

MONTANA STATE AT MONTANA • KICKOFF: NOON SATURDAY • TV: MTN • THURSDAY, NOV. 16, 2023

GRIZZLY GAME DAY

Missoulian

SENIOR SAFETY TO CARRY DETERMINATION INTO TEACHING, COACHING

THE EDUCATION OF DAVID KOPPANG

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

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Koppang living the dream

Missoula native, son of former Griz shows perseverance at UM

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David Koppang comes from a long line of people involved with academics and athletics.

The Missoula native will be following suit, chasing those career fields once his playing time on the football field ends with the Montana Grizzlies this season. He plans to get into teaching and coaching with thoughts of one day possibly becoming an athletic director.

Koppang hasn't had the most storied college career, partly due to injuries and a lack of playing time as a reserve safety who is mainly a special teams contributor. He has lived his motto of never quitting, and those lessons will serve him well in his profession working with children as a mentor.

"I think having an impact in shaping these kids' future for the better is awesome," he said ahead of Montana's game against Montana State at noon Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. "You have the power to shape the future generations is how I see it. That's awesome. Having such a big responsibility like that, I think it's fun."

Koppang is looking to teach at the elementary school level, hopefully third through fifth grade. He did his student teaching with a fifth-grade class at Rattlesnake Elementary last school year.

He worked with Harmony Johnson, who is in her fifth year teaching and her fourth year at the school. He first observed her, then did small group teaching and finally taught the entire class.

A key takeaway was learning to



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana's David Koppang (9) takes the field during the Grizzlies' home game against Sacramento State on Nov. 4 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

teach different types of students, whether they were hands-on, visual, auditory or reading learners. Being in the classroom reinforced it was the career he wanted.

"I'd say that David's biggest strength is how personable he is," Johnson said. "As a new teacher, he just understood the importance of having the connections and relationships with students and knows that goes super far with getting them to be excited to work with you and building that rapport with them."

"I also felt that way with me. He really cares about the people that he works with and that he's around and he makes them feel appreciated. The students just loved getting to work with him because he made them feel special and would always celebrate

their successes. If they need extra support, he was always there to offer that to them."

Koppang grew up seeing firsthand the importance of school through his family. His interest was piqued by seeing his mother, Hallie, teach physical education in town. She's now the assistant principal at Whitefish High School.

His cousin, Matt Upham, is a math teacher at Kalispell Glacier High School and was the head coach of the Kalispell Flathead football team for two seasons. His uncle, Matt Krahe, is a science teacher at Great Falls High School and had served as the head coach of the Great Falls High football team for six seasons.

Another uncle, Greg Upham, was a superintendent in Billings while another uncle, Kirk

Dunckel, had been an assistant principal at Lake City High School in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. His aunt, Keri Upham, was a math teacher at Helena High School. Another aunt, Stacey Krahe, taught math at East Middle School in Great Falls.

Like them, he'll look to make an impact on the next generation.

"I think commitment is definitely a big aspect you can teach and you can instill into kids and young teens," he said. "I think it's important that kids understand when you commit to something, it's important that you stay on it and you stay on track, you continue with it."

"It's an oath type thing. It's a promise. You're committing to stay, committing to whatever you want to do. You stay on track and you finish it until it's done."

David's determination

Injuries haven't deterred Koppang. He broke his foot during his first spring with the Griz. It was a re-aggravation of a high school injury.

He re-broke his foot in his second spring at UM and needed surgery. He then broke his thumb during his third spring and was still able to play but had to wear a club on his hand.

"I see quitting as turning your back on something when you had the ability to finish it," he said. "I think it's important that people see me as someone who is committed and once he is committed to something, he finishes it."

"At the same time, I'd like people to see that I'm a hard-working guy. I'd hope they see me as that. I try to be a hard-working guy. I think that's one of the biggest aspects. If you work hard, you don't quit, good things will happen to you and the others around you."

A lack of playing time on defense didn't defeat Koppang either. He redshirted in 2018, played twice in 2019 with no stats, had his 2020 season taken away by the pandemic and suited up two times in spring 2021, totaling three tackles and intercepting a pass against Central Washington.

His playing time has been almost exclusively on special teams and increased to 11 games in fall 2021 as he collected three tackles and half a tackle for loss. His participation rose again to 12 games in 2022 as he garnered four tackles.

He should again reach 11 games played this week in the Brawl of the Wild and then tie his personal best in the first playoff game with a chance to exceed it on a post-season run. He has yet to register any statistics this season.

