

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,
1956-present

University Relations

3-2-1971

Grizzly swimmers head for finals

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Grizzly swimmers head for finals" (1971).
University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present. 24779.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/24779>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Relations at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.



GRIZZLY SWIMMERS
HEAD FOR FINALS

brunell/dg
sports one
3-2-71

IMMEDIATE RELEASE



sports

MISSOULA--

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

Seventeen University of Montana swimmers left for Moscow, Ida., and the Big Sky finals Tuesday favored to retain the conference championship for the sixth consecutive time.

Coach Fred Stetson, in his eighth year at Montana, said the Grizzly record is not as impressive going into the league finals this year. Last year Montana entered the championships with an 8-1 mark losing only to Central Washington. This season Montana is 5-4 after Utah, WAC champion, and Washington State overpowered the Grizzlies and Central Washington and Puget Sound nudged the Tips for first in close dual meets.

Despite Montana's four losses, the Grizzlies are undefeated in Big Sky action. The Tips whipped Weber, Idaho and Idaho State along with non-league foe Eastern Washington.

Stetson said one of the reasons for Montana's 1971 record is the caliber of competition the Grizzlies faced. "Utah is favored to retain the WAC title and Washington State competes in a strong conference. In the Puget Sound and Central Washington meets it was a matter of losing points at critical moments that cost us the meet," he said.

While Montana's regular record is not impressive, neither are those of the chief contenders. Idaho State, figured to have the best chance to dethrone Montana, has a 5-5 record and Weber has 8-4. (Both marks were figured without the results of the ISU-Weber dual.)

Montana's power is in the freestyle, butterfly and diving. The Grizzlies have Dave Garard, Kurt von Tagen and Fred Poole back to defend their titles along with the entire title winning 400-yd. freestyle relay team (Von Tagen, Poole, Jim Zaro and Garard). Montana also has three of the four returning to defend the 800-yd. freestyle relay crown.

Von Tagen won the 200- and 500-yd. freestyle events last year. The senior from Walnut Creek, Calif., is Montana's most versatile freestyler. He swims anything from the 50 to the 1,650-yd. freestyle. Von Tagen holds four Big Sky freestyle records including the 200, 500, 1,000 and 1,650-yd. marks. Already this season, he cracked the conference record for the 200-yd. event with a 1:48.9 clocking against Central Washington in Missoula. The old mark was 1:49.0.

more

GRIZZLY SWIMMERS HEAD FOR FINALS--2

Von Tagen's biggest threat in the freestyle sprints is Grizzly sophomore Dave Garard. The Missoula swimmer won the 50-yd. event last year at Pocatello and the two butterfly events. Garard holds conference records in the 100 and 200-yd. butterfly.

In the distance freestyle events, 1,000 and 1,650-yds., von Tagen's chief threat is another teammate, freshman Tom Ridley from Hanford, Calif. Ridley eclipsed von Tagen's conference record by nine seconds last weekend at the Montana Senior AAU Championships in Missoula with an 18:34.2. Earlier this season against Idaho State, Ridley cracked von Tagen's 1,000-yd. record with a 10:59.4 time. It was the first time a Big Sky swimmer has broken 11:00 in the event. (The 1,000-yd. race will not be included in the 1971 finals.)

On the one and three meter boards, Dave Allen is king. The senior from Webster, N.Y., won both events last year and holds Big Sky records in the two. Allen has been defeated only once by Central Washington's Loren Fassett.

Looking at the challenger's strength, Stetson said Idaho State has good backstrokers, breaststrokers and is strong in the relays. ISU's Kevin Bodily is back to defend his title in the 100 and 200-yd. backstroke and the Bengals picked up transfer Mark Miller and freshman Cliff Regsbee to bolster the relay units.

Weber is strong in the individual medley, butterfly and breaststroke. The Wildcat's Rick Harding has been clocked at 2:11.4 in the 200-yd. butterfly while Gordon Nelson churned a 2:25.6 in the 200-yd. breaststroke.

Stetson plans to enter von Tagen, Garard, 100-yd. freestyle champion Fred Poole, Ridley, Jerry Homstad, Jim Zaro, Steve Turkiewickz and Greg Hejtmanek in the freestyle events. In the backstroke he will go with Gary Jensen, John Daehn, Larry McCarthy.

Stetson will use Garard, Homstad and McCarthy in the butterfly and will use Mark Townsend and Zaro in the individual medley. In the breaststroke Montana will have Gary Mortenson, Andy Hicks, Ken Conners and Townsend. Finally, in the diving will be Allen and Bob Heinrich.

###