11-23-2002

Game Day Kaimin, November 23, 2002

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Idle hands

Seniors Neill and Staninger
on the plight and purpose
of backing up the 'back
Idle hands

Story by Courtney Lowery
Photos by Lido Vizzutti

"IT'S INTENSE COMPETITION, EVERYBODY WANTS TO PLAY BUT AT THE SAME TIME, IN A SENSE, WE'RE ALL TRYING TO DO THE SAME THING. WE ALL WANT THE SAME GOAL TO GET ACCOMPLISHED: TO WIN."

— BRETT STANINGER, SENIOR BACKUP QUARTERBACK

Most people don't know that Brett Staninger can throw a football out of Washington-Grizzly Stadium. But John Edwards knows. So does Brandon Neill. Both have had to chase their footballs after Brett stole them and launched them out of range.

"It's a game during practice, that the quarterbacks have turned into what Brandon Neill calls a "cutthroat business." Each quarterback gets a ball at the start of practice. Each is responsible for their ball and must return it at the end of the day. So, when one of them steals another's, he tries to throw it as far as he can, laughing while his teammate is forced to hike the stands and find the ball.

The football soars, twisting a straight line through the air, over the seats that hold the fans who wouldn't probably recognize Brett on or off the field. It flies over the cannon, which has never boomed after one of the quarterback's touchdowns.

"We do have some spare time on our hands when we're not in the game quite so much," Brandon says with a laugh.

"It's the little things — like launching each other's footballs into the stands, or figuring out how many snaps they'd taken in five years — that makes the waiting bearable while other things are what make the five years worth every minute.

One of those things is the fact that even as thick as the competition is among a flock of quarterbacks at Montana, there is only one thing that separates a quarterback from THE quarterback: Time.

"The quarterback position is a position of intense competition but at the same time it has to be a position where you have to be the most (like a) family than any other position," Brett says. "If we call time out and John is out on the field and he comes to the sideline ... Brandon and I are seeing things on the field and he asks us what we're seeing and we're just trying to help us win the game."

On the Grizzly practice field, there is no distinction between gut and glory. Brett is a prime example.

"He doesn't get any money for it, so he's here on his own," Brandon says. "He does the same amount of film study, he goes to practice the same amount, he pays attention to all the plays. He knows his chances of playing are absolutely minimal and he still does all the work.

"John gets a lot of credit. I get a lot of credit sometimes but this guy probably deserves more than both of us," Brandon continued. "John plays every week. I play, not a ton, but I definitely get some reps. He really doesn't get that many (snaps) but he does the same amount of work we do, but without any of the glory, without any of the recognition, any of the accolades, he gets none of that."

"Talk about the team guy," Edwards says. "That's him. He's the most loyal guy I've ever met."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11.
After a 2-4 start and a mid-season switch at quarterback from a tested senior to a true freshman, Montana State head coach Mike Kramer almost can't believe his Bobcat team has a chance at the Big Sky Championship when MSU plays UM on Saturday.

Montana is atop the conference with a nearly upsetting Montana, and returned Johnson and quarterback Tyler Thomas. The two figured to play a key role this season, including all-Big Sky running back Ryan Edwards since, except themselves as they were in the beginning of the season. Ogden, Utah, but the win came at a crucial price. Starting senior center Brian Pelc, the leader and anchor of the offensive line, was lost for the season.

But last weekend, the inevitable happened, as Eastern Washington ripped a depleted Montana defense on its way to a 30-21 win. And in the process, upset Ranking.

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Montana looks to make it 17 straight.

Humboldt State (1-9) at Sacramento State (4-7)

In a game with no playoff implications, all pride is on the line. These two teams haven’t met since 1988, a 55-17 victory for Sac State. Sac State has won the last seven contests, but the overall series lead belongs to Humboldt State, 20-13-2.

Sac State has been playing well lately, coming off a win over Weber State and a close loss to Montana in Missoula. The Hornets have been silencing critics all season long, winning four games, including three conference games. With a win against Humboldt State, they can finish with a 5-7 record, including 3-4 in conference play. Considering Sac State’s preseason buildup (or lack of buildup) by critics and sports writers, and looking at its performance last year, this season has been very much a success.