"I'm not a star athlete out there," Koppang acknowledged. "I don't have some of the attributes that some of my teammates have. That's fine. I'm totally OK

See KOPPANG, PAGE 10

Detrick giving Griz D-line depth

Havre native collects first career sack after returning from injury

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Kellen Detrick got surrounded by teammates as a five-pack of Montana natives celebrated a key play that was also a personal milestone for the sophomore nose tackle.

The Havre native just recorded his first college sack after overcoming the first major injury of his athletic career. He followed up the next play with his first career quarterback hurry to force an incomplete pass on fourth down on Oct. 28 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

Detrick, a 6-foot-3 and 244-pound defensive tackle, finished with a career-high four tackles that game against Northern Colorado. He had missed two games earlier in the season but returned and has played the past seven contests, backing up All-American Alex Gubner.

Detrick has stepped up as the backup while the Griz have dealt with other injuries at that position. He had just two tackles while playing in three games in 2022 as a redshirt freshman. He had redshirted in 2021 but fractured his tibia and tore tendons in his knee during practice.

He had been a 3-star recruit coming out of high school in the 2021 recruiting class. He chose Montana over offers from Big Sky teams Montana State, Northern Arizona and Northern Colorado. He also passed on interest from FBS programs Washington State and Nevada.

Detrick sat down with 406mtsports to talk about his first extended playing time prior to Montana's game against Montana State at noon Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula. This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Q: How has the experience been living in Missoula? How has it compared to Havre?

A: It's a lot different having to adapt to the traffic and the different kind of roadways. Some things that are similar is I feel the community here is very similar to Havre. It's all very close-knit. Everybody



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana defensive lineman Kellen Detrick (47) celebrates after making a stop during the Big Sky Conference football game between Montana and Northern Colorado on Oct. 28 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

loves the local sports teams. Everybody does that here and everybody does that back in Havre.

Q: I remember you got injured your redshirt year, so what kept you believing that you could return and playing time would come?

A: That was tough to deal with my first-ever major injury happening in my first year of college football. But I had a lot of teammates that helped me out, a lot of coaches that helped me, and my dad and a lot of people from back home that pushed me through that and helped me get out of that hole that I was in and helped me get healthy.

Q: Back in action now, have you had any welcome-to-college moments going up against older players?

A: The first game this year against Butler, it was the first time I've actually played

early on in the first quarter. Just the speed and how fast the offensive linemen were and how heavy they were and how fast that they were off the ball, it's incredible. It takes a lot to get used to.

Q: You've had some veterans ahead of you over the years, so who were the guys who took you under their wing in your development?

A: Alex Gubner, huge contributor to helping me. I've still got a long ways to go. He's helped me a lot. Eli Alford helped me a lot last year. Kale Edwards. Just great guys. Pretty much everybody in the D-line room is just a great person and a great teammate. I'm blessed to be a part of them. They've helped me tremendously, so I can't thank them enough.

Q: As you've gotten moved from defensive end to defensive tackle, what

does it take to play tackle on this defensive line?

A: It took some getting used to because I struggle with my pad level sometimes. It takes a lot of quickness off the ball, got to stay low. I'm still trying to get better at it. Alex Gubner and the rest of the guys on the D-line are helping me. You look at Gubner and he has a huge impact on our success. He does a great job of doing that. When I go in there and try to give him a breath for a couple plays, I just try to help out and contribute as well.

Q: I recall you got injured the first game when you ran that fake punt, but what do you remember about that play and how did it feel to pick up the first down running the ball?

AROUND THE BIG SKY

Idaho's loss adds stakes to Brawl

UM, MSU to play for outright Big Sky title after Weber beat UI

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The Montana State football team entered each of the last two Brawls of the Wild with a chance to earn the Big Sky Conference title. But there were some caveats.

MSU needed a win over Montana plus a Sacramento State loss to UC Davis in the final week of the regular season to become outright Big Sky champions in both 2021 and 2022. The Bobcats could've also shared the conference crown with Sac State if both teams won or — in the least celebratory championship scenario imaginable — if both teams lost their rivalry games.

The Hornets won it outright in 2021, and both teams shared it last year.

A Big Sky title is on the line for MSU again this week, and a co-championship is off the table. Whoever carries the Great Divide trophy around Washington-Grizzly Stadium on Saturday will be the only Big Sky team to finish league play with a 7-1 record.

The Cats and Griz have Weber State to thank for the extra stakes. The unranked Wildcats upset Idaho 31-29 on their Senior Day this past Saturday in Ogden, Utah. That eliminated the Vandals, who fell to 5-2 in Big Sky play, from conference championship contention.

