MONTANA VS. Northern Arizona

GameDay
KAIMIN
The original, complete guide to Grizzly athletics

A BRUSH WITH CANCER,
A BATTLING DETERMINATION
AND A SOFT SPOT FOR
CHILDREN MAKE
JON TALMAGE
MORE THAN JUST
A FRESHMAN

veteran
The rookie

Saturday, November 2, 2002
Kickoff 12:05 PM
Jon Talmage's alarm rings. It must mean it's 7:21 a.m.
He rings a stiff arm to his bedside table and hits snooze just once.

For the next nine minutes, Talmage dreams about catching passes, tests and classes.
BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. It's 7:30 and time to get up.

The pant legs of the gray Griz sweatpants he slept in are bunched up to his knees. He pulls them down and arches back for a stretch.
Catching a glimpse of himself in a full-length mirror next to his bedroom door, Talmage pulls down the top right corner of his sweatpants. He stands there for a moment, looking at a purple scar three inches across.

As he runs his fingertips over the rough, coarse skin, Talmage remembers.
He remembers how a supposed "routine appendectomy" turned into the biggest scare of his life.

During a soccer game last spring, the Griz freshman dismissed sharp pains surging through his gut as stomach cramps.
He tried to ignore the pain until it went from a "I think I have gas" type of feeling, to "I think someone's shoving a fire poker through my innards" sensation.

He stepped out of the soccer game for a moment to catch his breath. Then Talmage's stomach began to turn, his palms began to sweat and his mouth began to water.
He was about to puke.

Talmage got sick and continued to vomit for the rest of the day. He couldn't keep anything down — not even a jug of Gatorade.

Talmage went to the Curry Health Center later that day after his condition did not improve. Following an examination, Talmage was advised to go to the hospital for more tests.

At 4 a.m., after all the lab results came back, Talmage's doctor swept into the room and told him he had appendicitis and would need surgery.

The appendectomy was scheduled for 9 a.m., and Talmage had a phone call to make.

"I had to call my parents early that morning and tell them I had to go into the hospital for more tests," Talmage said, "so when the football coach asked me if I was..." He trails off. "If I had a choice now and not take this second chance for granted. Not everyone gets to do what I do.

Now that the 6-foot-4 inch, 195-pound receiver is out of the red zone, he is becoming a permanent fixture in Montana's end zone.
Playing major minutes for the Griz and racking up yardage, Talmage has been the Griz's go-to guy at crunch time.

"He's playing like a senior instead of a freshman," Griz head coach Joe Glenn said. "He's just got savvy confidence and a competitive fire in his gut."

After gaining 117 yards on 10 receptions last weekend, Talmage is leading the team in receiving yards, averaging 62.8 a game. He's also scored the fourth most points for the Grizzlies, just behind kicker Chris Snyder.

"He comes up with everything," Glenn said. "His hand-eye coordination is some of the best I've seen for such a young guy."

This all comes as a surprise considering Talmage didn't even play football until he was a junior in high school.

At Orange Lutheran High School, Talmage was the guy in the hall you could hear a mile away with all the clanking hardware on his letterman's jacket. He had plenty of medals from soccer and baseball but none for football.

Always drawn to soccer and baseball, Talmage didn't consider playing with the pigskin until the football coach at his high school tried recruiting him as a kicker.

"Soccer and football sort of interfered with one another," Talmage said, "so when the football coach asked me to play on a scouting team for them I wasn't sure what I should do."

Talmage started going to both football and soccer practices, but then an opportunity presented itself that made him change his mind.

"A lot of thoughts passed through my mind, like, how could this happen to an 18-year-old kid? It didn't seem like it fit; it didn't seem like it should be happening."

"Sometimes I just have to stop and take it all in," Talmage said. "Especially after what I went through last year. I have to be realistic and not take this second chance for granted."

Talmage's long, lean arms and height advantage might be part of the reason he can make the football stick to his hands like a bug to flypaper.

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Jon Talmage is congratulated by teammate Leonard Segar Jr after he caught a 10-yard pass from quarterback Brandon Neill and fell into the end zone during the fourth quarter of the Griz's triumph over Albany. On the cover: Talmage is shown making the touchdown against the Great Danes — the first of his college career.