The youthful team is led by sophomore quarterback Ryan Leadingham, already the school’s all-time leading passer. He has 5,213 passing yards in just 22 career games. Accompanying him on offense is senior leader running back Garrett White. White might line up as running back, quarterback or receiver on any given play. Also, sophomore receiver Fred Amey leads the conference in all-purpose yards and receiving yards. Amey is sixth in the nation in all-purpose yards with 162.1 yards per game.

Humboldt State has little to brag about in the statistical categories, and maybe the only way for them to find comfort this weekend is the fact that the season is almost over. Sac State will win, and win the season with a respectable 5-7 record, looking ahead to next season with optimism and a core of returning starters.

GDK prediction: 44-17 Sac State

Weber State (3-7) at Cal Poly (2-8)

These two teams are battling for... well, they’re not really battling for anything. There has not been any playoff chances for either one of these teams for quite awhile now. And maybe one could say that they are playing for pride, but it seems that most of the pride and dignity surrounding both of these teams disappeared around the same time as their playoff hopes.

Weber State is alone at the bottom of the Big Sky, with a 1-6 conference record. Quarterback Tate Bennett is coming off a huge day. In a 41-38 loss against Sacramento State last weekend, Bennett completed 24 of 34 passes for 349 yards, two touchdowns and no interceptions. Running back Nick Choumou also had a big game, gaining 223 yards on 27 carries, with three touchdowns.

Despite the solid performances by offensive players, once again the WSU defense was unable to help the offense. Weber State is giving up 28.1 points per game, second worst in the conference.

One thing that the Wildcats have going for them this game is that they are undefeated against Cal Poly. They lead the series 3-0, including a crazy 43-40 victory last year in the fourth overtime.

GDK prediction: 38-31 Weber State
Lulay an unlikely leader

OREGON NATIVE SEeks TO BREAK STREAK ALMOST AS OLD AS HE IS

Will Cleveland
GameDay Kaimin

Montana State's Travis Lulay came into this season expecting to sit the bench behind senior quarterback Tyler Thomas, but a 2-4 start for the Bobcats changed his plans.

Lulay will start his seventh game of the season Saturday against the Griz, and he will look to improve his record to 5-2 as a starter.

"You know they are coming off a loss, they are a very good football team, even though they are a little vulnerable. They are a quality football team, even though they are coming off a loss, you know they are going to be ready to play. Especially if nothing else because it's the rivalry. That is why we are expecting them to be completely ready for us.

"Since you are a true freshman, do you truly understand the Griz-Cat rivalry?"

TL: I know a little bit about it. As an Oregon guy, I was a big Oregon State fan so I know a lot about the Civil War. I hear Cat-Griz is just as big, if not bigger.

"OK, so do the Griz scare you?"

TL: No, we are not letting ourselves get intimidated.

"Word association: Monte."

TL: You got me.

"You don't know who Monte is?"

TL: Isn't he the mascot?

"What does it feel like to be and why?"

TL: I'd be a bobcat.

"Word association: Washington-Grizzly Stadium, 19,000 screaming UM fans."

TL: Rivalry.

"Do you think the Griz are vulnerable?"

TL: I don't think they are vulnerable. They are a quality football team, even though they are coming off a loss, you know they are going to be ready to play. Especially if nothing else because it's the rivalry. That is why we are expecting them to be completely ready for us.

"If you could be any kind of animal, what would you be and why?"

TL: Big smile.

"What is your favorite word?"

TL: Touchdown.

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"What is your favorite word?"

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"What do you think of Johnny Montana, honestly?"

TL: Johnny Montana, he's a good quarterback. I mean not a lot of guys can say that they have done what he's done.

"Are you going to win Saturday?"

TL: I'm not making any predictions. We are going to be ready to play Saturday and it's going to be fun.

"Are you the most famous resident then?"

TL: I don't know. I suppose someone could argue that.

"Since Snoop Dogg is coming to Bozeman, do you plan on going?"

