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Grizzly sports column

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MISSOULA--One thing about this basketball season, it is far better than last year's campaign. By this time last season Montana had won but a single Conference game. This year they have won four and are looking for more against New Mexico and Denver this weekend.

Why the improvement?

The big reason is Montana's hustle. Coach Frosty Cox demands, and gets, more from his men than any other Skyline coach. The Grizzly sparkplug and game captain, little Bob O'Billovich, doesn't quit running from the time he gets onto the court until he turns on the shower, whether it's a practice session or a game.

Another reason is the play of senior reserves Paul Miller and Kay Roberts. Both have developed into first line players this season and have the poise and ability demanded in Skyline play.

Still another reason is the defensive play of the Grizzlies. Coach Cox believes basketball has two sides, an offense and a defense. His charges are adaptable too, using man-to-man when they must and switching to a zone defense that stops a fast break cold.

There are more reasons but let's conclude with Steve Lowry. Lowry is a sophomore but seldom has a first year man done what he has. Lowry is averaging better than 16 points per game and pulling down rebounds with the best in the nation.

Another Grizzly team that has done well so far this season is the swimming club. Wayne Veeneman, an Idaho product and Ray Ellis, a freshman from Deer Lodge, are both close to conference records and the Grizzly tank squad just may do some rewriting of the record books this year.

So far they have broken Skyline marks in the 440 yard medley relay and the 200 yard butterfly in practice runs. With a few meets under their belt, the Grizzly tank team may be the first Montana entry in the Skyline to win a championship.