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Game Day Kaimin, September 27, 2014

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GAMEDAY KAIMIN

Saturday, September 27, 2014

THE JUICE



cover photo by **JORDAN PURINTON**

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JUICE

Travon Van looks to a future in the NFL

SEABORN LARSON
Montana Kaimin

While Mick Delaney's starting defense thrashed a scout offense at practice on Tuesday, other players stood back in small huddles. Senior running back Travon Van strolled from group to group during the delay, talking and joking from inside his maroon helmet.

Although Van's disciplined response is that he's taking the season one game at a time, his long-term goals extend beyond an FCS championship. He hopes that being part of a fluid, functioning offense might give him the opportunity to be seen as a potential pick in the NFL draft come spring.

"We're just in the system more this year," Van said. "It's my senior year, so I'm trying to take my talents

to the next level; I'm trying to do everything I possibly can for this team so we can win."

The second-year Grizzly from San Diego has taken a dynamic role in the offense at the right time. Already this season, he's rushed for 173 yards on 27 carries, averaging 39.2 yards a game. He leads the team with 339 all-purpose yards, and is high scorer with five touchdowns.

Although he's listed as a running back, Van has also carved out his own place at receiver in Delaney's spread offense. He's grabbed 182 yards on 19 catches, averaging nearly a first down every pass (9.6 yards).

"Juice" got his nickname from his days playing youth football in San Diego. Van said he would bring juice to drink during team water breaks, and the nickname stuck. Now, "Juice" is causing headaches



Jordan Purinton/Montana Kaimin

Griz running back Travon Van prepares to face South Dakota at Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Sept. 13.

for opposing teams.

"I think he creates a matchup for other teams that is tough to match up against because you don't exactly know what he's going to be when he goes out on the football field," said Montana running back coach Justin Green.

Van hit the ground running in the season opener, grabbing a career-high nine catches against the FBS Wyoming Cowboys. A week later, he ran for three touchdowns and caught a fourth in Montana's 48-14 home opening win over Cen-

tral Washington.

"He has the ability to both run through tackles and be the fastest guy out there," Green said. "We're able to utilize that by getting the ball in his hands in a few different ways."

Delaney said he likes what Van brings to the receiving game, in addition to the presence of established wideouts Sean Haynes and Ellis Henderson.

"He's off to a really good start," Delaney said. "Just being able to have he and Canada on the field at

the same time is really good for our football team. They're both threats that can take it to the house in a second."

Green said Van has done well integrating into the team since transferring from Marshall two years ago. Van was The Herd's second-leading rusher as a redshirt freshman, and was named to the Conference USA All-American Team, but in his sophomore season, coach Doc Holliday's plan to move Van to defensive cornerback didn't match Van's love for offense.

With full support from Holliday, Van found his way back West, but he didn't end up very close to his home in Southern California.

"It does get a little cold here, but not that bad," Van laughs. "We have great facilities to work out in; we're around a great team with some great leaders, so it's really easy to do great things here."

Van saw plenty of injuries in that first year at Montana. By Delaney's count, Van endured several leg issues, a shoulder problem and a broken wrist he played with through the second half of last season.

He spent all spring rehabbing, prepping for what he hoped would be his first full season since his freshman year at Marshall.

"You find out a lot about yourself having injuries," Green said. "He worked on his body really hard this summer to make sure that he's durable and he can last all season."

His dual positioning started in earnest in summer camp. The 5-foot-11, 195-pound runner had 176 receiving yards and 13 catches in 2013, but it was time to take receiving seriously.

Van spent time at camp with wide receivers coach Torrey Myers learning his offensive duties. He emerged from camp with a simple checklist for success at playing two positions.

See PREVIEW, page 8

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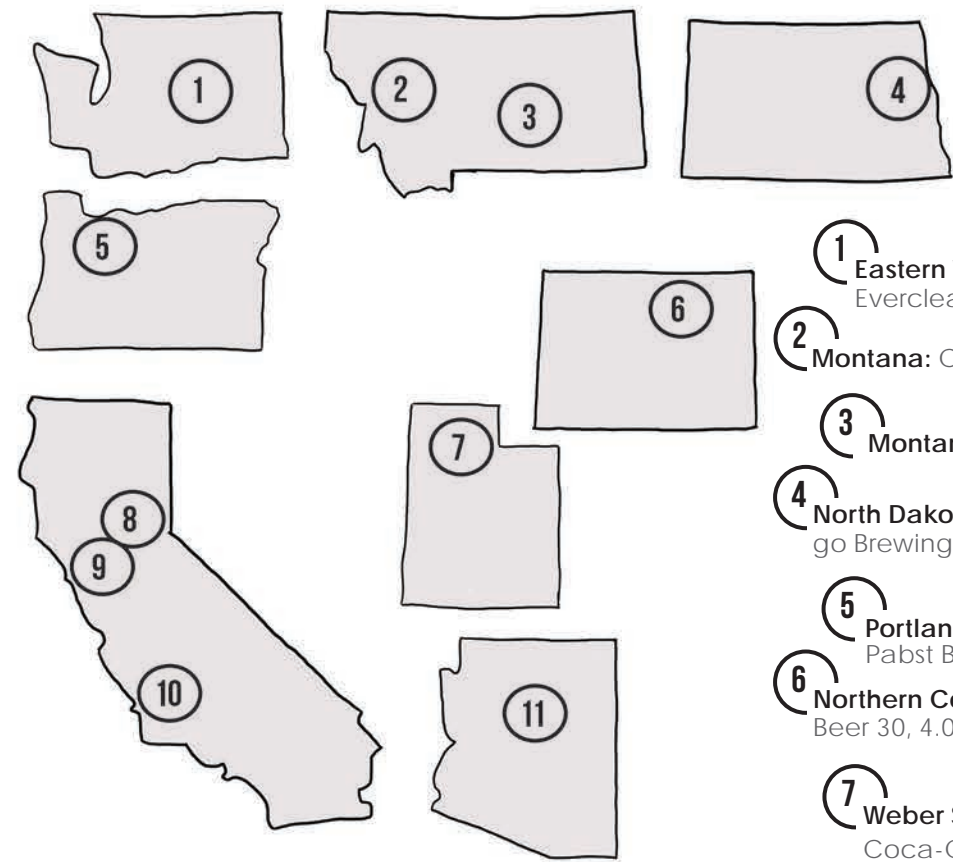
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WHICH BEER IS YOUR TEAM