"We're not there yet," Idaho head coach Jason Eck said after the game. "We've got to get better to be a conference championship team, in all three phases, and coaching is a big part of that. We've got to coach better."

Idaho built a 10-0 lead over a Weber team led by a true freshman quarterback, Richie Munoz, starting his fourth straight game in place of benched Kylan Weisser. A touchdown run from Kris Jackson cut the deficit to 10-7, and another score from the senior made it 14-13 in Weber's favor.

The Vandals out-gained the Wildcats 418 to 291 in total yards but lost the turn-



WEBER STATE ATHLETICS

Weber State's Richie Munoz throws a pass as Idaho's Jahkari Larmond pressures on Saturday at Stewart Stadium in Ogden, Utah.

Week 11 results, schedule, standings

WEEK 11 BIG SKY SCORES:

Montana 34, Portland State 10
Montana State 57, Eastern Washington 14
Northern Arizona 28, Northern Colorado 7
Sacramento State 41, Cal Poly 30
UC Davis 21, Idaho State 14
Weber State 31, Idaho 29

WEEK 12 BIG SKY SCHEDULE:

Montana State at Montana, noon MT
Portland State at Northern Colorado, 1 p.m.
Sacramento State at UC Davis, 1 p.m.
Northern Arizona at Eastern Washington, 2 p.m.
Idaho State at Idaho, 5 p.m.
Weber State at Cal Poly, 6 p.m.

over battle. One of Idaho's two lost fumbles led to a TD that put Weber up 21-13 in the third quarter.

Idaho tied it up at 21-21 but was forced to punt on its following drive, and Haze Hadley returned the punt 71 yards to the

STANDINGS (OVERALL, CONFERENCE):

T1. Montana	9-1, 6-1
T1. Montana State	8-2, 6-1
3. Idaho	7-3, 5-2
T4. Sacramento State	7-3, 4-3
T4. UC Davis	6-4, 4-3
T4. Northern Arizona	4-6, 4-3
T7. Weber State	5-5, 3-4
T7. Eastern Washington	4-6, 3-4
T7. Portland State	4-6, 3-4
T7. Idaho State	3-7, 3-4
11. Cal Poly	3-7, 1-6
12. Northern Colorado	0-10, 0-7

Idaho 12-yard line. Entering Saturday, the Vandals led the FCS with zero punt return yards allowed on the season.

Hadley's return led to a go-ahead TD in the final minute of the third quarter.

"I thought we had the momentum at

that time," Eck said. "That really shifted the momentum to them."

A Weber defense that played well all game looked especially good in the fourth quarter, holding Idaho scoreless until a last gasp TD with 12 seconds left. The Wildcats went up 31-21 with 2 minutes, 24 seconds remaining, about a minute after Idaho threw an incomplete pass on fourth-and-10 from its own 15.

"Playing complementary with our defense is huge, putting them in good situations to be aggressive, and those guys are coming through and getting the ball," Weber head coach Mickey Mental said after the game, via the (Ogden) Standard-Examiner. "When you don't turn the ball over, you give yourself a chance to win each and every game, especially with the defense and our special teams here."

Weber ran for 139 yards and held Idaho to 72. Vandals running back Anthony Woods, who led the Big Sky in rushing yards going into the game, was absent due to injury.

Idaho will have to wait at least one more year to earn its first Big Sky title since 1992 (the Vandals spent 1996-2017 in the FBS).

"We had two two-point losses in conference, so we're close," Eck said in his press conference on Monday. "But right now, our championship behavior is not quite championship enough to be a conference champion. Credit to Montana and Montana State."

The Vandals more or less secured a playoff spot two Saturdays ago. Their loss at Weber squashed their chances to receive the No. 2 or 3 seed in the FCS playoffs, but they might still be seeded if they beat Idaho State this Saturday.

Last month, Idaho bounced back from a 23-21 loss to Montana with a 24-21 win over Montana State, which nearly toppled top-ranked South Dakota State, so the Vandals have reasons to feel optimistic about a deep playoff run.

"We still have a ton to play for," Eck said.

