish the running game then Tyler Hawkins must run better than he did against Western Washington last week. The half-back gained only 60 yards on 15 carries, though he did find the end zone once during the game. On the other end are two stellar seniors in George Carroll and Eric Nelson. Nelson is already averaging more than 40 yards receiving this season.

Having his offensive line create holes and hold blocks is an area of concern for Dalton.

"I don't know if we can match up with them. I have no clue," Dalton said. "There is a big difference between our program and theirs."

Defensively, the Bears held Western Washington to just 120 total yards of offense in the shutout.

However, the Griz will probably be one of the strongest offenses the Bears will play all season.

Despite what appears to be an obvious advantage for the Griz, Glenn is doing everything he can to keep his players focused.

"We don't wear an insignia on our helmet saying 'We are I-AA and they are Division II,'" Glenn said.

"Our kids can see that they are big, strong and talented."

Though Glenn's heart will always be close to his Bears and their fans, he's ready to let the players focus on the game and bring their best to the field.

"Get your emotions out and get ready to play," Glenn said.

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**Defense**

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**Offense**

**Dane Oliver**
Wide Receiver
5-8, 155 junior from Monmouth, OR

Oliver fought for the starting "Z" receiver spot this year and proved to be a good investment as he made some key catches last week and scored on a 19-yard touchdown pass via John Edwards for his first collegiate touchdown. Oliver is sure to become a household name in the Griz's arsenal for the next two years.

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**NUMERICAL ROSTER**

**GRIZ OFFENSE VS. GRIZ DEFENSE VS.**

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**PITCHER**

McFarland 72
Returning offensive starter Dylan McFarland is a 295-pound force to be reckoned with offensively and bearded. Watch for big plays coming out of the bullpen behind number 72.

**Starting Lineup**

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Scott Tongren 33
Ryan Palmer 51
Dusty Hoftschnieder 95
Anthony Dunn 4
Cabel Rohloff 46

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Jared Wallen 97
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Northern Colorado (1-0) at Montana (2-0)
The Grizzlies have begun their quest for a second straight national championship in dominating fashion. After handing Hofstra their first scoreless game since 1978 with a 21-0 victory, the Griz followed up with a 45-7 thrashing of Albany, N.Y. Now the Griz are set to host Northern Colorado this weekend, with kickoff at 1:05.

As each week passes, including all of last season, the Griz continue to show that they might be in the wrong league. With a current 16-game win streak, Joe Glenn's squad looks to be a step above the rest of the Division I-AA field. But, hey, that's the rest of the nation's problem.

As long as they're in Division I-AA they'll continue to do what they do best: win. No team has been able to stop them from doing so, and Northern Colorado will probably be no exception. Led by last week's Big Sky Conference Offensive Player of the Week, John Edwards, the Griz will go home with 16 straight wins under their belts.

GDK prediction: 35-6 Griz

Adams State (1-1) at Montana State (1-1)
In the first ever meeting between the two teams, the Bobcats look to redeem themselves by not only winning, but hopefully crushing their much smaller Division II opponent. MSU's running back Ryan Johnson, possibly the best in the nation, needs only 185 yards to break the school's all-time rushing record.

Now they have to focus on staying above .500 by getting past Adams State.

GDK prediction: 28-24 EWU in a squeaker

North Carolina A&T (1-0) at Portland State (1-0)
In another match-up between two teams that have never met before, Coach Tim Walsh's PSU squad, riding high after past Adams State.

GDK prediction: 31-7 'Cats

Sam Houston State (1-1) at Northern Arizona (1-1)
Now this should be a game to watch. Northern Arizona is not currently in the top 25, but is definitely a top-25 caliber team. Sam Houston State is ranked 14th in the Sports Network poll and, like Northern Arizona, would be higher if not for an early loss.

The Lumberjacks are looking to avenge last season's loss to Sam Houston State in the first round of the I-AA playoffs, the two teams' only meeting ever.

Sam Houston State wants to creep in the top 10, where they hope to stay all season. The Lumberjacks have had difficult putting points on the board this season, but hope that quarterback Clint Womack can get on track and lead the offense.

This is easier said than done against a solid Sam Houston State squad. GDK thinks that even if Womack does get his groove back, it simply won't be enough. Sam Houston State is ready, which is highly unfortunate for the Lumberjacks.