By Andy Bixler

1 Eastern Washington: Everclear 95% ABV

2 Montana: Coldsmoke 6.5% ABV

3 Montana State: Bud Light 4.2 % ABV

4 North Dakota: Wood Chipper IPA (Far-go Brewing Company) 6.7% ABV

5 Portland State: Pabst Blue Ribbon 4.5% ABV

6 Northern Colorado: Beer 30, 4.0 % ABV

7 Weber State: Caffeine-Free Coca-Cola 0% ABV

8 Sacramento State: Sierra Nevada Pale Ale 5.6% ABV

9 UC Davis: Davis, CA: Cascaderade India Pale Lager 6.6% ABV

10 Cal Poly: Corona 4.6% ABV

11 Northern Arizona: Grand Canyon Pale Ale (Grand Canyon Brewing Company) 5.5% ABV,



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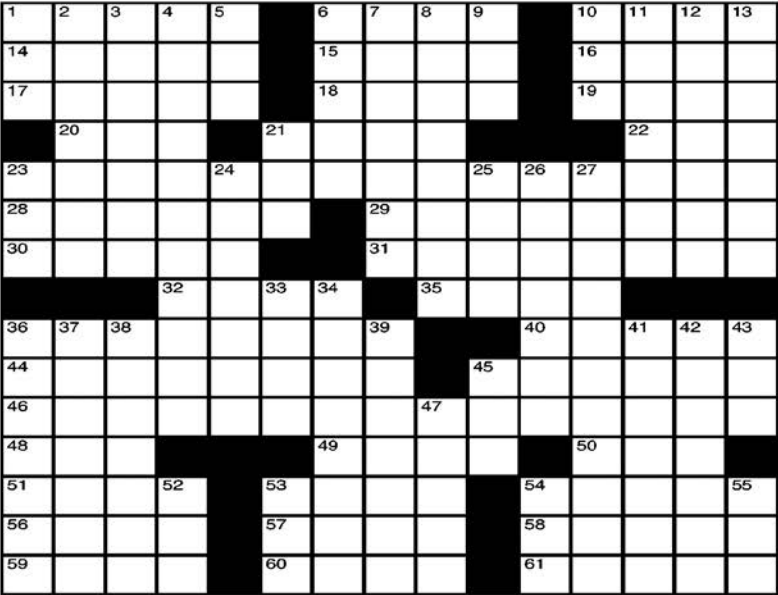
FOR RELEASE SEPTEMBER 27, 2014

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Early 20th-century Met baritone Pasquale
- 6 City on the Nile
- 10 "Sup"
- 14 Three-time Oscar-winning director
- 15 OS X basis
- 16 Scholarly Islamic title
- 17 Rasp
- 18 Place to pick up some pets
- 19 Yankees coach Tony
- 20 10% of MDX
- 21 Common file folder abbr.
- 22 Reno and others: Abbr.
- 23 Popular '60s-'70s garb
- 28 Thick-trunked tree
- 29 Put on a pedestal
- 30 Bee product
- 31 Followed
- 32 Makes a decision
- 35 Word with lake or lick
- 36 World's largest user of cheese, according to its website
- 40 Goes after, as flies
- 44 Alternative-medicine staple
- 45 Fastball, in slang
- 46 Some sightings
- 48 Airline with headquarters in Amstelveen
- 49 Energy source
- 50 Improv session
- 51 Premium factor
- 53 Two-band
- 54 Bashes
- 56 Etonic competitor
- 57 Extend one's service
- 58 ___ layer
- 59 One might be staked
- 60 Mallorca, e.g.