UC Davis wins 'Hawkins Bowl'

Cody Hawkins didn't have much to say to his father, Dan Hawkins, after Saturday's game in Pocatello, Idaho. Dan's UC Davis Aggies had just defeated Cody's

MONTANA ROSTER

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Hgt.	Wt.	Hometown
0	Kale Edwards	R-Jr.	DE	6-5	240	Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
2	Drew Deck	R-So.	WR	5-9	165	Kalispell, Mont.
2	Ronald Jackson	R-So.	CB	6-1	195	Detroit, Mich.
3	TraJon Cotton	R-Sr.	S	6-1	204	Sacramento, Calif.
3	Nick Williams	R-So.	WR	6-5	200	Oceanside, Calif.
4	Nash Fouch	R-Sr.	S	6-2	205	Woodinville, Wash.
4	Ryan Simpson	R-Jr.	WR	6-6	215	Bozeman, Mont.
5	Junior Bergen	Jr.	WR	5-11	184	Billings, Mont.
5	Garrett Graves	R-Sr.	S	6-3	207	Eureka, Mont.
6	Lamar Campbell	R-So.	CB	6-1	190	Lacy, Wash.
6	Keelan White	R-Jr.	WR	6-2	186	North Vancouver, B.C.
7	Sam Vidlak	R-So.	QB	6-1	195	Applegate, Ore.
7	Jelani Warren	R-Jr.	CB	6-0	199	Oakland, Calif.
8	Keali'i Ah Yat	Fr.	QB	6-1	181	Kaneohe, Hawaii
8	Corbin Walker	Sr.	CB	5-11	183	Renton, Wash.
9	David Koppang	R-Sr.	S	6-0	208	Missoula, Mont.
9	Sawyer Racanelli	R-Jr.	WR	6-3	210	Brush Prairie, Wash.
10	Eli Gillman	R-Fr.	RB	6-0	204	Dassel, Minn.
10	TJ Rausch	R-So.	S	6-3	196	Missoula, Mont.
11	Cole Grossman	R-Jr.	TE	6-4	225	Vancouver, Wash.
11	Gabe Longin	R-So.	S	5-11	190	Great Falls, Mont.
12	Elijah Brady	Fr.	QB	6-1	175	Seattle, Wash.
12	Kris Brown	R-Jr.	CB	6-4	220	Bozeman, Mont.
13	Xavier Harris	Jr.	RB	5-10	180	Oxnard, Calif.
13	Ryder Meyer	R-Jr.	S	5-9	178	Fairfield, Mont.
14	Aaron Fontes	Jr.	WR	6-1	172	Oxnard, Calif.
14	Robert Whitehead	Sr.	CB	6-1	183	El Cajon, Calif.
16	Tanner Barbour	Fr.	S	6-2	171	Pullman, Wash.
16	Kaden Huot	R-Fr.	QB	6-4	208	Helena, Mont.
17	Kade Boyd	Fr.	S	6-0	188	Billings, Mont.
17	Clifton McDowell	Sr.	QB	6-4	220	Spring, Texas
18	Sam Alford	R-Fr.	WR	6-3	193	Park City, Utah
18	Chase McGurran	R-Fr.	S	6-0	179	Helena, Mont.
19	Padraig Lang	R-So.	S	6-1	181	Bozeman, Mont.
19	Gage Sliter	Fr.	QB	6-1	187	Kalispell, Mont.
21	Iverson Young	Fr.	RB	5-10	196	Waxahachie, Texas
23	Beau Dantic	R-Fr.	RB	5-9	178	Laurel, Mont.
24	Cameron Gurnsey	Fr.	WR	6-0	188	Butte, Mont.
25	Jaxon Lee	Jr.	S	6-1	200	Missoula, Mont.
26	Nick Ostmo	Sr.	RB	6-0	218	Portland, Ore.
27	Jordan Dever	Fr.	WR	6-0	164	Spokane, Wash.
27	Trevin Gradney	R-Jr.	CB	6-0	180	Billings, Mont.
28	Travis Benham	R-Sr.	P	6-3	210	Pacific, Calif.
28	Isiah Childs	Jr.	RB	6-1	213	Manhattan, Kan.
29	Tanner Huff	R-So.	CB	6-0	196	Butte, Mont.
30	Colter Janacaro	R-So.	RB	5-11	214	Missoula, Mont.
31	Geno Leonard	R-So.	LB	5-11	224	Missoula, Mont.
32	Tyson Rostad	R-Fr.	S	6-1	197	Hamilton, Mont.
33	Carson Rostad	Jr.	LB	6-3	221	Hamilton, Mont.
34	Asher Croy	R-So.	LB	6-0	219	Bozeman, Mont.
35	Braxton Hill	Sr.	LB	6-2	226	Anaconda, Mont.
37	Levi Janacaro	R-Sr.	LB	6-0	237	Missoula, Mont.
38	Marcus Evans	R-Fr.	LB	6-0	217	Helena, Mont.
