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Bob Beers says high school, college coaching responsible for his linebacking success

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MISSOULA--

Bob Beers is a linebacker, and not just a good one. He's a great one.

At 5-9, 200 pounds, he isn't one of the biggest linebackers around. But he doesn't let his size stop him.

Tuesday, Beers was named Big Sky Conference defensive Player of the Week, the second time in the last three weeks he has received the honor from the league office. The other week saw Beers' teammate, Rich Unruh, get the nod.

How does he do it? Well, he just makes 14 tackles a game by himself, and usually helps on between five and ten others. And defensive experts will tell you that when a player makes 10 unassisted tackles in a game, he's doing real well.

Beers' best effort, tackle-wise, was a 16 unassisted effort against the University of the Pacific two weekends ago in Missoula. That was the week he wasn't named Player of the Week.

Beers will credit anyone but himself with bringing about his defensive success in football from high school, through junior college at Columbia Basin JC in Pasco, Wash., and then at the University of Montana, where he is a junior.

"I had real good high school coaching," Beers says, "and it continued right through JC ball and now at Montana."

The high school coach that gave Beers his first lessons in linebacking was Mike Clock at Sunset High in Beaverton, Ore., just outside of Portland.

"Mike gave me the basic fundamentals I needed to develop enough to play college ball," Beers says.

The coach that helped him in junior college is still keeping an eye on him at the
University of Montana. That one is Wally Brown, formerly line coach at Columbia Basin JC where Beers earned All-American first team honors last year, and now line coach at the University of Montana.

"Wally taught me the forearm shiver and how to move down the line for coverage," Beers says.

And Beers is continuing to learn at Montana, where he is receiving most of his attention from Pinky Erickson, the linebacker coach, with some help from defensive secondary coach Jack Elway.

"It seems like you can never quit learning things about football," Beers says. "Now I'm learning to cover on pass protection, something I didn't have to do much in junior college because the Washington JC's stuck to the ground most of the time.

"These coaches at Montana are a great bunch of guys, doing a great job," Beers says.

How does Beers account for the early season success of the Grizzlies?

"We all knew that people didn't even expect us to win one game this year because we are rebuilding," he says. "But we want to win, all of us, and we knew right off the bat that we could and would.

"We want to show the people in our league and all over Montana that we've got what it takes down here," Beers continues. "Our team spirit is tremendous, we've got great coaching, and we've got the horses to do it.

"And you watch out for us next year, because we'll be even tougher."