By Mark Bickham

9/27/14

61 Quetzalcoatl worshiper

DOWN

- 1 Clemson Univ. is in it
- 2 Only actor to speak in Mel Brooks' "Silent Movie"
- 3 Ill-fated 1967 mission
- 4 Pioneers
- 5 Poison ___
- 6 Hit the gas
- 7 Agitated
- 8 Routing aids
- 9 Send packing
- 10 Not square
- 11 "Seriously"
- 12 Asia's longest river
- 13 Got a lot of
- 21 ___ mentality
- 23 Summer party invitation letters
- 24 Part of Wayne's world
- 25 Neighbor of Tempe
- 26 Eponymous skater Axel
- 27 "Chicago" song

Friday's Puzzle Solved



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9/27/14

- 33 What you once were?
- 34 Last things written on applications?
- 36 Super saver?
- 37 "No harm done"
- 38 Enhances the details
- 39 Considerate
- 41 Got stuffed, maybe
- 42 Material
- 43 Yearbook sect.
- 45 Buzz
- 47 ___-Loompas: Dahl characters
- 52 Dennings of "2 Broke Girls"
- 53 NPR journalist Shapiro
- 54 ___ long way
- 55 Hardly a long time

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GRIZZLIES

1 Treshawn Favors, Running Back, Glendale, Ariz.
2 Taylor Walcott, Wide Receiver/Returner, Eugene, Ore.
2 Ryan McKinley, Cornerback, Anthem, Ariz.
3 Eric Johnson, Safety, San Francisco, Calif.
3 Brady Guftason, Quarterback, Billings, Mont.
4 Chris Parker, Cornerback, Sioux Falls, S.D.
4 Nate Hanser, Utility, Broadview, Mont.
5 Chase Naccarato, Wide Receiver, Spokane, Wash.
5 Daniel Sullivan, Kicker, Mill Creek, Wash.
6 Tyrel Garner, Cornerback, Henderson, Nev.
6 Jamaal Jones, Wide Receiver, Spanaway, Wash.
7 Ellis Henderson, Wide Receiver/Returner, Portland, Ore.
8 Travon Van, Running Back, San Diego, Calif.
8 Manu Rasmussen, Safety, Tigard, Ore.
9 Addison Owen, Defensive End, Vancouver, Wash.
9 Carl Johnson, Running Back, Hardin, Mont.
10 Jordan Johnson, Quarterback, Eugene, Ore.
11 Tristen Clark, Wide Receiver, Deer Lodge, Mont.
11 Nate Harris, Cornerback, Chino, Calif.
12 Sean Foley, Wide Receiver, Whitefish, Mont.
12 Matt Hermanson, Safety, Sioux Falls, SD
13 Josh Janssen, Wide Receiver, Missoula, Mont.
14 Joshua Dennard, Cornerback, Phoenix, Ariz.
16 Marq Rogers, Wide Receiver, Fort Wayne, Ind.
17 Makena Simis, Quarterback, Boise, Idaho
18 JR Nelson, Cornerback, Hacienda Heights, Calif.
19 Shay Smithwick-Hann, Quarterback, Kalispell, Mont.
21 Joey Counts, Running Back, Mesa, Ariz.
23 Caleb Lyons, Wide Receiver, Lakewood, Wash.
24 Lorenzo Logwood, Running Back, Oakland, Calif.
25 Shane Moody, Cornerback, Parker, Colo.
26 Jordan Canada, Running Back, West Covina, Calif.

27 Nico Graham, Wide Receiver, Missoula, Mont.
28 Jamaal Anderson, Safety, Fontana, Calif.
29 Connor Strahm, Linebacker, Eugene, Ore.
30 Evan Epperly, Safety, Kalispell, Mont.
31 Justin Whitted, Safety, Los Angeles, Calif.
32 Zach Vis, Linebacker, Lynden, Wash.
33 Connor Lebsock, Linebacker, Billings, Mont.
34 Jamal Wilson, Fullback, Fontana, Calif.
35 Kendrick Van Ackeren, Linebacker, Bellevue, Wash.
36 Herbert Gamboa, Linebacker, San Clemente, Calif.
37 Zack Wagenmann, Defensive End, Missoula, Mont.
38 John Nguyen, Running Back, Seattle, Wash.
39 Jake Dallaser, Safety, Butte, Mont.
40 Cooper Sprunk, Tight End, Tigard, Ore.
41 Mick Delaney, Safety, Bozeman, Mont.
42 Josh Buss, Linebacker, Boise, Idaho
43 Nate Bradley, Nose Guard, Billings, Mont.
44 Caleb Kidder, Defensive Tackle, Helena, Mont.
45 Jeremiah Kose, Linebacker, Oceanside, Calif.
46 Austin Chadderdon, Fullback, Couer d'Alene, Idaho
47 Derek Crittenden, Defensive End, Whitefish, Mont.
48 Riley Kack, Fullback, Bozeman, Mont.
49 Nick Mertes, Defensive End, Edina, Minn.
50 Aaron Held, Snaps, Sacramento, Calif.
51 Tucker Schye, Linebacker, Malta, Mont.
54 Trevor Rehm, Defensive Tackle, Dillon, Mont.
55 Kyle Davis, Defensive Tackle, San Diego, Calif.
56 Alex Thomas, Linebacker, Great Falls, Mont.
57 Shane Cochran, Linebacker, Culbertson, Mont.
58 Tyler Richtmeyer, Linebacker, Missoula, Mont.
60 Jackson Thiebes, Offensive Tackle, Kalispell, Mont.
62 Roscoe Alley, Guard, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