The veteran rookie

Jon Talmage fights Idaho State linebacker Bart Brooks for yardage during the Griz's 15-9 win over the Bengals on homecoming weekend.
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Griz play host to Northern Arizona ’Jacks

Biting weather could help
Griz nip NAU

Myers Reece
GameDay Kaimin

As a cold snap hits Missoula, Griz fans are hoping it stays and the Northern Arizona Lumberjacks go home feeling a bit chilly. But the Griz aren’t going to just let NAU battle the cold — they’ll make sure the fight heats up.

Head coach Joe Glenn said the Lumberjacks’ defense will be a tough one to get around with their own version of “Desert Swarm,” complete with barrage of blitzing and stunt ing.

“They have a very good defense and a very strong linebacking core,” Glenn said in a press release. “They’re putting more linebackers on the field with more schemes.”

Marshall will be the Griz defense will have to big plays, Glenn said, which tends to win games with the best athletes on the field. They are a tough team to prepare for.”

Offensively, NAU has a tendency to win games with big plays, Glenn said, which the Griz defense will have to watch for. Junior receivers Clarence Moore and Johnny Marshall will be the Lumberjacks to watch. Also, the return of junior running back Brian Bingham from a knee injury will beef up the ‘Jacks rushing game. Last year, Bingham rushed for 650 yards, had 19 touchdowns, four 100-yard games and is a big-play player. He showed that last season when he rushed for 50 yards at Oregon State.

NAU is coming into Missoula just as the Montana Grizzlies are coming off their biggest test of the season after beating Portland State on the road last week. Guided by the senior leadership of quarterback John Edwards, Montana scored in the final minute to top the game 24-21.

Edwards finished the game with a career-high 366 yards, completing 30 of 45 passes. The senior from Billings, was six for eight on the 76-yard, game-winning drive. Now, Edwards faces a Northern Arizona team that is giving up 273.4 yards per game through the air, last in the Big Sky.

Also coming off a career day is freshman running back J.R. Waller. Last week against PSU, Waller had a career high of 156 yards in 26 carries.

But many against Northern Arizona is another story. NAU has the best rushing defense in the conference, allowing only 78.2 yards per game.

On the other hand, Edwards probably won’t air it out like last week if the temperature is very low. This could give Waller a chance to prove that he can back up last week’s performance this week against the top-rated rushing defense in the conference.

While the cold weather may serve as an advantage for the Griz, it could also alter the game for both teams. Depending on the severity of the weather, the temperature and harshness in the air could lead to a low-scoring, defensive battle — something the Griz are used to.

The Griz broke the Big Sky record for consecutive victories last week with their 22nd win in a row. The I-AA record is 24, held by Pennsylvania during their remarkable run from 1992 to 1995. Montana has also won its last 23 conference games, including the last 13 on the road. Both feats are Big Sky records.

Northern Arizona is coming off a close victory over the Grizzly cross-state rival, Montana State. The Lumberjacks defeated the Bobcats 20-17 at home. That victory improved NAU to 5-3 overall and more important 3-2 in the Big Sky. They are currently third behind Montana and Idaho State in the conference.

As Joe Glenn said in a press release, “They’re a low-scoring affair because of the importance of field position. Montana has won the last four meetings between the two teams, including a 28-27 victory last year. Montana leads the overall series at 24-11.”

With Idaho State nipping at their heels, the Griz know that every game is of the utmost importance for the remainder of the season.

Kickoff is set for 12:05 p.m. Saturday.
### Offense

**J.R. Waller**

Running Back

5-9, 197 freshman from Portland, Ore.

Mr. Waller is a redhead freshman from Portland, OR, who opened many eyes last week against Portland State. In front of a hometown crowd, Mr. Waller ran the ball 26 times for 165 yards and added two catches for 26 yards, including the game winner with less than a minute to go. Look continued strong play from this young Grizzly cub.

### Defense

**Lance Spencer**

Defensive End

6-2, 235 freshman from Malta, Mont.

Mr. Spencer came into this year not expecting the huge amount of playing time he has had, but with season ending injuries to Johnny Varona and Curt Colter have launched him into the starting line-up. Mr. Spencer has raised some eyebrows in the process, playing consistent, hard-nosed defense for the Griz.

### Numerical Roster

**Probable starters in BOLD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>School</th>
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<tr>
<td>QB</td>
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### 2002 Record • 15-1 Overall, 7-0 Big Sky

**2001 Process**

Playing consistent, hard-nosed defense for the Griz.

