Jerry Williams pleased with Montana Grizzlies progress

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MISSOULA, Mont., Sept. After a weekend of head bashing and five days of three-a-day practices, the Montana Grizzlies were given a breather Monday by Coach Jerry Williams—the third of the daily practices was replaced by chalk talks.

Williams, who still is faced by problems, not the least of which is finding a quarterback to replace the ailing Earl Keeley, nevertheless is pleased with the progress shown by a team that two weeks ago was more familiar with sheets, beds and hypodermic needles than with cleats and pads.

All the influenza victims have recovered. The last one, wingback Jim Christianson, the fleetest of a bevy of swift backs, reported for action Saturday.

Keeley, a superb field general and a splendid passer, has been troubled with bursitis the past four days. Williams can go along with Roy Bray, the starting quarterback last year, or Phil Griffin, a sophomore from Chicago. Another sophomore, Bruce Olson, from Missoula, has been showing much promise in drills and, while he likely won’t start, could make the trip to Utah in place of Keeley.

Although Bray holds the edge in experience and in defensive excellence, Griffin actually is a better passer, from a technical standpoint, than any of the other quarterback candidates.

The heavy scrimmage sessions of the past few days have demonstrated one thing about the 1957 Grizzlies:

While the primary mode of attack will be through the air, the Silvertip line is big enough and tough enough and the runnings backs are fast enough to give Montana a fair running game.

Don Williamson, Butte, who has for two years been trying to shake an injury jinx, appears at last to have come into his own. The 187-pound senior has looked very good running from the wingback slot.

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Grizzlies 2-2-2-2

Williams appears set at fullback with Ervin (Tank) Rosera, Jerry Young, Sandy, Ore., and Bob Everson, Spokane, running in that order. At the crucial right half-back slot Matt Gorsich, a junior speedster from Highland, Ind., is almost sure to be a starter.

Gorsich has been running with power and abandon during the scrimmage sessions and could become an outstanding running back in the Skyline this year. Behind Gorsich it's a tossup between Jerry Connors, junior from Spokane, Joe Pepe, sophomore from Missoula, and Harley Remington, a Kalispell sophomore.

In the line senior ends Terry Hurley, Chicago, and Pete Rhinehart, Missoula; tackles Karl Benjamin, Seattle, Wash., and Dick Leenhouts, Yakima, Wash.; and right guard Stan Renning, Great Falls, have their positions more or less cinched.

A three-way battle is raging for the starting assignment at the pivot position between Mick O'Brien, Spokane, a semi-regular last year; Chuck Moore, Deer Lodge, also a semi-regular; and Bill Harden, a transfer from East Los Angeles Junior College.

At left guard, last year's starter Bill Hand, Selah, Wash., is being threatened by sophomore Ed Bilan, Calgary, Alberta. By game time Saturday, Bilan may well have copped the starting assignment.

The Grizzlies scrimmage Wednesday, the final contact work before the Utah game Saturday night.

A 33-man traveling squad leaves Missoula Thursday morning for Pocatello. A light workout is slated for Thursday evening on the Idaho State College field. Friday, the team arrives in Salt Lake City. Another light workout will be held Friday evening at the Utah Stadium.

Headquarters for the Montana team while in Salt Lake will be the Temple Square Hotel.

The Grizzlies depart Salt Lake Sunday morning and will arrive in Missoula at 9:30 p.m. Sunday.

Game time is 8 p.m. Saturday and the tilt will be aired over Montana radio

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Grizzlies 3-3-3-3

stations KOPR, Butte, KMON, Great Falls, KGHL, Billings, and KGVO, Missoula.

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