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TIPS PLACE 11
ON BIG SKY TEAM

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Not only did Montana dominate the Big Sky Conference statistics and standings in 1969, but Jack Swarthout's Tips placed 11 out of 25 players selected by conference coaches for the Big Sky All-Conference team.

The 10-0 Grizzlies placed five men on the first offensive team and six stalwarts on the defensive unit for the conference team.

The only repeater for Montana from the 1968 Big Sky team was All-American candidate Tuufuli Uperesa. The big 250 lb. offensive tackle from Aiea, Haw, was a unanimous choice for the second year in succession. In 1968 the Tip tri-captain was also an honorable All-American candidate.

Montana's other offensive tackle, Bill Gutman from Seattle was selected as the other All-Conference tackle. The 6-2, 235 lb. senior was a two-year starter for Swarthout after a stint at Grays Harbor JC in Washington.

One of the biggest surprises for the Montana coaching staff was the rapid and effective transformation John Stedham made this season. John played two years as defensive tackle at Montana before assuming the role as offensive guard in 1969. The 6-5, 230 lb. senior from Chehalis, Wash. made the first offensive team for his effectiveness.

Montana had two fine running backs in Les Kent and Arnie Blancas, both fortunately juniors, and both first unit choices. Kent rushed for 972 yards while Blancas scampered for 709 yards. Both packed a 6.3 yard or better average per carry.

The pride of the Grizzly defense in 1969 was the beefy front four that gave the ten or more opposing quarterbacks nightmares. Larry Stranahan, Larry Miller, Jim Nordstrom and John Talalotu pierced the side of many field generals. Three of the four were selected as Big Sky choices--Miller, Nordstrom and Stranahan and the fourth barely missed the selection.

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The only Tip linebacker to make the first team was a Kalispell junior, Tim Gallagher. Gallagher was a consistent performer who initiated many opponents into the school of hard knocks. The 6-2 , 215 lb. outside linebacker showed that it is easier to give than receive.

One of the vulnerable points in the 1968 Tip defense was the defensive backfield. With a quick shift and a new addition, Swarthout came up with a ball-hawking secondary.

Roy Robinson shifted from offensive halfback to cornerback on defense. The 9.5 speedster hit like a freight train and covered opponents like a blanket. Robinson is a senior and picked off one aerial.

However, the other back is not a senior. Karl Stein is a junior free safety from San Anselmo, Calif. He was a unanimous selection for his record breaking performances picking off 11 passes and deflecting a number of others.

For the Camellia Bowl bound Grizzlies, 1969 was rewarding and it overshadowed the grief of a dismal 1968 2-7 record. Now the Tips must face the number one college division team in the nation in Sacramento on Dec. 13.

UM FOOTBALL '69