65 Jordan Hines, Offensive Guard, Phoenix, Ariz.
66 Logan Hines, Center, Phoenix, Ariz.
67 Ben D'Alton, Defensive Line, Billings, Mont.
68 McCauley Todd, Offensive Guard, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
69 Jared Clard, Offensive Line, San Diego, Calif.
70 Ben Weyer, Guard, Bozeman, Mont.
71 Devon Dietrich, Offensive Tackle, Woodinville, Wash.
72 Trevor Poole, Offensive Tackle, Spokane, Wash.
75 Robert Luke, Center, Tacoma, Wash.
76 David Reese, Offensive Tackle, Clackamas, Ore.
77 Cameron Rokich, Offensive Tackle, West Jordan, Utah
78 Clint LaRowe, Offensive Tackle, Miles City, Mont.
79 Max Kelly, Offensive Guard, Spokane, Wash.
80 Sean Haynes, Wide Receiver, Los Angeles, Calif.
81 Mitch Saylor, Tight End, Vancouver, Wash.
82 Jermaine Jones, Tight End, Oakland, Calif.
83 Ryan Burke, Wide Receiver, Billings, Mont.
84 Kevin Berland, Wide Receiver, Missoula, Mont.
85 Reese Carlson, Wide Receiver, Gig Harbor, Wash.
86 Austin Carver, Wide Receiver, Dillon, Mont.
87 Chris Linder, Kicker, Bellevue, Wash.
88 Stephen Shaw, Punter, Fullerton, Calif.
89 Aschan Richards, Defensive End, Butte, Mont.
90 Bo Harris, Defensive Tackle, Fairfield, Mont.
91 Tyrone Holmes, Defensive End, Eagle Point, Ore.
92 Kole Swartz, Defensive End, Missoula, Mont.
93 Zach Peevey, Defensive Tackle, Missoula, Mont.
94 Harrison Greenberg, Kicker, Lake Oswego, Ore.
95 Tonga Takai, Defensive Tackle, Honolulu, Hawaii
96 Josh Horner, Tight End, Great Falls, Mont.
97 Ryan Johnson, Defensive End, Vancouver, Wash.
98 Mike Ralston, Tight End, Eugene, Ore.

ELLIS HENDERSON

senior, wide receiver

Henderson has played sparingly this season after suffering from a bacterial infection in the spring. He has yet to find the end zone this year, but has come up with several big plays for Montana, averaging 9.2 yards per reception.

#7

JORDAN JOHNSON

senior, quarterback

Montana's quarterback has been every bit as good as he was in 2013. The senior has thrown for 500 yards and three touchdowns in four games, and has a 54.5 percent completion. Johnson's thrown only one interception this year and holds a 103.9 passer rating.

#10

SEAN RUBALCABA

sophomore, quarterback

Northern Colorado's QB boasts an impressive 68.9 percent completion rate through the air, and has thrown for 514 yards this season. His one interception came in the Bears season opener against FBS UNLV. However, he's only thrown one touchdown this season.

#15

ROBERT HOLLAND

senior, running back

Senior running back Robert Holland carries the brunt of UNC's ground-heavy offense. He averages 70 yards per game, and most importantly takes care of the football, only fumbling once so far in three games.

#28

- 1 A.J. Battle, Defensive Back, Denver, Colo.
- 2 Marcell Peoples Wide Receiver, Corona, Calif.
- 3 Dimitri Stimphil Wide Receiver, Homestead, Fla.
- 4 Thomas Singleton Defensive Back, Aurora, Colo.
- 5 Leilon Willingham Linebacker, Denver, Colo.
- 6 Brandon Lenoir, Cornerback, Flint, Mich.
- 7 Jacob Knipp, Quarterback, Arvada, Colo.
- 8 James Davis, Defensive Back, Miami, Fla.
- 9 Leonard Rhodes, Tight End San Bernardino, Calif.
- 10 Brant Berglund, Quarterback, Las Vegas, Nev.
- 11 Hakeem Deggs, Wide Receiver, Plaquemine, La.
- 13 Ellis Onic II, Wide Receiver, Dallas, Texas
- 14 Jonathan Newsom Quarterback, Bothill Ranch, Calif.
- 15 Sean Rubalcaba, Quarterback, Grand Junction, Colo.
- 16 Brock Berglund, Quarterback, Highlands Ranch, Colo.
- 17 Malcolm Whye, Wide Receiver Denver, Colo.
- 18 Samad Hinds, Wide Receiver Miami, Fla.
- 19 Devion Anderson, Defensive Line Dallas, Texas
- 20 Jalen Boyd, Defensive Back Louisville, Ky.
- 21 Courtney Hall, Cornerback, Pompano Beach, Fla.
- 22 Everett Bible, Defensive Back Aurora, Colo.
- 23 Chris Glover, Defensive Back, Gardena, Calif.
- 24 Kaelen Russell, Defensive Back, Gardena, Calif.
- 25 Zachary Lindsay, Running Back, Denver, Colo.
- 26 Darius Graham, Running Back, Lawton, Okla.
- 27 Dominick Sierra, Linebacker, Whittier, Calif.
- 28 Robert Holland, Running back, Golden, Colo.
- 29 JaQueal Walker, Linebacker, Plaquemine
- 30 Anthony Davis, Defensive Back Fountain, Colo.
- 31 Kyle Griffin, Safety, Arvada, Colo.
- 32 Tyler Bloyer, Defensive Back, Aurora, Colo.
- 33 Ronald LaRue, Defensive Back Dallas, Texas