39	Jace Kluczewich	R-So.	CB	5-10	165	Frenchtown, Mont.
40	Cooper Barnum	Jr.	LB	6-2	216	Vancouver, Wash.
41	Brayton Boyer	Fr.	K	5-11	170	Madison, N.J.
42	Riley Wilson	R-So.	LB	6-2	210	Prosper, Texas
43	Grayson Pibal	R-So.	LS	6-3	207	Clackamas, Ore.
44	Ryan Tirrell	R-Jr.	LB	6-2	225	Missoula, Mont.
45	Vincent Genatone	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	213	North Platte, Neb.
46	Wyatt Wegener	R-So.	DL	6-3	228	Algona, Iowa
47	Kellen Detrick	R-So.	DL	6-3	245	Havre, Mont.
48	Hayden Harris	R-Jr.	DE	6-5	251	Mill Creek, Wash.
49	Cooper Walton	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	216	Johnstown, Colo.
50	Erich Osteen	R-Jr.	LB	6-2	220	Simi Valley, Calif.
51	Austin Buehler	Fr.	OL	6-5	243	Helena, Mont.
52	Cy Stevenson	Fr.	LB	6-2	201	Libby, Mont.
53	Braunson Henriksen	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	236	Polson, Mont.
54	Tyler Flink	R-Sr.	LB	5-11	225	Missoula, Mont.
55	Chris Walker	R-Sr.	OT	6-6	300	Lincoln, Neb.
56	Garrett Hustedt	R-Jr.	DE	6-2	245	Omaha, Neb.
57	AJ Forbes	R-Sr.	OL	6-2	302	Bellevue, Neb.
58	Clay Oven	Fr.	DE	6-3	194	Billings, Mont.
59	Hayden Opitz	Fr.	LB	6-2	214	Helena, Mont.
60	Dillon Botner	R-Jr.	OL	6-6	285	Whitefish, Mont.
61	Hunter Mayginnis	R-Sr.	OL	6-5	325	Chandler, Ariz.
63	Dylan Cohen	Fr.	OL	6-1	257	Seattle, Wash.
64	Ethan Barney	R-Fr.	OL	6-4	300	Sumner, Wash.
66	Brandon Casey	Jr.	OL	6-5	295	Sandpoint, Idaho
69	Noah Kaschmitter	Jr.	DE	6-3	250	Grangeville, Idaho
69	Cannon Panfiloff	R-So.	OL	6-6	285	Roy, Utah
72	Tate Templeton	Fr.	OL	6-3	291	Missoula, Mont.
73	Colin Dreis	R-Jr.	OL	6-7	275	Tucson, Ariz.
74	Kukila Lincoln	R-So.	OL	6-5	286	Kamuela, Hawaii
75	Declan McCabe	R-So.	OL	6-4	279	Waco, Texas
76	Journey Grimsrud	R-So.	OL	6-3	280	Huntley, Mont.
77	Michael Ray	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	281	Yakima, Wash.
78	Lucas Freitas	Fr.	OL	6-6	312	Snoqualmie, Wash.
79	Liam Brown	R-So.	OL	6-5	310	Beaverton, Ore.
80	Brady Lang	R-So.	WR	6-1	180	Bozeman, Mont.
81	Joseph Grezmak	So.	TE	6-5	249	Pilot Mountain, N.C.
82	Ian Finch	R-Fr.	WR	6-3	197	Missoula, Mont.
83	Drew Klumph	R-Fr.	WR	5-11	180	Missoula, Mont.
83	Nico Ramos	R-Sr.	P/K	5-11	194	Miami, Fla.
84	Evan Shafer	Jr.	TE	6-5	270	Connerville, Ind.
85	Micah Ashton	R-So.	TE	6-5	243	San Diego, Calif.
86	Joe Weida	R-Fr.	TE	6-4	228	Missoula, Mont.
87	Jake Olson	R-So.	TE	6-7	247	Butte, Mont.
88	Erik Barker	Jr.	TE	6-4	250	Keizer, Ore.
89	Lucas Prendergast	Jr.	WR	6-4	214	Seattle, Wash.
90	Jareb Ramos	R-Fr.	DL	6-4	283	Centennial, Colo.
92	Will Jenkins	Fr.	DL	6-5	220	Everett, Wash.
93	Sloan McPherson	R-So.	DL	6-4	243	Savage, Mont.
94	Brendan Murphy	Fr.	DL	6-2	227	Seattle, Wash.
95	Dylan Smith	R-So.	DL	6-4	230	Whitehall, Mont.
96	Henry Nuce	Jr.	DL	6-4	245	Kalispell, Mont.
97	Grant Glasgow	R-Fr.	K	6-1	195	Lawrence, Kan.
98	Matai Mata'afa	R-So.	DL	6-1	220	Lahaina, Hawaii
99	Alex Gubner	R-Sr.	DT	6-3	285	West Hills, Calif.