Johnny Varona and Curt Colter have launched him into the starting line-up. Mr. Spencer has raised some eyebrows in the process, playing consistent, hard-nosed defense for the Griz.
Northern Arizona

2002 Record • 5-3 Overall, 3-2 Big Sky
2001 Record • 8-4, 5 Big Sky

Offense

Willie Maumau
Offensive Line

6-2, 269 junior from Honolulu, Hawai'i
Mr. Maumau is an offensive force for NAU. As a converted defensive tackle, Mr. Maumau knows how to inflict pain. On Saturday, he will look to open some wide lanes for the NAU rushing attack led by junior Brian Bingham. However, we here at GDM expect Mr. Maumau to have his hands full the Griz D-
The Bobcats look like they are finally playing like a Big Sky contender. Too bad it's performance in a loss to Northern Arizona, Weber State, followed by a worthy performance. With a convincing 44-10 win over so late in the season.

The record for consecutive wins. make it five this weekend and tie the I-AAings between the two teams. The Griz will above .500 in conference play. The Lumbeijacks are just looking to stay.

The winning streak to 23 games, tying the I-AArecord for consecutive wins. Sac State conquered NAU, while the Northern Arizona victory. Last week, against EWU, running back Tyronne Gruh eight years old, and the Bobcats are playing for their top ranking and extend their winning streak. Both teams share common Big Sky

Montana's advantage. Gri quarterback John Edwards shouldn't expect to throw for 388 yards again like last week, but instead move the ball with the help of a running game just enough to put some points on the board. Against PSU, freshman J.R. Waller had a career high of 154 yards on 26 carries. While the Gri are looking to maintain their top ranking and extend their winning streak to 23 games, tying the I-AA record held by Pennsylvania, the Lumbeijacks are just looking to stay above .500 in conference play.

Montana has won the last four meetings between the two teams. The Gri will make it five this weekend and tie the I-AA record for consecutive wins.

GDK prediction: 24-10 Montana

Northern Arizona (5-3) at No. 1 Montana (8-0)

Montana is tied at 5-5, but MSU has only won once against EWU, running back Tyronne Gruh eight years old, and the Bobcats are playing for their top ranking and extend their winning streak. Both teams share common Big Sky

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Montana State (3-5) at Sacramento State (3-5)

This is a battle between a team struggling to live up to expectations and a team soaring above its expectations. Although MSU has had a disappointing season considering its preseason hype, the Bobcats have been showing some life lately. With a convincing 44-10 over Weber State, followed by a worthy performance. In a loss to Northern Arizona, the Bobcats are playing, they are finally playing like a Big Sky contender. Too bad it's too late in the season.

Sac State, on the other hand, was expected to sit at the bottom of the Big Sky much like it did last season. However, they are now 9-2 in conference play, including a 48-41 shootout win against Eastern Washington last week.

Both teams are playing well right now, with a combined for 990 yards of total offense, resulting in an EWU win. Blankenship should be on the "Payton Watch" list.

Sacramento State has been finding ways to win whether it is by outscoring its opponent like against Eastern Washington or coming up with big defensive stops like the Northern Arizona victory. Last week, against EWU, running back Tyronne Gruh rushed for a career-high 151 yards on 30 carries. MSU's defense is too strong to let a shut-out happen, so Sac State will have to counter the Bobcats with some solid defense.

Both teams share common Big Sky opponents in Northern Arizona and Idaho State. Idaho State beat both of them, but Sac State conquered NAU, while the Bobcats are playing, they are finally playing like a Big Sky contender. Too bad it's too late in the season.

MSU may have the more talented team overall, but Sac State has been playing with passion lately and has home field advantage.

GDK prediction: 31-27 Sac State; Amey leads them to victory

No. 19 Idaho State (5-2) at No. 15 Portland State (5-3)

This should be the game to watch this weekend. These are two solid teams playing for second place in Big Sky supremacy. Portland State played well against Montana last week in a loss, but Idaho State is also coming off a strong outing: a 34-0 shutout victory over Weber State. The win was ISU's first shutout in Big Sky play in 22 years.

Even though ISU owns the better record this season, their schedule has been easier. PSU has played only one team with a losing record in Sacramento State. ISU is first in scoring defense and PSU is last in scoring defense. However, in a battle between two good teams like these, that shouldn't mean too much. It might just come down to which team makes the big plays and the least amount of mistakes.

