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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Grizzlies open home season Saturday; illness makes center position program" (1967). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 3140.

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NEWS

INFORMATION SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MISSOULA, MONTANA 59801

Phone (406) 243-2522

EDITOR: FOR RELEASE SATURDAY A.M.

schwanke/bs
12-7-67
sports one & bskb11

GRIZZLIES OPEN HOME SEASON SATURDAY; ILLNESS MAKES CENTER POSITION PROBLEM

MISSOULA--

The University of Montana Grizzlies would like nothing better than to open their home season with a win after two losses on the road, but illness has hit the Grizzly cage camp, and both centers are doubtful for this Saturday's game with Augustana College.

Don Parsons, senior letterman at 6-6, and Tom Jones, sophomore at 6-8 who showed genuine promise on the Grizzlies' unsuccessful Midwest road trip last weekend, were in the infirmary on Thursday, apparently fighting the flu bug.

If neither one can play, Ron Nord, Grizzly coach, may have to go with junior letterman Steve Brown, a 6-6 string bean from Corvallis who has seen most of his action this year at forward.

Outstanding play by several reserves on the Midwest trip has put the other four starting positions up in the air. Of the four who started last weekend at the guards and forwards, only junior guard Ron Moore, at 6-4 the team's leading scorer and rebounder, appears safe to hold his spot.

The other guard spot is up for grabs between senior letterman Rick Johnston, 6-0, and sophomore John Cheek, 6-1. The forward spots are being sought by regulars Greg Hanson, 6-3 senior, Stan Yoder, 6-2 junior, and sophomore Mark Agather, 6-5, with 6-3 sophomore Sid Rhinehart applying pressure.

The Grizzlies will have a tough game on their hands against Augustana, despite the fact that the Vikings have lost their first three games. The Viks faced top-notch competition in losing to Chicago Loyola, 125-79, DePaul, 111-79, and Northern Illinois, 80-78.

Scouting reports indicate that Augustana is a fundamentally sound club that does

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a lot of things well and was simply outclassed by its first two opponents.

The Vikings, who play in the tough North Central Conference with schools like North Dakota and North Dakota State, are coached by first year man Ed Stevens, former assistant at the University of Nebraska. Stevens is working with a team that lost only four lettermen from last year's 13-12 team.

Augustana's preseason forecast indicated that three probable starters are lettermen John Eggers, 6-5 center-forward, Bob Floyd, 6-2 guard, and Bill Squires, 6-5 center-forward. These three led the Vikings in rebounding and scoring last season.

Eggers had a 21.2 scoring average last year, and was named for honorable mention on the Little All-America team in 1966-67.

Another likely starter is 6-0 junior guard Gary Baumann, a transfer from Glendive Junior College in Montana, where he was an All-America JC selection and finished 13th in the nation in JC scoring:

Other help is expected from 6-3 guard-forward Roy Teas, touted as a good shooter, and 6-2 guard-forward Mike Backer, a good shooter and rebounder.

Stevens considers lack of height as his main problem, but feels that extra speed and better shooting may make up for it.

This will be the first meeting between the two schools, with game time set for 8 p.m. in the Harry Adams Field House. It is the first of three straight home games for the Grizzlies, who will host Washington State Dec. 16 and Fresno State Dec. 19 before going to the Evansville Classic tourney in Indiana Dec. 28-29.