- 34 Brandon Miller, Linebacker, Memphis, Tenn.
- 35 Collin Gibbs, Linebacker, Longmont, Colo.
- 36 Josh Peterson, Defensive Back, Marrero, La.
- 37 Trevor Douglass, Defensive Back, Redlands, Calif.
- 38 Taylor Risner, Defensive Back, Wiggins, Colo.
- 40 Trae Riek, Running Back, Palm Desert, Calif.
- 41 Lavell Sanders, Defensive Back, Compton, Calif.
- 42 Nick Johnson, Defensive Lineman, Sauk Village, Ill.
- 43 Brandon Cartagena, Cornerback, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 44 Quinn Zamora, Fullback, Palisade, Colo.
- 45 Brody Haehlen, Defensive Lineman, Happy Valley, Ore.
- 46 Isaiah Williams, Linebacker, Mesquite, Texas
- 47 Theron Verna, Tight End, Grand Junction, Colo.
- 48 Mikhail Dubose, Defensive End, Chicago, Ill.
- 49 Shaquan Baines, Tight End, Bakersfield, Calif.
- 50 Ryan Gackle, Linebacker, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 51 James Riddle, Linebacker, Lakewood, Colo.
- 52 Austin Bown, Linebacker, Manitowoc, Wisc.
- 53 Anthony Ochiato, Offensive Line, Westminster, Colo.
- 54 Kody Mommaerts, Offensive Line, Superior, Colo.
- 55 Marcus Forward II, Linebacker, Flint, Mich.
- 56 Kameron Harrod, Defensive Line, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 57 Keenan Leary, Defensive Tackle, Arvada, Colo.
- 58 A.J. Isenburg, Linebacker, Littleton, Colo.
- 59 Kelfer Morris, Defensive Line, Parker, Colo.
- 61 Weston Gadiant, Offensive Line, Goodhue, Minn.
- 62 Joseph Turner, Defensive Tackle, Oxnard, Calif.
- 63 Joe Layzel, Offensive Line, Bloomington, Ill.
- 64 Dan Ryan, Offensive Line, Shiloh, Ill.
- 65 Cody Wilson, Offensive Line, Parker, Colo.
- 66 Nathan Shepherd, Defensive Line, Sedalia, Colo.

- 67 Austin Hendrickson, Offensive Line, Arvada, Colo.
- 68 Jamie Falloon, Kicker, Boulder, Colo.
- 69 Radmen Niven, Offensive Line, Minneapolis, Minn.
- 70 Sean McGill, Offensive Line, Tigard, Ore.
- 71 Kendall Ryan, Offensive Line, Westminster, Colo.
- 72 Filipo Mose, Offensive Lineman, Long Beach, Calif.
- 73 Coleman McCann Offensive Line, Shawnee, Kan.
- 74 Sean Palinckx, Offensive Line, Parker, Colo.
- 76 Marcus Piechowski, Offensive Line, Westlake Village, Calif.
- 77 Zach Wilkinson, Offensive Line, Vancouver, B.C., Canada
- 78 Evan Short, Offensive Line, Sycamore, Ill.
- 79 Conner Pawlak, Offensive Line, Glenwood Springs, Colo.
- 80 Michael McCauley, Tight End, Centennial, Colo.
- 81 Alex Wesley, Wide Receiver, Murphy, Texa
- 82 Kadim Phillip, Defensive Line, Chicago, Ill.
- 83 Sean Leslie, Wide Receiver, JArvada, Colo.
- 84 Christian Backes, Tight End, Aurora, Colo.
- 85 Jean-Claude Madin Cerezo, Wide Receiver, Hamburg, Germany
- 86 Derek Vander, Velde Tight End, Littleton, Colo.
- 87 Stephen Miller, Wide Receiver, Centennial, Colo.
- 88 Sawyere Monson, Half Back, Eden, Utah
- 89 Jacob Drage, Tight End, Thatcher, Ariz.
- 90 Myles Overton, Dfensive Line, Flint, Mich.
- 91 Devontae Chapple, Defensive End, Denver, Colo.
- 92 Chris Urbaniak, Defensive End, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 93 Kendrick Johnson, Defensive End, Arlington, Texas
- 94 Lexington Smith, Defensive Line, Denver, Colo.
- 95 Aaron Carr, Linebacker, Waukegna, Ill.
- 96 Seth Czapenski, Kicker, Greeley, Colo.
- 98 Bailey Landwehr, Kicker, Greeley, Colo.
- 99 Kyle Todd, Defensive End, Ben Lomond, Calif.

BEARS

FOOTBALL

Griz look to regroup in conference play

Montana opens BSC schedule with first matchup against Northern Colorado since 2012

Andy Bixler

Montana Kaimin

Big Sky Conference play is finally here for the Montana Grizzlies, and after a brutal non-conference schedule that saw the Griz go 2-2, the team is trying to regroup.

What better way than against a team they've only ever lost to once before?

The Northern Colorado Bears will travel to Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Saturday to take on the No. 7 ranked Grizzlies. Montana is 12-1 all-time against UNC, and trounced the Bears 40-17

in their last meeting in 2012.

"It's a game we've got to be very careful of, and not worry about who they are and what they've done, and just worry about what the Griz have to do to be successful," said head coach Mick Delaney.