GRIZZLY GAME DAY MATCHUPS

MONTANA STARTING OFFENSE

WR 6 Keelan White

WR 5 Junior Bergen

LT 55 Chris Walker

LG 79 -OR- 61 L. Brown -OR- H. Mayginnis

C 57 AJ Forbes

RG 76 Journey Grimsrud

RT 66 Brandon Casey

TE 84 Evan Shafer

QB 17 Clifton McDowell

TB 10 - OR -26 Eli Gillman -OR- Nick Ostmo

WR 14 Aaron Fontes

K 83 Nico Ramos

MONTANA STATE STARTING DEFENSE

CB 9 Simeon Woodard

DE 10 Brody Grebe

DT 95 Sebastian Valdez

NT 92 Blake Schmidt

RUSH 98 Ben Seymour

CB 4 Jon Johnson

WLB 41 Nolan Askelson

SS 26 Rylan Ortt

MLB 43 McCade O'Reilly

NB 8 Level Price Jr.

FS 2 Dru Polidore

P 93 Brendan Hall

MONTANA BACKUPS ON OFFENSE

QB	8	Keali'i Ah Yat	LT	69	Cannon Panfiloff
WR	4	Ryan Simpson	C	75	Declan McCabe
WR	9	Sawyer Racanelli	RG	74	Kukila Lincoln
WR	2	Drew Deck	RT	73	Colin Dreis
TE	88	Erik Barker			

MONTANA STATE BACKUPS ON DEFENSE

DE	11	Kenneth Eiden IV	NB	6	Miles Jackson
DT	33	Blake Hehl	CB	1	Andrew Powdrell
NT	96	Paul Brott	CB	12	Devin Davis
RUSH	94	David Alston	SS	20	Tyson Pottenger
WLB	40	Cole Bullock	FS	0	Blake Stilwell
MLB	47	Eli Aby			

MONTANA STATE STARTING OFFENSE

WR 6 Ty McCullouch

RT 76 Marcus Wehr

RG 68 Omar Aigbedion

C 65 Justus Perkins

LG 63 Rush Reimer

LT 72 Conner Moore

TE 80 Treyton Pickering

QB 4 Tommy Mellott

RB 32 Julius Davis

WR 14 Taco Dowler

TE 80 Treyton Pickering

K 38 Casey Kautzman

MONTANA STATE STARTING DEFENSE

CB 8 Corbin Walker

LB 35 Braxton Hill

LB 44 -OR- 54 Ryan Tirrell -OR- Tyler Flink

FS 4 -OR- 25 Nash Fouch -OR- Jaxon Lee

NT 99 Alex Gubner

LB 37 -OR- 42 Levi Janacaro -OR- Riley Wilson

SS 13 Ryder Meyer

Nickel 3 TraJon Cotton

DE 0 Kale Edwards

CB 2 Ronald Jackson

P 28 Travis Benham

MONTANA STATE BACKUPS ON OFFENSE

QB	10	Sean Chambers	LT	73	Cedric Jefferson
RB	3	Jared White	LG	64	Burke Mastel
WR	81	Tayvian Williams	C	70	Holden Sampson
WR	1	Marqui Johnson	RB	58	Aaron Richards
WR	25	Jacob Trimble	RT	75	Jacob Kettels
TE	87	Ryan Lonergan			

MONTANA BACKUPS ON DEFENSE

DE	98	Matai Mata'afa	CB	39	Jace Kluczewich
DE	56	Garrett Hustedt	CB	7	Jelani Warren
NT	47	Kellen Detrick	SS	5	Garrett Graves
LB	33	Carson Rostad	Nickel	10	TJ Rausch