TL: I don't know. I came out here you know and they offered me a scholarship. I liked the coaching staff. I liked the program, I liked the players and here I am.

"All right, is it true? Is coach Mike Kramer cuddly like a big teddy bear?"

TL: He is a little bit of a teddy bear (laughing). He is a good guy.

"What five CDs are in your CD changer right now?"

TL: Oh man! I couldn't even tell you. I don't know if I even five CDs. I am more of a radio guy I guess.

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Montana vs. Montana State

2002 Record • 6-5 Overall, 4-2 Big Sky
2001 Record • 5-6 Overall, 5-4 Big Sky

Offense

Travis Lulay
Quarterback

6-0, 187 freshman from Aumsville, Ore.
In ten games of action, Mr. Lulay has completed 59.4 percent of his passes for 1690 yards to go along with 11 touchdowns compared to only three interceptions. Mr. Lulay is an efficient little Cat, who will look to beat the Griz Saturday in his first meeting against the swarming mass that is the Griz defense.

Kane loane
Strong Safety

5-11, 180 junior from Billings, Mont.
Mr. loane makes a lot of plays. He tackles lots of people and he hurts them in the process too. This junior from Billings, leads the Cats with 112 tackles and four interceptions. Last season, he was selected as a third team All-American by Don Hansen's Football Digest and he will most likely improve upon this accolade at the end of this year. Come Saturday, Mr. loane will look to stuff the run and interrupt Johnny Montana's pass-downs compared to only three interceptions. Mr. Lulay is an efficient little Cat, who will look to beat the Griz Saturday in his first meeting against the swarming mass that is the Griz defense.

Numerical Roster

Possible Starters in Bold

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WR</th>
<th>Aaron Hill</th>
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<tr>
<td>WR</td>
<td>Blake Foster</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>QB</td>
<td>Travis Lulay</td>
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<td>RB</td>
<td>Ryan Johnson</td>
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<td>WR</td>
<td>Scott Turnquist</td>
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<td>WR</td>
<td>Corey Smith</td>
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| DB | Ken Hackett       | 7  |
| LB | David Smith       | 23 |
| DT | Jon Montoya       | 95 |
| DT | Ryan Cooper       | 91 |
| LB | Micah Thompson    | 60 |
| DT | Adam Cordeiro     | 92 |
| LB | Ray Sebestyen     | 56 |
| DT | Jason Nicastro    | 93 |
| LB | Isaac Gardner     | 41 |

Turnquist 86
Mr. Turnquist led the 'Cats with four catches for 130 yards and two touchdowns in the 10-7 win over Portland State. For the year, he has tallied 29 receptions for 483 yards. On Saturday, he will look to exploit some holes in the banged-up Griz secondary. Good luck!
Chris Redaky
GameDay Kaimin

Editor’s Note: UM Mascot Monte hasn’t always been the back-flipping, crowd-pleasing star he is today. No, the current “man behind the suit” was selected to be Monte alongside somebody far less athletic and significantly less стильяжный. While he must remain anonymous to protect not only UM Athletics but also himself, this Monte spoke to GameDay Kaimin in an exclusive interview.

Q: Monte, Ex-Monte, Anonymous Monte... I’m just not sure what your name is. What can we call you?
A: I can’t really reveal my name or true identity, but I can tell you this: My first name is identical to a certain Grizzly football player. For now, call me “Enrique.”

Q: All right — “Enrique,” could you explain the rise and abrupt fall from fame as UM’s mascot?
A: Several students tried out for the part of Monte using dance routines and skills. The current Monte, who I will call Cubby, performed an incredible display of gymnastic ability with flips and tricks. I never talked to the real Monte, the guy who I’m not even sure what his name is. I think he’s kind of a bear. I’m not directly saying he looks like a bear, but the guy sure doesn’t seem to have time for us little people, you know?

Q: So you two meet down at the Iron Horse some weekend, what’s going to happen? Would you even know him in a good honest fight, but the guy sure doesn’t seem to have time for us little people, you know?
A: I rode a bicycle and perhaps also I’m just not sure what your name is.