It would be easy for the Griz to overlook the 1-2 Bears. Montana is coming off a loss to the No. 1 ranked team in the nation, North Dakota State University, winners of the last three FCS national championships.

Montana played the Bison close, losing 22-10, but the

offense failed to score in the second half and the defense allowed NDSU 447 total yards of offense.

In the platitude-filled world of football, there are no moral victories, but Delaney might bend the rules just this once.

"You're disappointed, obviously. We went there to win the football game, not just to play well," Delaney said. "But then you take the positives from a game like that, you look at how dynamic our defense was... I'm just so proud of how hard our guys fought."

The game was the first time Montana's defense, which currently tops the Big Sky Conference, has allowed more than 317 yards in a single game.

But despite giving up that many yards against the Bison, the Griz, for the most part, kept NDSU out of the end zone, forcing five field goals and only allowing one touchdown. Linebacker Jeremiah Kose said Montana's mentality was key.

"I felt like as they were starting to move the ball a little more, our defense just decided not to let them score," Kose said.

Easier said than done, but results don't lie. The Bears won't prove to be as tough an obstacle as the Bison to defend, but they do pose a threat to Montana's 'D'. UNC sophomore quarterback Sean Rubalcaba has completed nearly 69 percent of his passes this season, throwing only one interception.

UNC also has a deep threat in wide receiver Dimitri Stimpf, who averages nearly 80 yards per game through the air.

"Watching him on tape, he's a very nice athlete," Delaney said of Rubalcaba. "He doesn't run a lot but he can

"Offensively, we're struggling a little bit," Delaney said. "We're getting there, but (NDSU) exposed us a little bit where our weaknesses are, and we've still got a ton of work to do."

The weaknesses come largely from inexperience in Montana's offensive line. However, UNC isn't nearly as big or experienced up front as the Bison or Cowboys are – they've allowed 222.3 yards per game rushing so far this season – and Montana has had success rushing the ball against them in the past.

In their 2012 matchup, the Griz ran for 294 yards and three touchdowns.

"Our young guys have never been an excuse for us," Delaney said. "They're getting better. They're undersized a little bit, but there's nothing you can do about that. The key for them now is to keep fighting and not making the same mistakes over and over again."

In one of the toughest conferences in the FCS, mistakes against any team can prove costly. Northern Colorado's season-opener against UNLV, an FBS squad, was filled with mistakes by UNLV, almost allowing the Bears to sneak away with a win.

The Runnin' Rebels barely squeaked it out, 13-12.

"Northern Colorado is scary in a lot of respects," Delaney said. "What they are capable of doing, they've gotten better and better."

andrew.bixler@umontana.edu

@bixlerandy

'It's a game we've got to be careful of, and not worry about who they are and what they've done, and just worry about what the Griz have to do to be successful'

Mike Delaney


Head Coach

run, and he's thrown the ball well at times."

The Bears offense has averaged 294.3 yards per game this season.

While Montana's defense has been stout all year, problems have arisen at times on offense. Montana only gained 68 yards on the ground Saturday, the second time Delaney's run-first team has failed to eclipse the century mark (the other time was Montana's other loss, against the FBS Wyoming Cowboys).

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Special teams in flux for Griz

JESSE FLICKINGER
Montana Kaimin

When the Montana Grizzlies take the field against Northern Colorado Saturday afternoon, the Grizzlies special teams unit will look a bit different since its last home game.

Given the uncertainty and irregularity of success in Montana's kicking game during its first few contests, head coach Mick Delaney recently inserted Wyoming-transfer Daniel Sullivan as Montana's starting kicker going forward.

"What Daniel is doing right now we're real excited about," Delaney said. "He gets the ball up real quick, his timing is up and his kickoffs hang, so we're in good shape there."

Montana's previous kickers, Harrison Greenberg and Chris Lider, went a combined 2-5 in converting field goal attempts in Montana's first three games.

Sullivan was a perfect 1-1, nailing a 20-yard attempt, in Montana's 22-10 loss to No. 1 North Dakota State University. Delaney was impressed enough with Sullivan's performance to give him the job going into Big Sky Conference play.

"Sullivan was really solid," Delaney said. "On four kickoffs I believe three were touchbacks deep in the end zone, which is good and should happen inside. Even though he's been away for two years, he's kicked in big time football games."

Sullivan transferred from Wyoming this year after sitting out his past two seasons recovering from a serious medical issue he suffered after his freshman year.

Sullivan converted seven of 11 field goals and nailed 30 of 34 extra point attempts for Wyoming his freshman year. He hit a career-long 48-yard field goal against TCU in his only season playing for the Cowboys.

Sullivan originally tried out for Washington State, but blew out his ankle before the tryout. He shot a video and sent it out to schools, which helped land him in Montana.

Sullivan said it's been good having the trio of kickers pushing each other so hard in practice.

"I have a pretty high expectation for myself, so I was never going to be content if I didn't have a full grasp on the position," Sullivan said. "The other guys made

it difficult to get out there, but it's been a good competition."

He intends to keep the job now that he's landed it after starting his first game as a Griz at NDSU.

