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Grizzly sports column

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MISSOULA--Seven lettermen and several top sophomores will greet Montana basketball coach Forrest (Frosty) Cox a week from today, and the veteran Grizzly mentor says his squad has the makings of a "fair" team.

"At least two problems must be solved before we move out of the 'fair' category," Cox says. "First of all, we will not be a tall team this season. We also must find a capable performer at one forward post."

Lettermen who probably will be starters include All-Skyline guard Dan Balko, guard Vince Ignatowicz, forward Terry Screnar and center Duane Ruegsegger. Several other candidates--lettermen Kay Roberts, sophomore Dan Sullivan, and letterman John Lands--will attempt to fill the gap at the other forward spot.

Other top personnel include veteran guard Paul Miller and sophomores Ron Quilling, Butch Hendricks, Gary Wojtowick, Bob O'Billovich, and Jim Harris. Three of the cagers--Lands, O'Billovich and Harris--will not report until the football season is over.

Tallest men on the team are Ruegsegger and Sullivan, both 6-6. If both break the starting lineup, the Grizzlies will not be a small team, but they still will probably be at a height disadvantage compared to other Skyline teams.

The Grizzlies open their season Dec. 1, entertaining Idaho's tough Vandals at Missoula. Pre-Skyline games match the Silvertips against Washington State, South Dakota, Oregon State and Nebraska. The Skyline season will open Jan. 4, when Montana travels to Salt Lake City to take on Utah, the pre-season favorite to cop the conference title.

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The duck season hadn't even opened in Utah last Saturday, but bullet Bob O'Billovich, the individual star of Montana's 12-0 victory over Brigham Young, managed to get off a reasonable facsimile of a wounded mallard that led to the first Grizzly touchdown. On a fourth and six situation, the cool Butte sophomore calmly fired a blooper to halfback Jim Grasky. Jet Jim gathered in the pigskin, eluded one BYU defender, and rushed into the end zone. O'Billovich, explaining the wounded duck pass, said, "I had plenty of time and Grasky was all by himself. So I just threw it soft and easy."

Grizzly guard John Matte, 164 pounds of football player, had a few problems Saturday night. The tough Missoula junior was on the receiving end of double-team blocking put on by Cougars John Kapele and Lonnie Dennis. Kapele weighs in at 243 and Dennis is a solid 220 pounds. Matte did a surprisingly good job of plugging up the holes against the Brigs.

Montana's third-string tackle, Dave Kosiur, was representative of improved play by Grizzly relievers. Kosiur came into the game in the second half and did a good job. One important tackle he contributed was throwing a Cougar runner for a three-yard loss on Montana's 22-yard-line, which led to a fourth down pass attempt that failed.

Montana University students had their first big celebration in two years. After the score was announced at an all-school dance, Montana freshmen dragged the victory bell out of storage and clanged the clapper until nearly 3 a.m. One junior coed commented it was only the second time she had ever heard the bell tolled. A good-sized male contingent met the first load of Grizzlies at the Missoula airport at 4:15 a.m. (more)
SOPHOMORES TO WATCH IN COMING SEASONS

Quarterback BOB O'BILLOVICH, 5'-10', 172, Butte, Mont.

Bullet Bob, a small but tough yearling, has ranked among the best two passers in the Skyline since the first week of the season. Hit 18 of 36 aerials in his first four games for 228 yards and one touchdown. Best Montana passer in the past three seasons, Bobby O also shines on defense. The Grizzly leads the team in pass interceptions and also is among the leaders in punt returns.

Halfback JIM GRASKY, 6-0, 192, Miles City, Mont.

Best rusher on the team with an average of nearly eight yards per carry in the first four Grizzly contests, Jet Jim is a graduate of Montana six-man football. He prepped for Class C Sacred Heart high school in Miles City, and was a Montana sprint champion in 1957. Has blazing speed and good size. Also is a good pass receiver and plays a tough defensive game.

Guard LARRY BEDDES, 6-0, 200, Billings, Mont.

A dark horse candidate who won a starting job after fine play in Montana's 12-0 upset over Brigham Young, Beddes now appears headed for definite stardom. Shines on defense, but also is developing into a very capable blocker. Intercepted a pass in the Montana-Denver tilt and rambled 30 yards before being knocked down.

Center GARY SCHWERTFEGER, 6-2, 205, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Another tough yearling who pushed a good center, Jim Johnson, out of a starting job midway in the season. Has the brains and speed to develop into an outstanding outside linebacker. Also blocks very well. Intercepted an errant Denver aerial 10 days ago and rambled 30 yards for a Montana touchdown.

Punter PAUL GUSTAFSON, 5'-11', 184, Vancouver, B.C.

Former Canadian soccer star who can kick the ball a country mile. Through his first four contests Gustafson averaged 45.3 yards per boot on 14 punts. Best effort was a 67-yard quick kick against Denver.