ISU is second in the conference behind EWU in total offense at 419.3 yards per game. Senior quarterback Doug Baughman has been leading the team, running third in the Big Sky in total offense and pass efficiency. Isaac Mitchell provides a stable running game, ranking third in rushing. Also, ISU's defense has been playing very well, which is another major reason for the Bengals' current four-game winning streak.

PSU's only really remarkable standout in the statistical categories is sophomore running back Ryan Fuqua. Fuqua leads the Big Sky in rushing at 129.1 yards per game and is on the "Payton Watch" list. Other than Fuqua, ISU seems to have the edge in nearly every statistical category over the Vikings except for kickoff returns (No. 1 in the nation). However, the Vikings have been playing better teams than the Bengals and just seem to know how to get the job done when it really counts.

Portland State will continue to feed Fuqua the ball, but they also have quarterback Justin Wood beginning to get in rhythm. Idaho State will probably have a fairly even play selection, mixing it up between passing plays and rushing plays, which is what they have been doing for most of this season.

This game should be close and probably will be decided by key plays and mistakes. Even though PSU has home field advantage, ISU has the momentum of a four-game winning streak.

GDK prediction: 27-20 Idaho State

Central Washington (3-5) at Weber State (3-5)

For now, the battle of the Big Sky cellar dwellers. Weber State, winners in conference play, is last in the Big Sky. EWU has only won one conference game, good enough for second to last in the Big Sky.

EWU is led by senior quarterback Jake Blankenship. Blankenship leads the Big Sky in almost every statistical category including passing yards, total offense, and pass efficiency. He has led his offense to several national rankings. EWU is second in the nation in passing offense, fifth in total offense, and eighth in scoring offense. Still, Blankenship's name doesn't appear on the "Payton Watch" list.

EWU is gaining 100 yards per more game than Weber State. The question is: Can their defense help out enough for a victory?

Last week the defense couldn't do this task, as EWU lost 48-41 to Sac State. Weber State has a comparable offense to Sac State's, paced by junior quarterback Tael Brown. It probably won't be enough to upset Eastern Washington, though.

On defense, WSU is first in the Big Sky in pass defense, but Blankenship will still probably be able to find his spots. He always does. WSU, however, is second to last in scoring defense, barely above EWU, which is a bad sign when facing an Eagles team that is putting up 35.4 points per game.

With a win, Eastern Washington will be right in the middle of the Big Sky. Eastern Washington has three conference losses, and with the exception of front runners Montana and Idaho State, every other Big Sky team has two conference losses. A couple of these teams are going to come out of this weekend with three conference losses. The Eagles are playing for the possibility that they can still stay in the thick of things in the Big Sky. Weber State is just trying desperately to get its first conference victory of the year.

The overall series is tied at 10-10. In last year's meeting, the two teams combined for 990 yards of total offense, resulting in a 50-26 EWU victory. Expect another shootout, again ending in an EWU win.

GDK prediction: 43-31 EWU; maybe Blankenship should be on the "Payton Watch" list

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The Old Post

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$2 Local Pints • $2 Well Drinks • 1/2 Price Nachos & Quesadillas
Burger Night: Sunday & Monday 5-10pm
Regular Dinner: Veggie Burger and Any Local Pint for $5
Hump Day! - Wednesday
$2 Local Pints • $2 Well Drinks • 1/2 Price Nachos & Quesadillas
Southwest Saturday - 12-11pm
Our Famous Fish Tacos and Mexican Beer & Margarita for $8
Mexican Beers and Margaritas $2 All Day

Check our calendar for band info
Join us after a great day on the river!
Bring in your kingfisher flyshop receipt and get %15 off any entree!

103 W. Spruce 721-7399
Downtown Missoula
McNeese State has made it to the playoffs several times, including the past two seasons. But they suffered elimination in the first round both times, by Georgia Southern in 2000 and Maine in 2001. It's a safe bet that head coach Tommy Tate's team is hungry to make it back into the playoffs this season and have some redemption.

The Cowboys' offense is racking up an average of 376 yards per game this year with 227 of those on the ground. Leading the charge is junior running back Vick King with 677 yards in his last seven games. King is the No. 1 running back in the SLC, conference and is listed at 5-11, 206 pounds, hailing from Cutoff, La.