Don't expect a blowout, but do expect a blemish on the Big Sky Conference's resume.

GDK prediction: 24-17 Sam Houston State

Western State (0-1) at Weber State (0-1)
This game, unlike the one against Northern Arizona, carries no importance and should be as about exciting as bridge night at the senior citizens' center.

Weber State is a weak, little Division II opponent that can win pride just by keeping their losing margin to a minimum. Weber State is a team with firepower on offense, and absolutely nothing on defense. That's all right though, because they won't need defense to win this one.

Junior quarterback Tate Bennett threw for 345 yards and three touchdowns in the first game of the season. Unfortunately, the defense couldn't make any stops, get any tackles, or really do anything at all, and Weber State lost the game.

Western State doesn't have a strong offense but is more than capable of scoring on Weber's pathetic defense. However, Bennett should have another big day that will result in a Weber State win. It won't be pretty, it shouldn't be exciting, and it's definitely not important. It's still a game, though, and there has to be an outcome.

GDK prediction: 41-26 Weber State

Idaho State (1-0) at Utah State (0-2)
Idaho State exploded out of the gates in their first game of the season, led by a running game that compiled 257 yards. Idaho State punished Montana Western 42-7, which is, granted, no huge feat, but did so in a manner impressive enough to catch the attention of fans from around the conference.

Utah State, on the other hand, is still searching for their first victory of the year. It looks like they'll still be searching after this weekend.

In the first game against Western, ISU had two running backs, Rory Carrington and Isaac Mitchell, gain nearly 100 yards each on the ground. They might not be quite as productive this game, but still will be the keys to an ISU victory.

The Utah State Aggies own a 10-2 series lead overall against ISU, but will face a tougher opponent than in past years. The past has belonged to Utah State, but 2002 belongs to ISU.

GDK prediction: 33-21 ISU

Western Oregon (1-0) at Eastern Washington (1-1)
So far this season, both of Eastern Washington's games have ended with decisive results. Their 38-12 loss to Division I-A Arizona State wasn't as bad as it looked in the end, and their 50-6 win over tiny Montana Tech wasn't as amazing as the score suggested. Now they will have an opponent more parallel to their level of play in Western Oregon.

Led by last year's Big Sky Co-Caucus of the Year, Paul Wulf, Eastern Washington will utilize their pass-happy offense and mediocre, but solid, defense to squash out a victory this year. Last week against Montana Tech, starting quarterback Josh Blankenship threw five touchdowns and backup Erik Meyer threw two more to give EWU a new team record of seven touchdown passes in one game.

This game should be fun to watch, and if not, it still should result in another Big Sky Conference victory.

GDK prediction: 28-24 EWU in a speaker

If the stars fall into alignment and GDK's predictions become reality, then the Big Sky Conference should have a very productive weekend, losing only one game (Northern Arizona). Sacramento State is the only team in the conference not playing this weekend, and that's probably a good thing if the Big Sky wants to lose only one game. Sac State has lost 10 straight games dating back to last year.

Whatever happens, when all of the final whistles have blown and the weekend is over, the Montana Grizzlies will find themselves ranked number one in the nation because when winning becomes routine, and routine becomes habit, it's hard to break a good habit.
Bryan O'Connor

GameDay Kaimin

Following a tough loss to the Vanderbilt Commodores last Saturday, the Furman Paladins are keeping their heads up and focusing on the rest of their schedule, their new head coach told the GameDay Kaimin.

The Paladins, under first-year head coach Bobby Lamb, opened their season against the Commodores and sustained a 49-18 loss in Tennessee. The Commodores rolled up 577 yards on offense against the Furman defense last weekend. Coach Lamb didn't want to talk much about the defense.

One of his favorite targets, senior flanker Bear Rinehart, caught seven passes for 127 yards against the Commodores. Rinehart had a strained hamstring in preseason practice, but appeared to have healed well by the season opener. Sophomore split end Isaac West also hauled in seven passes for 82 yards.

"If (West) stays healthy, he could break all our records," Lamb said.

"In August I told the team, 'we laid that to rest, it's in our past,'" Lamb said. "That was last year's team. This is a new team and we have to find our own identity."