MONTANA STATE

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Hgt.	Wt.	Hometown
0	Javonte King	Fr.	WR	6-4	208	Blackfoot, Idaho
0	Blake Stilwell	So.	S	6-1	180	Winter Garden, Fla.
1	Marqui Johnson	Jr.	WR	5-8	165	Philadelphia, Pa.
1	Andrew Powdrell	Fr.	DB	5-10	164	The Woodlands, Texas
2	Dru Polidore	So.	S	6-2	186	Katy, Texas
2	Clevan Thomas Jr.	Gr.	WR	5-11	194	Miami, Fla.
3	Jared White	R-Fr.	RB	5-10	200	Frisco, Texas
4	Jon Johnson	Jr.	CB	6-0	171	Gardena, Calif.
4	Tommy Mellott	Jr.	QB	6-0	209	Butte, Mont.
5	Garrett Coon	So.	RB	6-0	195	Sheridan, Wyo.
5	Caden Dowler	So.	S/N	6-0	203	Billings, Mont.
6	Miles Jackson	Jr.	CB	5-11	194	Portland, Ore.
6	Ty McCullouch	Jr.	WR	6-1	181	Moreno Valley, Calif.
7	Lomayatta Alexander Jr.	So.	WR	6-3	202	Auburn, Wash.
7	Tayden Gray	Fr.	DB	6-0	185	Arlington, Texas
8	Level Price Jr.	Sr.	S/N	5-8	184	Los Angeles, Calif.
8	Derryk Snell	Sr.	TE/FB	6-2	240	Anchorage, Alaska
9	Luke Abshire	R-Fr.	QB	6-1	191	Spokane, Wash.
9	Simeon Woodard	Jr.	CB	5-10	171	San Antonio, Texas
10	Sean Chambers	Sr.	QB	6-3	221	Kerman, Calif.
10	Brody Grebe	Jr.	DE	6-2	248	Melstone, Mont.
11	Kenneth Eiden IV	So.	DE	6-1	247	Bozeman, Mont.
11	Elijah Elliott	Jr.	RB	5-10	188	Portland, Ore.
12	Devin Davis	So.	CB	6-1	195	Vallejo, Calif.
12	Jordan Reed	R-Fr.	QB	6-6	214	El Centro, Calif.
13	Jackson Harmon	So.	CB	6-3	201	Anchorage, Alaska
13	Chance Wilson	Fr.	QB	6-3	189	Owasso, Okla.
14	Taco Dowler	So.	WR	5-9	169	Billings, Mont.
15	Patrick Duchien	Fr.	QB	6-2	213	Florence, Mont.
15	Bryce Grebe	Fr.	LB	6-0	215	Melstone, Mont.
16	Michael Armstrong	R-Fr.	S	6-0	189	Bozeman, Mont.
16	Zachary Dodson-Greene	R-Fr.	WR	6-1	182	Salem, Ore.
17	Christian Anaya	R-Fr.	WR	6-1	182	Chandler, Ariz.
17	Taki Uluilakepa	Fr.	DB	6-0	167	Provo, Utah
18	Kendric Bailey	Jr.	S	6-1	206	Carmichael, Calif.
18	Garrett Walchli	Jr.	WR	5-8	171	Hermiston, Ore.
19	Tom Carter	Fr.	WR	6-0	175	Helena, Mont.
19	Neil Daily	So.	LB	6-3	227	Billings, Mont.
20	Tyson Pottenger	So.	S	6-2	179	Helena, Mont.
22	Takhari Carr	R-Fr.	DB	6-0	173	Compton, Calif.
22	Scottre Humphrey	Fr.	RB	5-11	207	Seattle, Wash.
23	Adam Jones	Fr.	RB	6-1	192	Missoula, Mont.
23	Aidan Parks	So.	S	6-0	219	Chico, Calif.
24	Colter Petre	Fr.	DB	6-1	184	Helena, Mont.
24	Lane Sumner	Sr.	RB	5-8	198	Huntley, Mont.
25	Jacob Trimble	Fr.				
26	Rylan Ortt	Jr.	S/N	6-1	207	184North Richland Hills, Texas
27	Brock Steel	R-Fr.	DB	6-1	203	Missoula, Mont.
28	Colson Coon	Fr.	RB	5-11	184	Sheridan, Wyo.
29	JJ Dolan	Fr.	DB	6-0	174	Missoula, Mont.
31	Jace Fitzgerald	Jr.	LB	6-1	220	Puyallup, Wash.
31	Jace Fitzgerald	So.	LB	6-1	221	Dillon, Mont.
32	Julius Davis	Jr.	RB	5-10	199	Menomnie Falls, Wis.
33	Blake Hehl	Sr.	DT	6-3	273	Huntington Beach, Calif.
34	Cole Taylor	Fr.	LB	6-3	220	Great Falls, Mont.
35	Kade Cutler	R-Fr.	DB	6-0	206	Phillipsburg, Mont.
36	Luke Smith	Fr.	TE	6-5	215	Bozeman, Mont.
38	Casey Kautzman	R-Fr.	K/P			

HOW WE SEE THE BIG SKY

BILL SPELTZ

Missoulian | bill.speltz@406mtsports.com

Like a pinball machine, the most dangerous offense in the Big Sky Conference is capable of putting up numbers in a hurry.

Montana State has averaged 43.8 points per game — almost 14 more than the Montana Grizzlies. And the Bobcats have played a tougher schedule.

