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Alumni starters include seven professionals

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ALUMNI STARTERS INCLUDE
SEVEN PROFESSIONALS

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Seven professionals will be in the starting lineup when a talented group of former Grizzlies takes on the current Tip squad in Saturday's alumni game at Dornblaser Stadium.

The game, which begins at 1:30, replaces the annual intrasquad game as the final touch to spring football at the University of Montana.

The alums will have five pros in the offensive alignment and two players with professional contracts in the defensive unit.

Guards Steve Okoniewski and Tuufuli Uperesa head the list of offensive starters. Both received All America recognition at tackle during their collegiate careers. Okoniewski is with the National Football League's Buffalo Bills and Uperesa is with the Canadian Football League's Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

The tackles for the alumni team are Ron Richards and Cliff Burnett. The two were members of the 1972 UM squad. Burnett, a tenth round choice of San Diego in the NFL draft, has signed with Canada's Edmonton Eskimos.

Doug Brager, who played as a freshman at UM, will be the starting center. It is possible that Willie Postler, center for the Grey Cup Champion B.C. Lions, will be on hand for the game.

Jim Hann and Glen Welch, members of the 1972 team, will fill the end positions. Welch was the leading receiver last year and Hann, a versatile athlete, has signed with the St. Louis Cardinals as a linebacker. Hann will play tight end and Welch split end Saturday.

The quarterback of Montana's unbeaten 1970 squad, Gary Berding, will have three fine backs to give the pigskin to in Saturday's contest. The halfbacks are Sparky Kottke and Steve Caputo. Caputo, the University's all-time leading rusher, attended the Green Bay Packers rookie camp after his excellent 1971 season.

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Jeff Hoffmann will be the alumni fullback. Hoffmann has inked a contract with Canada's Calgary Stampeders.

Familiar names are also abundant in the alumni defensive lineup.

Jim Nordstrom and John Talalotu will be the defensive ends, with tackles Gary Swearingen and Larry Stranahan completing the interior. Swearingen will play for the Calgary Stampeders this fall. He, like Nordstrom and Stranahan, earned all-conference recognition for the Grizzlies.

The alumni linebacking corps will be made up of Terry Pugh, Rick Dodds and Chuck Nakoa. Bob Beers, a 1967 All American, is expected to play.

A defensive back for the Saskatchewan Rough Riders, Roy Robinson, heads the list of secondary backs. He will be joined in the starting lineup by Mick Dennehy, Robin Peters and Pat Dolan.

Bruce Wallwork, organizer of the alumni team, said that as many as 70 former Grizzly players will be on hand for the game. "We won't know until just before the game how many are going to show up," Wallwork said.

"I can tell you everyone is going to have fun and its going to be a good game," he added.

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