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Ex-Boebot trusts Griz winning tradition

by Brittany Hageman

GameDay Kaime

I have a confession to make. I have an MSU Boebot sweatshirt stuffed on the top shelf of my closet. I know exactly where it's at. It's the bottom sweatshirt among a stack in the right-hand corner of my closet, just above the wedding dresses preserved in the comer of my closet, just above the bridesmaid dresses preserved in the comer of my closet. I have a confession to admit it, I went to Montana State my freshman year.

It was 1999, and my circle of friends and I had a hard time getting excited about Boebot football. Jumping down beers and tailgating only deterred us for half the season. We were cheering on a losing team. Gating only deterred us for half the season. The highlight of the games was usually laughing at a crazed fan of the conference that year, and as he danced around the stands, in his back hair (yes, back hair) with the letters "M-S-U" shaved into his head. The"Title" echoes from one group of pus, where "Big Sky Conference Champion" would be the only title on the program. Where "Big Sky Conference Champion" would be the only title on the program. The Grizzlies have shown beautiful consistency in their game, and they have made the state of Montana proud, allowing bragging rights as the home of the Big Sky Champions for years.

The Grizzlies have grown. They have evolved from a team that was once considered a joke to a team that could compete, and this year, they've really got the Griz looking over their shoulder pads. UM's football practices were closed all week, as the rodeo hits its peak in the downtown center. Montana State fans think the Grizzlies have been proven to be virtually perfect in their game, fighting their way into the national championship spotlight two years in a row. On the other hand, the last two seasons with a place in the record books and a signif cant power behind leading the conference at meet­ ing time with the Grizzlies- the Montana State fans think the Grizzly's winning tradition sits in a glass case in the entrance of the Adams Center. Two national champi­ onships trophies exhibit the Grizzlies success, and Griz fans are accustomed to expect nothing less. Not only have the fans been loyal, but Missoula has Boe­ man one-uped in community support. Griz meal deals, special­ ties and T-shirt giveaways are only a few of the perks offered by local businesses. This intimate relationship makes for a close-knit bond and pride in the college and community.

Missoula's tight-necked lawyers and accountants who are "all business" Monday through Friday are standing in the beer line with obnoxious college songs on Wednesday nights. Both young and old will be up at the crack of dawn on Saturday, rifling through their closets looking for Griz apparel.

In the meantime, I'll have to remember to get rid of my MSU sweatshirt. I could burn it in effigy in my back yard as a symbol of the Grizzles winning tradition. I know exactly where it's at.
Rivalry fuels family feuds

Should the unthinkable happen, four years of "when hell freezes over" comments will come back to haunt me.

Eric Visocan's dad even threatened to skip graduation because it would mean another trip to Missoula.

"I said, 'This has gone on so many times, I don't want to have to bite my tongue a little more,'" Hoge said. His sister does tease him, though.

"It's fun," Hegel said. "I don't mind it because it's all in fun." Hegel is still going home for Thanksgiving even if hell freezes over, "but I might have to bite my tongue a little more."

"I'll do everything in my power to keep the streak," Hoge said. "We don't want to be the team that breaks it. Should the Griz lose, I don't know if I'll go home for break. You're right. It is the unthinkable." With two years of eligibility left, Hoge plans to continue the streak through his career. "I'll do everything in my power to keep the streak alive," he said.

Carl Horst (above), a Bozeman resident, porting the Bobcats. He's a big fan and a former heckler of the Grizzlies.

"I'll be loyal once they make it to the playoffs," Lilly said. "I'm getting a step back and looking from the objectionable standpoint." Hoge said. "I don't know if they know that either," Hoge said.

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"My siblings are now dihard Grizzlies fans," Hegel said. "My brother was a Bobcat fan, but nothing too severe he couldn't change for his little brother." Hegel's dad has made the biggest change. He now wears the Griz. "He's a proud Griz fan," Hoge said.

"It's a great rivalry: the gray and the blue, kind of like the Civil War — except not as bloody," Hoge said. "The Grizzlies suck! Grizzlies suck!"