Lamb said he and his coaching staff were a little concerned with Napier's nine interceptions last year, and worked with him in the offseason to improve his accuracy.

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"(Napier) is like a coach out there on the field," Lamb said. "He's our leader and we all have a lot of confidence in him."

Lamb said there are still questions about the Paladin's defense, which lost senior linebackers Will Bouton and John Thrift. The Commodores rolled up 577 yards on offense against the Furman defense last weekend. Coach Lamb didn't want to talk much about the defense.

As far as the loss Furman suffered against the Griz in the 2001 I-AA championship, Lamb said it is not figuring into this year's team's motivation. "In August I told the team, 'we laid that to rest, it's in our past,'" Lamb said. "That was last year's team. This is a new team and we have to find our own identity."

Lamb said his seventh-ranked team is looking forward to the offensive and defensive schemes.

Lamb said he is looking to his offense — especially the backs and receivers — to be the strong point for the Paladins.

Lamb said he will not be making any major changes ahead, playing Richmond, Appalachian State and some conference play after being overpowered by the SEC Commodores. But the team has a tough schedule.

The 6-foot-3 inch, 210-pound senior completed 21 of 31 passes for 241 yards against Vanderbilt last Saturday and has four returning receivers as weapons this year.

Not only does he play well, fittingly, he coaches well. "(Napier) is like a coach out there on the field," Lamb said. "He's our leader and we all have a lot of confidence in him."

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I give them little pointers and give them little mental tidbits before a game," Colter says. "There's a lot of that that's intangible that no one ever talks about. Things like what to think during a game, how to clear your head." It's not easy being on the sidelines. After starting all last season and just starting to come into his own during the playoffs, it's just not easy. That's how he puts it. It's not devastating. His world hasn't ended, it's just not easy.

"It's a hard pill to swallow, but I'm not going to throw in the towel," he said. "I'm going to make the best out of this." Sure, it scares him that he's missing a possible return championship season, but he's confident he'll be back soon. He's put too much in to give up now, just when he feels like he's starting to shine.

Colter red-shirted his freshman year. Again, there he was on the sidelines, not a place he likes to be. His brother, DJ, was playing defensive tackle for the Griz' at the time. Colter was in the shadows of his brother, he was homesick, having a tough time and he started to rethink playing football. But he stuck with it, and in the end he says it's been worth it, not because football has been his life but because he's loved every minute he's been on the gridiron.

Last year, in Chattanooga, he never knew if he was going to make the decision and it's a tough one to deal with. Colter was in the shadows of his brother, he was homesick, having a tough time and he started to rethink playing football.

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"While everybody was just jumping around, hugging the trophy, I took a walk by myself," he said. "I just kind of walked around the field and thought about junior high football in Hysham ... a lot of things. Something like that, you can carry with you the rest of your life." He's played sports his entire life. As a kid, his brother and he would clear the furniture out of the family living room in his tiny town and wrestle. He got his first pair of shoulder pads in third grade. He earned 12 letters at Hysham High, four each in football, basketball and track.

"It's funny, because he says he loves sports and no doubt he does. You can see it in his eyes when he starts to talk about games, plays or highlights he remembers. He says he'd do anything for a competition, but there's something different about him, something that distinguishes him from the stereotypical athletes who are only athletes, who only talk about their lives in terms of wins and losses.

Sure, he admits that, "The thing with me is that I love to win, it doesn't matter if I'm playing checkers or ... I just love to win." And, he admits to doing what all small-town kids do: playing all sports growing up, sometimes just to pass the time.

But when asked about what's been the best about his five years in Missoula, he doesn't want to talk about football.

"It's hard to explain," he says, squinting his eyes. "The last five years ... A lot has changed. Coming from a small town, I've opened my mind a lot more. My perspectives have changed." He's taking it in stride, injury and all.

"I'm not going to let this go to my head," he said. "I just gotta wait for my time, because things like this, I don't have any control over. I told one of my lineman "I'd rather be there running, conditioning and puking." And, he admits to doing what all small-town kids do: playing all sports growing up, sometimes just to pass the time. He's putting it all back on the field, but not for the fans, or for his mug to be displayed on the new scoreboard.

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