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Grizzly Sports Column

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MISSOULA--How much is the home court worth in basketball? Absolutely nothing, says Montana coach Frosty Cox.

"I don't mean that the home team doesn't have an advantage. But I do feel that a good team can, and should, win with regularity on the road," the Grizzly mentor comments. The coach puts it another way: "If your team is better than the opposition, it should make no difference where the game is played."

Cox feels that the home court advantage is largely psychological. "We try to teach our kids that playing on the road does involve a hostile crowd and 'home' refereeing. But this is something that should be expected, and it should not be used as an excuse for a poor performance."

"Take this current season as an example," Cox goes on. "So far we just haven't been tough enough to win any road games. But this should be blamed on our own mistakes, not any particular advantage that the home teams have had. If we had played good ball in some of these contests, we would have won."

All of which points to the fact that the Grizzlies are in the midst of their first long Skyline trip this week. The Silvertips meet a strong Denver team tonight in the mile-high city, then journey to Albuquerque for a Saturday night encounter with New Mexico. In the past two seasons, Montana has lost twice at Denver, but has beaten the Lobos twice in Albuquerque.

"We can win both games if we play strong basketball. But if we start making mistakes, like we did in the second half last week at Utah, it could be an awfully long trip," Cox concludes.