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FROM: J. D. Coleman
Sports Information
Montana University
Missoula, Montana

December 26, 1957

MISSOULA, Mont., Dec. ____ Montana's basketball team, sporting a so-so 4-3 record in non-conference cage wars, took a Christmas day breather, then returned to the practice hardwoods to prepare for what likely will be the Silvertips' sternest test.

The Grizzlies invade the Beehive state Jan. 4 for a tilt with the nationally-ranked Utah University Redskins. The Utes, sporting a flawless 7-0 mark as they head into the Far West Classic this weekend, are odds on favorites to cop the Skyline crown this season and the Redskins' performances in the seven non-conference games indicate that the prognosticators have not been far off base.

On the other hand, Montana, rated a possible league dark horse, has had trouble getting its offense working until the late stages of each game.

Against the State College Bobcats Monday night, the Grizzlies trailed by a five-to-eight-point spread for most of the evening, until four consecutive field goals gave the Silvertips a two point bulge. Another four consecutive shots from the field put the Grizzlies in the lead to stay.

The Bobcat tilt, which Montana eventually won 75-66, did, however, prove valuable to the Grizzly cagers inasmuch as they sharpened their offense against a tight zone and their defense against the fast break.

Most of the Bobcat points came on jump shots by Larry Chanay and Al Harris, with only a few markers being counted on the fast break.

With the rampaging Utes, Montana will find a team that does everything the Bobcats did, only better.

The Grizzlies controlled the backboards against the State College, with a 48-36 bulge in the rebounding department--a contributing factor in the final analysis.

(more)

Senior center Russ Sheriff leads the team in the rebounding column with 82 retrieves. Junior forward Darroll Dunham is second with 73.

Junior forward Jim Powell continues to set the scoring pace for Montana with 100 points--a 14.3 game average. Dunham is second with 91 points and leads the club in field goal percentage with a healthy .429 percentage.

The Grizzlies' 9-point bulge over the State College enabled the club to overcome a season-long deficit in the total points column. The Silvertips now have hit 458 points in seven games while their opponents have counted 454 points.

Senior guard Hal Erickson, last year's top defensive player, this season is proving a pleasant surprise to Coach Frosty Cox with his offensive punch. In just seven games Erickson has canned 79 points--more than half of his 22-game output last season.

Sophomore guard Dan Balko continues to set the pace as the inspirational floor leader of the team. It was Balko's second-half scoring that touched off the Grizzly surge against the Bobcats Monday night.

Powell still holds the individual single-game high with 19 points in two encounters--Washington State on Dec. 3 and Montana State on Dec. 23.

The emphasis on scoring, however, has been on a team basis, with four players averaging in the double-figures and the fifth, Sheriff, not far behind.

(more)

MONTANA UNIVERSITY CUMULATIVE BASKETBALL STATISTICS.

Including game of Dec. 23, 1957

Won 4, lost 3

Player	GMS	FGA	FGM	%	FTA	FTM	%	REBDS	AVG.	PF	PTS.	AVG.
Powell	7	97	34	.351	52	32	.615	52	7.4	13	100	14.3
Dunham	7	70	30	.429	55	31	.564	73	10.4	19	91	13.0
Erickson	7	91	30	.330	22	19	.864	40	5.7	20	79	11.3
Balko	7	79	29	.367	25	18	.720	26	3.7	22	76	10.9
Sheriff	7	51	15	.288	26	20	.769	82	11.7	15	50	7.1
Waters	6	45	12	.267	8	6	.750	10	1.7	7	30	5.0
Suttles	7	20	10	.500	12	4	.333	13	1.9	13	24	3.4
Shelby	5	4	4	--	1	0	--	4	--	6	8	1.2
Johnston	1	0	0	--	0	0	--	1	--	0	0	--
Others	2	4	0	--	0	0	--	0	--	2	0	--
Team...								69	9.9			
Own Totals	7	461	164	.356	181	130	.720	370	52.9	117	458	65.4
Opp. Totals	7	505	177	.350	165	100	.606	376	53.7	145	454	64.9

SEASON RECORD

<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Opp. Score</u>	<u>Mont. Score</u>
Idaho U.	64	56
Washington State	62	78
Colorado U.	77	60
Idaho U.	60	64
Washington State	67	59
Washington State	58	68
Montana State	66	75