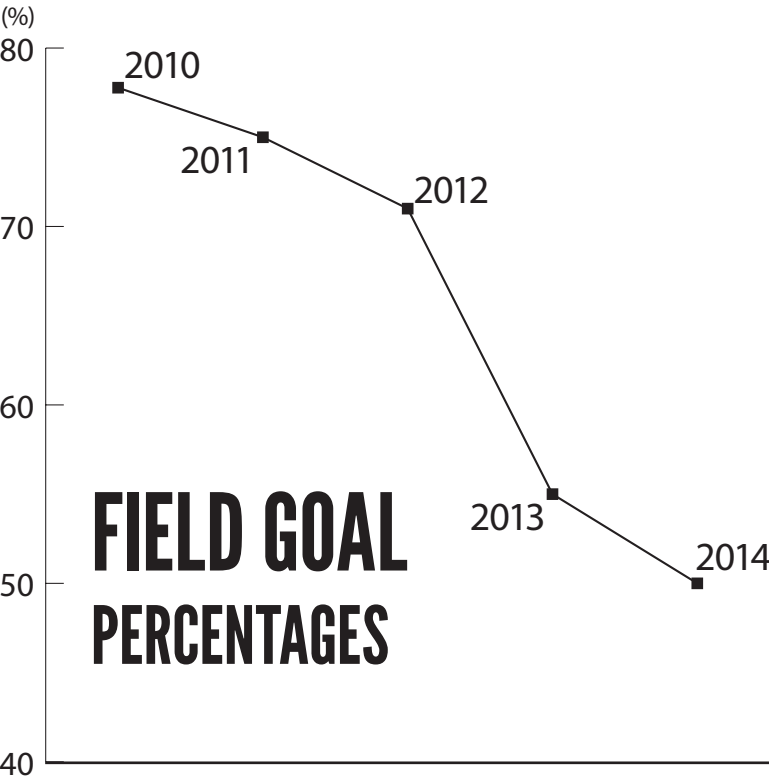
"It felt great to get out there again," Sullivan said. "Getting to run out there with everyone when they put up the '1' (for an extra point) or call for a field goal. Whenever you get to run out and do that to help put points on the board for your team, it's awesome."

While Montana is happy to have decided on a place kicker, an unfortunate bit of luck will force Montana to trot out a new punter as well.

Griz punter Stephen Shaw was illegally clipped below the waist on a punt against NDSU last weekend. Delaney said an MRI showed it's not an ACL tear, but there's enough meniscus damage to sit Shaw for a considerable amount of time.

Montana's former place kicker, Lider, will now line up at punter for Montana. Reserve quarterback Shay Smithwick-Hann will back up Lider should he go down.

"(Chris) has always been able to bail us out in the past if need be," Delaney said. "He punted in



high school, like Shay, so we have no problem with that. There's different things we can do with the punt to make sure we're adequate there."

With both special teams units changing personnel so frequently in Montana's first few games, it'll be interesting to see how the unit pans out during Montana's homecoming contest against UNC.

Sullivan thinks they'll be just fine.

"The expectation I have for myself is—I shouldn't ever miss," Sullivan said, "and while that might not be realistic, that's a goal for me."

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5		6			3	2	
	3			2			7
		1	8			6	9
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Level: 1 2 3 4

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9	7	5	4	2	8	6	3	1
2	4	6	3	5	1	9	7	8
7	1	8	5	4	2	3	9	6
5	2	3	6	8	9	4	1	7
4	6	9	1	7	3	5	8	2
1	5	7	9	6	4	8	2	3
6	3	2	8	1	5	7	4	9
8	9	4	2	3	7	1	6	5

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MISSOULA NATIVES SUIT UP FOR GRIZ

KOLBY KICKINGWOMAN
Montana Kaimin

Since it opened in 1986, Washington-Grizzly Stadium has been a cornerstone of the city of Missoula, holding raucous crowds of 25,000 plus nearly every Saturday in the fall.

Few make the jump from the stands to the field, but UM currently has seven athletes on the active roster who spent time growing up in Missoula — many of whom regularly attended games growing up.

"I remember trying to go to every game I could when I was younger," redshirt senior Kevin Berland said. "If not, my dad and I would listen on the radio."

Senior defensive end Zack Wagenmann, who attended Sentinel High School, still remembers the section his family sat in.

"We had season tickets. I think it was section 125, somewhere around there," Wagenmann said, recalling Griz Saturdays with his family.

Head coach Mick Delaney, a Montana native himself, says there is an emphasis on bringing in local prospects.

"It is very important to recruit the city of Missoula, as well as the state of Montana," Delaney said. "If there is the talent available, we want to recruit it."

Delaney added that local athletes are given a unique opportunity to play in front of family and friends that would otherwise be difficult if they chose an out-of-state school.

"It means the most to me," redshirt freshman receiver Josh Janssen said. "That was one of the reasons I chose Montana right away was so I could have all my family here at almost every game."

Berland, who along with Janssen graduated from Loyola Sacred Heart, said one of the more rewarding feelings for Missoula players is signing autographs.

"It's really cool," Berland said. "The first time I thought it was a joke; I wasn't ready for it."

Hellgate High School alum Zach Peevey remembers collecting signatures of his own as a kid, and still hasn't quite got used to being asked for his.

"It's weird," Peevey said. "It doesn't seem like the same thing to me."

It's an honor for me to be able to do that."

Redshirt freshman Nico Graham and freshmen Kole Swartz and Tyler Richtmyer are also Missoula products on the current Griz roster.