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No matter where you are in Missoula, you are only 15 minutes away from an Ole's... and the Bobcats are only 60 minutes away from an @#%!* kicking.
Brandon adds that Staninger "does all the work, but he doesn't get to share in the great part of the game. But that's where the bond is the reward more than any other part of the game."

Brett refers to the quarterbacks as a unit. Brandon says he's seen Brett "in every state of guy he be." The bond is what helps pass the time, the bond he has with what he be on the field, on the sidelines or not.

"If I don't know how many times it's been Brandon's turn, when the name has said that John and Brandon are going to split the time and coaches have said that, I want to keep John in the game. Because if that was me, and if I was playing well, I'd want to stay in the game," Brett says. "He's done that for me when he could have gone in and taken the last few series of the game, but he didn't. He said, 'I want Brett to go in. It's fair for him to go in.'" Even though they would give most anything, even for just one snap, that anything didn't include a win.

"It's intense competition, everybody wants to play but at the same time, in a sense, we're all trying to do the same thing. We all want to do the same thing, to get accomplished: to win," Brett says.

Brandon has seen the inside of Weber State, where he rushed for 1,02 yards. He's tasted glory, but also comments that he hasn't forgotten what it's like.

"Being a starting quarterback Brandon Yellow jackets practices before the Griz took the field to beat slippery Sacramento State 31-24 on Nov. 9.

Second-string quarterback Brandon Staninger kicks a field goal against the Bobcats.

"The same thing happened last year when Brandon came in, and I right away had an understanding, I knew him in high school and respected Brandon in high school," Brett, Brandon and John's father are lined up next to each other and even when Brandon was playing last season, there has been nothing but friendship in the lockerroom and out. "Stanley (Brett) comes in and it's just three guys who are the same kind of guys. We enjoy each other, we have a ball together and it's awesome. It's one of the best friendships I'll ever have," John says.

Switching sidelines

For some reason, which sidelines you're standing on makes all the difference.

Both Brandon and Brett are transfer students. Both transferred in hopes of seeing field time. Neither found what they were looking for, but they did find something else.

Brandon transferred from the University of Wyoming, where he went after his high school career at CM Russell High School in Great Falls. In Wyoming, Brandon had two starts and played in eight games before coming back to Montana.

Brett started his career at the University of Nevada, where he walked on as a freshman. The coach told him he could only be playing behind two other quarterbacks. When he got to Reno, from Massassau - his hometown - he found the coaches promises were empty:

"College coaches can be worse than used car salesmen," he says with a laugh. Still, he stayed on for three years in Reno, where he started a handful of times, and as a sophomore completed 40 of 114 passes, for a 615 yards and three touchdowns.

But then he was dropped in the depth chart, back to No. 3. So, he left the team. He spent the summer off the field, but then one day he got a phone call. Then, Kim Africa, his girlfriend of more than a year, got a call, too.

"One day, I was at work and I got a phone call: I just talked to coach Glenn, um, he offered me to come to Montana, will you come? I said, 'When, hold on a second.' Then I think I cried. It just blew my mind," Kim says, remembering that day in July.

That was a Thursday. Brett was packed and ready to go on Saturday.

In reality, Brett has always been a Grizzly. He grew up in Grizzly land and even dined with Grizzlies as a kid. His dad, Ken Staninger, is an NFL agent for Grizzly greats like Dave Dickerson, Scott Gragg and Scott Curry.

"When I was a little kid, I'll never forget sitting in calculus class," Brett says. "I'm 17 and Scott Gragg, who was a math major, was helping me with my homework. It was really inspirational to see these kids, these icons in your town in your own house." Gragg, former Grizzly line- man, is now a starring tackle for the San Francisco 49ers.

Both Brett and his dad remember clearly how devoted Brett was at a young age. Ken set up a little basketball hoop in the basement of their home.

"I was the most full-blooded Grizzly kid around," Brett says. "I had all the gear. I had a little hoop downstairs and I'd play basketball against the Bobcats, always." Brett didn't have imaginary friends, he had imaginary enemies and they were always Bobcats.

Kim remembers Brett singing the national anthem and the Grizzly Fight Song before every game, and always howling out the other 'boom' by a huge commen- tating on every play. So, when it came time to move after Nevada, Montana was the place to go.

