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Grizzly Sports Column; Montana Statistics; The Season to Date (Won 2, Lost 4)

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MISSOULA--Not many Montana fans know it, but one of MSU's biggest boosters is a 76-year-old Irishman who hasn't "seen" an athletic contest in many years. John L. Sullivan--known as "Uncle John" to his friends in Missoula--has been blind for nearly 60 years. He lost his eyesight in a mine accident in Marysville when he was 17, but that hasn't deterred him from avidly following Grizzly basketball fortunes.

"John is one of the sharpest fans I've ever met," says basketball coach Frosty Cox. "He knows the game inside and out, and he can visualize every move the players make by simply following the game on the radio."

Uncle John had an opportunity to meet the Grizzly cagers at a get-together at Cox's home one night recently. He immediately struck up a conversation with forward Terry Screnar of East Helena. Sullivan is a good friend of Terry's father, John Screnar, who was a top baseball performer in the old Montana League a number of years ago. Uncle John also met Grizzly sophomore Dan Sullivan, who has an uncle in Helena who also is named John L. Sullivan. The two John L.'s are old friends.

John currently spends his winters in Missoula with his nephew, MSU Law School Dean Robert Sullivan, and family. But every summer he moves back to Marysville, the historic old gold camp located about 15 miles west of Helena. "It's still a good town, and I love it," Uncle John says.

But he likes Missoula equally as well. "I get a chance to listen to the Grizzly games, and I'd like to add that Frosty Cox is a real fine coach," he concludes.

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