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Basketball team establish themselves as one of the nation's top defensive teams; Grizzlies win against Utah State

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FROM: JOHN BENNITT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MISSOULA--Basketball for 1961 is all but finished and Montana's Grizzlies have firmly established themselves as one of the nation's top twenty defensive teams. In 17 contests this season the Grizzlies have allowed their foes an average of 60 points per game.

This record alone is good enough to allow the Grizzlies and coach Frosty Cox some chest swelling. Taking their record one step further, the Grizzlies have out-scored their opponents by seven points in compiling an 11-6 record.

Some say that Montana's style of basketball borders on the old fashioned game where a team hitting the buckets for 50 or more points in a night could rest assured of victory and some new scoring records.

Others think it's a pleasant relief from the "race horse" variety where shooting is all important and defense assumes a role of minor if any significance.

In any event coach Cox's brand of basketball has kept Montana a power in the Skyline Conference and when the nets are stilled this spring Grizzly fans may find themselves in crowded company.

Every week the National Collegiate Athletic Bureau releases a pair of yellow sheets with team and individual leaders in all phases of basketball. According to these sheets, which serve yeoman duty to sports writers, there is a split between east and west and the beginning of a trend in basketball philosophy.

Among the nation's top twenty offensive clubs but two are from the West. Most notable among the pair is Utah, a member of the Skyline Conference and a regular foe of the Grizzlies in all sports.

(more)

stop Utah's Billy McGill nor was Montana's 6-7 center particularly effective against Utah's tough defense. Against CSU Lowry hit 27 points but could find the nets for only 13 against the Redskins while allowing McGill 26.

One of the few bright spots for Montana in the Utah game was the floorplay of guard Ray Lucien who may advance to a regular starting spot for the New Mexico and Denver affairs. Other starters for Montana probably will include Lowry at center, Kay Roberts and Dan Sullivan at forwards and Bob O'Billovich at the other guard post.

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MISSOULA--Big things may be just around the corner for coach Bud Wallace's swimming team if the Grizzlies' performance against Utah State is any indication.

The Grizzlies floated to an easy victory over the USU tankers in a contest here last week that was never in doubt from the first splash. In all but drowning the Aggies Montana smashed four team and pool records and bettered three conference marks.

The Grizzly medley relay team which has dominated Skyline competition in recent years broke its own record in the 400 yard race by five seconds. The freestyle team did the same thing in their 440 yard relay. Breastroker Wayne Veeneman and freestyler Steve Cropper bettered all conference records in the 200 yard breaststroke event and the 100 yard freestyle.

"If we had been pushed," Wallace said, "we probably would have broken every conference record in the book."

Wallace maintains that the winning team in the Skyline meet March 2, 3 and 4 at Utah, will have to smash all current marks and approach or better some national records. He added that he thinks this is the year Montana can do it.

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