"The reason that makes me come back is that you put in so much time at football that you want to get something out of it and I just saw that no longer was I going to get the chances that I needed to get at that institution," Brett says. "At the drop of hat, I left a lot of friends that I still try to keep in contact with, but it was just something I needed at that time, so I came home. I guess I couldn't have been in other places, but the Grizzly blood came back."

Kim, who came with Brett to Montana in August 2001, says that even though at Montana he's still No. 1, Brett has changed since their move.

"I've heard him say so many times how much closer these guys are and how he feels like he's been here forever," she says. "We used to go to football games in Nevada and you couldn't even fill half the stadium. I know his first game here, when he walked out and saw the atmos- phere and heard the people, he just wanted to cry. This is what football is about."

There is just something, both Brett and Brandon say, about Grizzly football that makes the sacrifices worth it.

"The thing that's different here is that there's an aura about the whole thing," Brandon says. "When we walk on the field, we know we're going to win." Last season, Brett was a part of more winning games than he was in three years at Reno.

Even with a winning record, however, the job can still be rough, which is why sometimes both Brett and Brandon look to gain perspective on their situation.

"I think the beauty of both of our transfers ... and I see the beauty of both of our lives, is that there..."

GAME DAY KAINM SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2002

IDLE HANDS

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Idle hands

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"When you're under center and you're calling plays and you're reading the coverage and everything is happening so fast and it's happening 10 times faster than you practiced it, it's the best thing in the world and it's the reason we play and it's the reason that we'll watch 1,000 clips of tape, to get those four snaps — because it's worth it."

— Brett Staninger, senior backup quarterback

comes a time when football is damn important to your life, but (you realize) that there's so much to life that's more than football," Brett says. "There's the relationships you build, there's the team and it's really not worth it to go in with that cutthroat attitude of 'I'm going to be the guy. I'm gonna be the one who's going to start. If I can't be the guy, then screw everybody.' You can't be that way. You can't function that way, if you want to be happy in this position. There's only one quarterback.

"There's only 1161-AA quarterbacks and there's only 16 quarterbacks at the top of the 1-AA level so that's only 122 people out there. There's 20,000 people in that stadium every weekend... I don't think there's any one in there that doesn't wish they could be down there at some point and say, 'I got to do what's going on that field instead of watching it from the stands.' You cherish it, definitely. It's a gift of life, that's for sure."

For Brett, it was his girlfriend who asked that same question, when after quitting in Nevada, he decided to come play for the Grizzlies.

"When I told her, she asked me why. Why? Because for that second you're on the field and you're in the balance of the game and it's the greatest game out there. It's not like anything else. You can't describe it. When you're under center and you're calling plays and you're reading the coverage and everything is happening so fast and it's happening 10 times faster than you practiced it, it's the best game in the world and it's the reason you play and it's the reason that we'll watch 1,000 clips of tape, to get those four snaps — because it's worth it."

Brandon says, "It's those times when you have that one moment when things go right you can look back on it say... Hey, that was an experience that not a lot of people ever get to say they had."

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But even with the 20,000 screaming fans and the community support, one still has to ask, with all the work, with the few snaps taken and the hundreds of thousands of people in the United States who get start. So, you have to take into consideration."

Why?

"Sometimes it seems like the amount of work that we put in, when you look at it statistically, you have to ask, 'Why is that worth it?'" Brandon says. "It's those times when you have that one moment when things go right you can look back on it say... Hey, that was an experience that not a lot of people ever get to say they had."

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Bowl for Kids Sake Campaign 2002 is about giving kids a happier childhood and a brighter future.

There's still time to put your team together.

College Bowl this weekend-Sunday, Nov. 24th at 2:30 at Liberty Lanes

Bowling times still open for December 7th and 8th. Put one team together of 5 bowlers that your business, University group or friends supports.

Collect pledges and be eligible for the Thank You Parties include free bowling, pizza, refreshments and prizes. It's fun, it's easy and for a good cause... KIDS!

Call Big Brothers Big Sisters to register at 721-2380