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1980-81 UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW

The 1980-81 edition of the University of Montana women's basketball team faces the toughest schedule in its eight-year history. However, with four returning starters and four outstanding recruits, third-year coach Robin Selvig equates the upgraded competition with his improved Grizzly team.

"We have a challenging schedule which reflects the caliber of players on our team," Selvig said.

Montana plays three teams that were ranked in the top 20 nationally last season: Brigham Young University, University of Oregon and the University of San Francisco.

The four starters back for Selvig include 6-1 center Jill Greenfield, forwards Janet Ruetten and Sandy Selvig, and point guard Annette Whitaker.

Greenfield, from Richland, Wash., led the 1979-80 Grizzlies in scoring (449 points for a 16.0 average), rebounding (252 for a 9.0 average) and shooting percentage (.517), setting school season records in all three categories. She was a second-team Northwest Women's Basketball League (NWBL) pick and was selected to the Region IX basketball All-Star team by the National Scouting Association, Inc., the official scouting organization for the women's pro basketball league.

Ruetten, a 5-10 forward from San Diego, was the second-leading scorer for the Grizzlies (10.3 average) last season. Her free-throw shooting percentage (.852) ranked in the top ten nationally as she canned 69 of 81 attempts.

1980-81 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW--add one

Junior forward Sandy Selvig returns to anchor a league-leading defense that allowed '79-80 opponents an average of 54.7 points a game. The 6-0 forward from Plentywood, Mont., was named the team's top defensive player and backed up Greenfield under the boards, averaging 7.9 rebounds per game.

Whitaker, a 5-4 lead guard from Cashmere, Wash., kept the Grizzly fast break rolling and served as team captain.

Other returning letter winners include 5-10 guard Juli Eckmann, Minot, N.D.; 5-8 guard Cathy St. John, Opheim, Mont.; guard Peg Havlovick, Polson, Mont.; forward Alison Robb, Livingston, Mont.; guard Barb Johannsen, Sunburst, Mont.; and guard Shari Kappel, Billings, Mont.

The top four Montana recruits are 5-10 guard Cheri Bratt, 6-0 forward Doris Deden, 5-5 guard Shannon Green and 6-0 forward Shari Thesenvitz.

Bratt, from Flathead High School in Kalispell, Mont., was All-State her junior and senior years and carried four-year career averages of 11 points, 10 rebounds and 6 assists per game.

Deden, from Missoula Sentinel, was the state's AA Most Valuable Player in 1979-80 and shot over 50 percent from the floor for a 15.8 average. She was All-State her junior and senior years.

Green is an All-Stater from Big Sandy, Mont., averaging 16.5 points and 10 assists per game her senior year.

Thesenvitz comes from the same high school as Greenfield, Hanford High in Richland, Wash., and also was an All-State selection. She averaged 14 points and 10 rebounds last season.

Coach Selvig, who guided the Grizzlies to a win-loss record of 19-10 (.655) in 1979-80, said the four recruits should help immediately.

"The league (NWBL) gets tougher each year as the players increase in size and skill," he said. "Oregon, Oregon State, Washington State and Montana State will have strong teams."

(more)

1980-81 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW--add two

Last season the Grizzlies finished fourth in the NWBL, making the semi-finals in the playoff tournament.

Selvig expects to continue the improvement in Montana's women's basketball program.

"We were a good club last year, and next season looks even better," he said.

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