But McNeese State is by no means a one-dimensional team offensively. Senior wide receiver Jermaine Martin became the all-time leader in McNeese history for passes caught and yards receiving earlier this year. He is also ranked No. 10 all time in the SLC with 136 receptions. Martin has hauled in 17 passes for 301 yards and two touchdowns this season.

Defensively, the Cowboys are giving up 292.6 yards per game, 132 rushing and 160.6 through the air. The defense is highlighted by senior strong safety Haidley Prince, a cowboy on and off the field. Prince leads the team with 77 tackles and four sacks.

Prince is responsible for five of the ten interceptions pulled down by the defense this year.

Prince, who also holds the school record bench press for a defensive back with 365 pounds, used to be a saddlebronc rider in high school. According to the McNeese State Web Site, he plans to continue rodeoing after he graduates.

Saturday McNeese travels to Nacogdoches, Texas to take on the Stephen F. Austin Lumberjacks. Coach Tate said in a press conference on Tuesday that he is preparing his defense for the Lumberjacks' "huge" offensive front, and he knew they are just as hungry as his team for a victory.

"It's a similar situation as we've had the last two weekends," Tate said. "They've got one conference loss, they are still in the hunt and we're going to get their best effort."

The Cowboys whipped Sam Houston State 47-10 last weekend and are 2-0 in SLC play.

After playing Stephen F. Austin this Saturday, McNeese will round out their season with conference matches against Southwest Texas, Northwestern State and Nicholls State.
Talmage choose one over the other.

A member of the football team got sick, and the coach wanted to test Talmage's hands as a receiver. A trophy case of football awards later, Talmage proved he was a quick study.

Talmage went on to lead his team in receiving and garnered MVP accolades his senior year.

With football in the front seat and soccer on the back burner, Talmage made the decision to pursue a future at the University of Montana as a Grizzly.

"Part of the reason why I took a football scholarship was because the newness of football hadn't worn off," Talmage said. "I'd played soccer forever, and I could always go back to it."

Talmage doesn't regret his decision for a second. Especially when he's running onto the football field through Montana's blow-up helium in front of a roaring crowd.

In addition to the thousands of screaming fans in Washington-Grizzly Stadium, he has his own private pep squad.

In Section 112, just diagonal from the cannon, Adele, Matt, Westin and Dillon Gibbs cheer on Talmage. Although the Gibbs family is there for support just as regular Griz fans, they act more like a surrogate family to the 19-year-old.

"It all started with the number 8," Adele Gibbs said. "Last year Westin's favorite player was Jimmy Farris, number eight."

Four-year-old Westin wrote Farris letters and the two later became pals. After Farris left last year, Adele Gibbs invited Westin to come for dinner one night, then invited Talmage to come with him the next time.

"The rest is history. "Now the kids are part of our family," Adele Gibbs said. "We've extended our family from four to six, and I don't know what we'd do without them around.""

Heidelburger and Talmage go hunting with Adele's husband, Matt. They babysit the boys and join the Gibbs for dinner most Sundays. Heidelburger accepted Westin's invitation to come for dinner one night, then invited Talmage to come with him the next time.

"The kids don't see the tough, football bravado," Gibbs said. "Westin and Dillon are unaffected by them on the field. They love them simply as friends who come visit and play with them."

May be Talmage is a softy off the field, but come game time he's all business.

"Before game time he's not the guy getting everyone riled up, but he's not a recluse either," Heidelburger said. "He gets focused, and I respect what he does on the field."

Coming off the bench and starting in front of some older players, Talmage said there was one player in specific he admired and emulated.

"I respect Rory Zilmund because he's been there; he's been in those situations and can give us pointers," Talmage said. "He's kept a positive attitude through everything and is such a good motivator. That's amazing to me."

While Talmage vies for more playing time, the freshman who had to redshirt last year doesn't want to be characterized as a softy, but he really is a big teddy bear.

"He's a little shy, but he really is a big teddy bear," Gibbs said. "As a football player, maybe he doesn't want to be characterized as a softy, but he really is a big teddy bear."

"Westin and Dillon might be simply smitten with having two Grizzlies in the house, but the youngsters don't see the two as football stars," Gibbs said.

Jon Talmage raises himself after making significant yardage against Northern Colorado on Sept. 14.