The Griz football program has a long history of excellence and the players are aware that there is an immense amount of pride that comes with wearing the maroon and silver.

"The most pride you can have I think, other than your family's name," Peevey said. "Putting the maroon on and wearing Montana across your chest; I don't think you represent pride much better than that."

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JUICE
From page 2

"Just keep studying, studying and studying. And have Jordy as a quarterback," Van said. "Having him out there helps a lot."

Johnson said Van's speed and mind for the game set him apart.

"His quickness is unlike anyone I've played with here," Johnson said. "He's probably our best play-maker, and you can see that on the field on Saturdays."

During Montana's 22-10 loss to North Dakota State last Saturday, Van gained just three yards on four carries. He added 29 receiving yards on four catches, but said he's already working on ironing out his mistakes.

"You got that loss out of the way," Van said. "So now you just keep building your blocks back up as you get better as a whole unit."

But Van's plans are bigger than the season ahead. He said the NFL is calling his name.

Any goal that big, at this level, will draw critics. The Grizzlies have had success in the pros recently though — 2013 grads Jordan Tripp and Brock Coyle are both currently on NFL rosters — so Van doesn't put doubters out of mind.

One online commenter said he had "0 percent" chance of making the NFL, and that he should just transfer if he doesn't

care about the rest of his career.

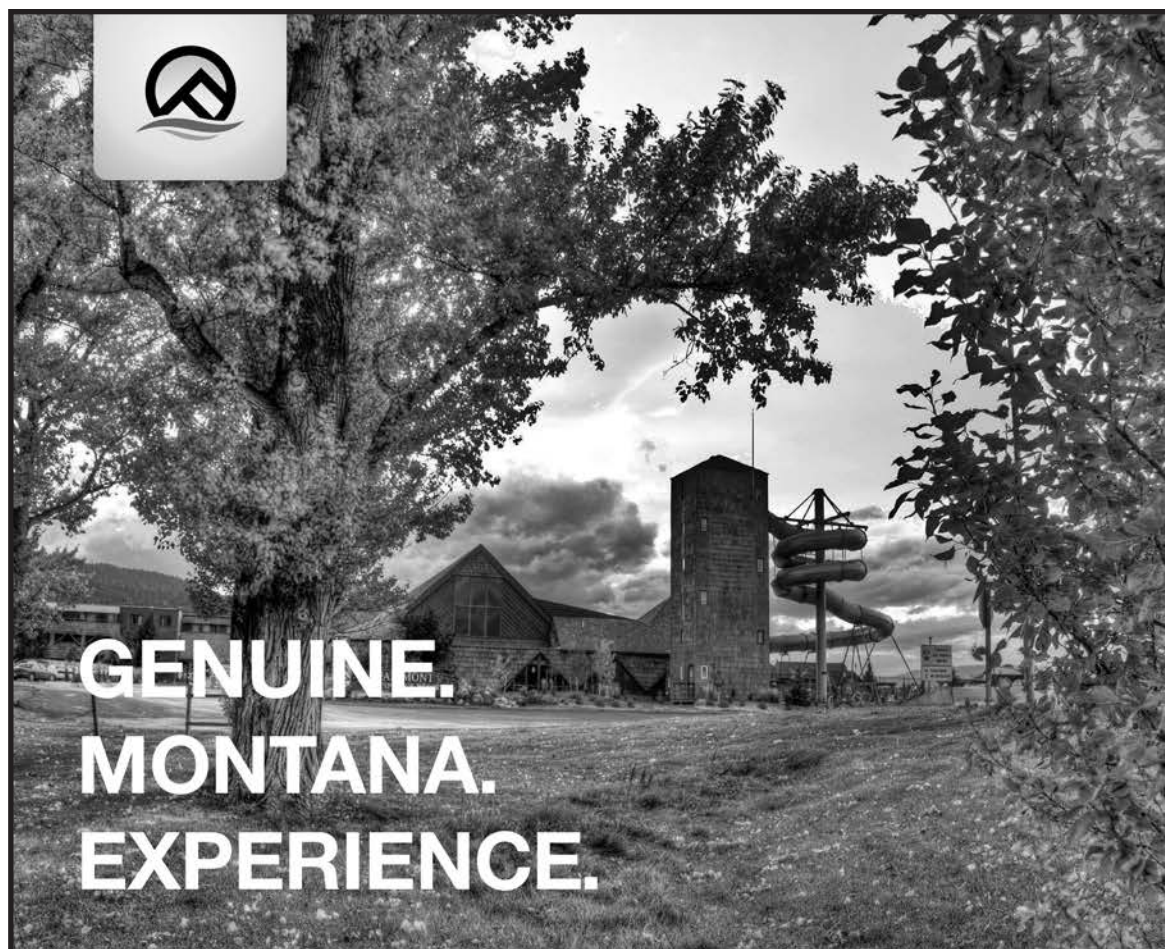
So Van made it the cover picture on his Twitter account.

"I like to read that, because it helps me not get relaxed and keep working," Van said.

After practice on Tuesday, as players and coaches retreated to the locker room tunnel, Van grabbed a ball and redshirt sophomore quarterback Brady Gustafson to practice his routes and footwork.

"Some days it gets hot out here and it gets tiring," Van said. "But there are some people that don't think I can make it to the NFL, and I need to prove them wrong."

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