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### Grizzlies host NAU and Weber State

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GRIZZLIES HOST NAU AND WEBER STATE

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sports state + Big Sky media + Basketball



## sports

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MISSOULA---

The Montana Grizzlies put a six-game win streak and their Big Sky title aspirations on the line when they host Northern Arizona Friday night and Weber State Saturday night.

Resounding wins over Idaho (93-68) and Gonzaga (89-54) last weekend moved Montana's season record to 12-7 and kept the Grizzlies alive in the Big Sky title chase with a 4-3 slate.

The Grizzlies used torrid shooting, strong defensive play and balanced scoring in the wins over Idaho and Gonzaga. Four players scored in double figures each night and the Tips shot 53 per cent from the field against Idaho Friday night and 61 per cent in Saturday's triumph over Gonzaga.

"We played very well both offensively and defensively. We are just hoping to maintain the high level of play this weekend against Northern Arizona and Weber State," coach Jud Heathcote commented. "We will have to play well to beat Weber."

Northern Arizona is winless in eight Big Sky outings and 3-17 for the season, but the Lumberjacks came within a whisker of toppling Boise State in Boise last Friday night and Heathcote voiced concern that the Grizzlies might get caught looking ahead to Saturday's battle with Weber State.

The Lumberjacks have one of the league's top scorers in guard Nate "the skate" Payne. In his last eight outings, the 5-11 junior has averaged better than 22 points. Dave Benning, a 6-5 forward, is averaging in double figures and Payne's running mate at guard, 6-2 Emerson Gordon, has been scoring well in recent games.

According to the respective coaches, Saturday night's Weber State-Montana clash is certain to reduce the number of teams with a chance at the Big Sky title. Both coaches claim their teams can not afford to lose another conference game.

Last weekend, the Wildcats handed Idaho State its first league loss, a 66-64 thriller in Pocatello, but then dropped a 44-42 encounter with Boise State. The defending champs have a 5-3 Big Sky record and a 10-9 season record.

Tipoff for both games will be 7:30 p.m. MDT.