9-10-1957

Football practice hindered by flu

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

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MISSOULA, Sept._______ Three-a-day practice sessions, to last at least eight days have been ordered by Coach Jerry Williams as a last ditch attempt to whip his flu-racked squad into some semblance of shape prior to the Grizzlies’ season opener with Utah University Sept. 21.

With more than 30 Silvertip hopefuls bedridden at one time or another since practice started Sept. 1, Williams faces an almost superhuman task.

"Right now things look pretty bleak," Williams declared. "We'll be going at full speed just at the time when we should start tapering off for the game."

Monday, with only about 20 of 41 players reporting out yet fit enough for heavy duty, Williams sent his weakened charges through punt formation, punt return, kickoff and kickoff return drills.

"Isn't this something," Williams remarked after practice. "Here we are in a week that should be devoted to heavy drills and we have to limit ourselves to the type of exercises we normally use for tapering off."

Five players still are in the infirmary but they are expected back the latter part of this week.

Not even the coaching staff has escaped the ravages of the virus. Lauri Neimi and Joe DeLuca, assistant coaches, both have been hit with a touch of the flu.

"I just hope the worst is over," Williams declared. "But we still have about 15 boys who haven't been sick yet. The way our luck has been running they'll probably catch it the day before the Utah game."

Williams has managed to squeeze in only one full-scale scrimmage in the first nine days of practice. That was Sept. 4. Since that time the situation steadily (more)
worsened and little or no contact work was scheduled.

Williams said he hoped the triple practice sessions would turn the trick and bring the squad into a "halfway decent condition" for the opener with the powerful Utes.

"We've only nine practice days left. You can bet your boots they're going to be tough ones," he said.

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