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Montana sports update

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MISSOULA, MONTANA---Pleasantly surprised by a Grizzly team that scored its most decisive opening-game victory in the past four seasons, Montana cage mentor Frosty Cox will send his charges against Montana State this Friday and Saturday in Missoula. Both tilts are scheduled for 8 P.M. in the MSU fieldhouse, with near-capacity crowds predicted.

"With the exception of some bad passing, the Grizzlies did a real fine job," was Cox's appraisal of Montana's 67-55 win over Idaho last Saturday in Moscow. But, like most coaches, the mentor quickly pointed out that his men can't afford to let down.

"In some respects, we had it too easy last weekend. If the men decide that all their problems are solved on the basis of one game, we could be in for a rude awakening from the Bobcats."

Cox allowed that defensive play and rebounding--Montana's sore spot all of last season--was greatly improved. Montana outrebounded the Vandals on both boards, and the Silvertips held Idaho to only six field goals in the final half of play. And hustle also was improved, with a Grizzly full-court press contributing to Idaho's woes.

Offensively, the Silvertips hit 41.5 percent of their field shots and sank 23 of 30 free throws. Grizzly guard Bob O'Billovich led in scoring with 15, while forwards Dan Sullivan and Duane Ruegsegger chipped in 14 and 13. Sullivan, who had a hot-and-cold sophomore season last year, was greatly improved.

Among the newer men, sophomore center Steve Lowry did an outstanding job in rebounding, although the 6-7 pivot man seemed hesitant in the scoring department. Lowry took only two shots in the game, connecting on one and adding six free throws. Guard Ray Lucien was a big factor when O'Billovich fouled out late in the game, while junior guard Butch Hendricks did a fine job early in the contest.