

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,
1956-present

University Relations

9-10-1968

Coaches Brown, Delaney boast depth, strength at positions they handle

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, "Coaches Brown, Delaney boast depth, strength at positions they handle" (1968). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 3958.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/3958>

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.



NEWS

INFORMATION SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MISSOULA, MONTANA 59801

Phone (406) 243-2522

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

schwanke
9-10-68
sports one & football

COACHES BROWN, DELANEY BOAST DEPTH, STRENGTH AT POSITIONS THEY HANDLE

MISSOULA---

Strength, depth and size appear to be in evidence at all positions on the 1968 University of Montana football team, and Coaches Wally Brown and Mick Delaney feel that the spots they handle are no exceptions.

Brown, in his second year at UM, works with the defensive interior linemen and the strong side of the offensive interior line, while Delaney, who will coach the UM frosh squad starting in October, works with the tight ends.

Delaney figures that the tight end position will be much improved over last year because the men manning that position are not only proving to be excellent receivers, but are improving as blockers as well.

Returning veteran Jim Kelly is currently starting at the position after fighting off an injury incurred early in fall drills.

"Jim has a great pair of hands, especially when heavily covered," Delaney said. "He's loosening up now, and I look for some great performances from him this season."

The 6-0, 224-pounder from Seattle, Wash. got plenty of blocking practice last year when he was moved to tackle for part of the season.

Backing up Kelly is 6-2, 195-pound sophomore Jim DeBord of Pasco, Wash. Delaney said that DeBord is improving "by leaps and bounds," and shows great speed, hustle and desire. "He gets open real well from the tight end spot, and his catching ability improves daily."

Mike Nicosia, 6-2, 230-pound converted defensive tackle from Scranton, Pa., hasn't had his chance due to a holdover back injury incurred during spring drills. He's a junior.

Delaney added that defensive end Jim Nordstrom, a 6-2, 215-pound sophomore from Vancouver, Wash., can move in at tight end if necessary.

more

Coach Brown said his defensive interior line, even with the loss of All-Big Sky tackle Bob Graham, will be stronger in the starting lineup and in depth than last year's. He has nine candidates for three positions, and all, he said, are capable of playing a lot.

The starting defensive tackle on the left side will be junior Ole Hedstrom, a 6-0, 215-pounder from Laurel. Last year, Hedstrom worked early in the year on both offense and defense, but the coaches were impressed enough with his defensive work to keep him there.

"Ole is extremely agile and quick, and he's a tremendous hitter and hustler," Brown said. "We will also keep him working as an offensive tackle just in case."

Backing Hedstrom are senior veteran Fred Tubbs, 6-2, 223 from Honolulu, Hawaii; junior Dennis Thrasher, 6-3½, 245 from Yuba City, Calif., and sophomore Ray Stachnik, 6-2, 250 from Chicago, Ill.

Tubbs started in the 1967 opener, was injured early, and was virtually lost for the season. Brown was impressed with the spring showing of the Honolulu native, and said he continues to read plays well this fall. "He'll see lots of action," Brown said.

Thrasher, according to Brown, was unaccustomed to the type of defense the Grizzlies use, and is just learning his reading assignments. "Dennis is making a stronger bid to play more and more this year," Brown reported.

Stachnik, according to Brown, will be redshirted to hold him out for the next three seasons of action starting in 1969. "We think a lot of Ray, and we think he has a great future with us," he said.

The "Cinderella" player for the Grizzlies, if there is one, has to be middle guard Larry Stranahan, 6-0, 225-pound sophomore from Missoula. Larry wasn't on full scholarship last season, was redshirted, and still has three years to go. He will start at middle guard Saturday against North Dakota in Billings.

"Larry had a great spring," said Brown. "He learned what he had to, improved his mechanics of play, and has to be commended because he did it all on his own on sheer determination."

Alternating with Stranahan will be fall transfer John Talolutu, an All-American junior college player last year. Not overly big at 5-11, 195, John is extremely quick and a savage

hitter. Brown said he will be sharing playing time with Stranahan, and who plays the most will depend on the opponent.

"I think Grizzly fans will find John highly enjoyable to watch," Brown said.

Holding down the right tackle spot is fall transfer Ron Garske, 6-3, 234-pound junior from Chico, Calif. The former teammate of Grizzlies Dave Urie and Al Luis at Shasta JC in California is described by Brown as extremely quick and "a smart defensive player."

"Ron will be a tremendous asset to us for two years with his great coordination," Brown said.

John Stedham, 6-5, 245-pounder from Chelalis, Wash., and Bruce Nordstrom, 6-2, 218-pounder from Vancouver, Wash., will back up Garske. Stedham, a starter last year as a sophomore, is somewhat behind in conditioning and speed, Brown said. "He'll play a lot of ball for us though," Brown said.

Nordstrom, a senior, could be called on to play either tackle on defense, Brown noted. "Bruce has improved a lot over last spring," he said.

On the offensive strong side, junior Bill Waters of Troy holds down the starting guard spot. The 6-1, 230-pounder started at quick tackle last season, but the influx of bigger tackles and the need for bigger, faster guards brought about his switch to guard.

"Bill's the fastest offensive lineman on the squad," Brown said. "He's a good puller, he's smart, and his one-on-one blocking has improved immensely. We're really high on him. He's the kind of guard we need for our type of offense."

Butch Ortiz, 5-8½, 190-pound senior from Monterey Park, Calif., will back up Waters, and could be used at quick guard as well. Brown called Ortiz "the best player for fundamentals on the entire team."

Ortiz distinguished himself last season in the Utah State game by doing an excellent job of blocking 250-pound Aggie All-American Bill Staley. Ortiz weighed 175 then.

At tackle, spring transfer Bill Gutman, 6-2, 245-pound junior from Seattle, will start.

"Bill, when teamed with quick tackle Tuufuli Uperesa, gives us a tackle combination that should distinguish itself as one of the best in the Northwest," Brown said. "He's extremely conscientious, likes to hit, and he's got the speed we like to see."

Backing up Gutman will be Ed Dawson, 6-3, 225-pound senior from Shelton, Wash. currently sidelined with a knee injury, and 6-2, 215-pound veteran junior Mike McCann of Renton, Wash., who can also work at quick tackle if necessary.

"Dawson will provide good depth at the strong tackle spot once he recovers from his knee injury," Brown said.

He lauded McCann for his versatility, saying that besides playing either offensive tackle, he could go on defense, where he played last season. "He'll be our first substitute at tackle on either side," Brown said.

"Our offensive line is really coming on strong," Brown concluded. "We're expecting great things from it this season."