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Grizzlies open Big Sky baseball play vs Idaho

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MISSOULA--

GRIZZLIES OPEN BIG SKY
BASEBALL PLAY VS IDAHO

fultz/st
April 14, 1972
Sports Local

Information Services • University of Montana • Missoula, Montana 59801 • (406) 243-2522

Booyed by twin triumphs over the Northern Montana College Grizzlies on Tuesday of last week the University of Montana baseball team opens up its Big Sky conference schedule this weekend against the Idaho Vandals in Moscow, Idaho.

The Vandals, losers of three conference games to defending champions Gonzaga last weekend, will host the Grizzlies for a Saturday doubleheader consisting of two seven inning games and then a Sunday contest of nine innings.

Montana has won six of the ten games played this season while Idaho with a 11-12 record has a great deal more game experience than the Grizzly diamondmen have.

Montana has split in competition with fellow Big Sky conference teams this season. The Tips lost a 9-2 decision to Idaho State and defeated Boise State 7-6. Both of these games were during Montana's season opening appearance in the Banana Belt tournament.

The series with Idaho is very important to both teams. Montana needs a couple of wins if it is to muster a challenge to Gonzaga's frontrunning Bulldogs and Idaho, though the Vandals may well be out of title contention, can still capture a berth in the Big Sky playoffs by having the best runnerup record in the two divisions.

Ten game stats show that four regulars on the Tip squad have batting averages in excess of the magical .300 mark that typifies good hitting. Tim Sampson boosted his average to .375 with his five for seven afternoon against Northern and is the leading Grizzly batsman. First baseman Dale Phillips offers support with his .344 figure as do center-fielder Tom Bertelson (.333) and shortstop Bob Rutledge (.313).

Darrell Bushard, a freshman from Great Falls, has the most impressive statistics of the members of the Grizzly mound corps. Bushard has notched three victories this season without suffering a loss, his earned-run-average per nine inning contest is well below two and his 19 strikeouts in only ten and two-third innings is an average of 16 per game. The rest of the pitching staff gave indications that they are beginning to round into shape against Northern. Gary Smith struck out the side in both innings he pitched in Havre and Al Solander turned in three scoreless innings while striking out six NMC batters. All told in the doubleheader NMC could garner only nine hits off UM pitchers while whiffing 25 times and not scoring an earned run.

Next action for Montana will be Tuesday in Butte against Montana Tech. Montana opens its home baseball season next Saturday and Sunday when Gonzaga will be in Missoula for a