Still, Montana State has yet to face Montana's defense at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. That's the combination that might just be enough to stymie the high-flying Bobcats offense on Saturday. The emphasis there is on *might* because no one knows for certain.



BILL
SPELTZ

59-15



FRANK
GOGOLA

59-15

It's not just the defense that makes the Grizzlies tough to score on in Missoula. It's the crowd that has consistently flummoxed opponents by shouting in their ear and forcing motion penalties.

Montana is going to need all the help it can get Saturday. Montana State has more big-game experience at key positions and the Cats have proven they're capable of knocking off anyone on the road. Back on Sept. 9, the Bobcats should have won at top-ranked South Dakota State, blowing a lead in the final two minutes.

I really don't know how good the Grizzlies are on offense or defense. The "big" wins they've recorded have come against Idaho and Sacramento State teams that looked decidedly average last week.

One thing is for certain: It's easier to win a championship than it used to be on the FCS level. There's not as many super-strong programs. No James Madison. No Sam Houston State. No Appalachian State. No typical North Dakota State juggernaut this season.

The team that wins Saturday in Zootown has an excellent chance to go all the way to the FCS championship in Frisco, Texas. Even the team that loses has a decent shot. That, in itself, speaks to the lack of depth on the FCS level.

My guess is that Griz and Cats fans couldn't care less about FCS depth. They just want championships, starting with a Big Sky Conference title Saturday.



MEAGAN THOMPSON, THE MONTANA STANDARD

Montana State's Sean Chambers hangs on to the ball under a pile of Montana Grizzly defenders during the Brawl of the Wild last year in Bozeman.

SATURDAY GAMES

No. 4 Montana State (6-1, 8-2) at No. 3 Montana (6-1, 9-1) (Noon, MTN SPORTS): I have a gut feeling the Grizzlies will prevail at home but I'm not real confident. I'll go with my gut. The Grizzlies need to get on top early because they don't have the type of offense that can erase a two-touchdown deficit to Montana State. I'm just glad I'm not betting the mortgage on this one because it's even tougher to predict this year than it has been in recent years — and that's saying something because the rivalry has been very unpredictable lately. **Speltz:** Montana 30, Montana State 28. **Gogola:** Griz 31, Cats 27.

No. 8 Sacramento State (4-3, 7-3) at UC Davis (4-3, 6-4) (1 p.m.): It's amazing the Hornets are ranked No. 8 in the country. Last week at home, they were locked in a one-score game with mediocre Cal Poly for part of the fourth quarter. Saturday means more to the Aggies in their playoff push and I'm going with the home team. **Speltz:** Davis 35,

Sac State 27. **Gogola:** Hornets 34, Aggies 24.

Portland State (3-4, 4-6) at Northern Colorado (0-7, 0-10) (1 p.m.): Portland State's defense looked awful against Montana last week. There were two touchdown runs by the Grizzlies in the second quarter where it looked as though Portland State defenders were reluctant to engage. Look it up on X sometime. If Portland State plays with the same effort level against Northern Colorado, the Bears might just get their first win. Expect a close game. **Speltz:** Portland State 24, Northern Colorado 21. **Gogola:** Viks 35, Bears 17.

Northern Arizona (4-3, 4-6) at Eastern Washington (3-4, 4-6) (2 p.m., ESPN+): You get to the last game of the season and neither team has a shot at the playoffs and it becomes a question of which team cares more. The Lumberjacks have won two of their last three games and they still care. But the Eagles have been extra tough on the red turf with a 3-1 mark and wins over We-

ber State and Southeastern Louisiana. **Speltz:** Eastern 40, NAU 34. **Gogola:** NAU 34, EWU 31.

Idaho State (3-4, 3-7) at No. 6 Idaho (5-2, 7-3) (5 p.m., ESPN+): Plenty of incentive for both teams in this rivalry game. The Bengals have lost three in a row and the Vandals have a lot to gain as they strive for a first-round bye in the FCS playoffs. Hard to go against Idaho in this one — even though the Vandals are coming off a heartbreaking loss at Weber State. **Speltz:** Idaho 41, Idaho State 30. **Gogola:** Idaho 38, ISU 28.

Weber State (3-4, 5-5) at Cal Poly (1-6, 3-7) (6 p.m., ESPN+): The Wildcats are coming off their biggest win of the season at home last week against Idaho. Their reward is a season finale in balmy San Luis Obispo, California. Not a bad consolation prize if you fail to make the playoffs. **Speltz:** Wildcats 50, Mustangs 20. **Gogola:** Weber 42, Poly 14.

Bill Speltz is Missoulian Sports Editor. Email Bill at bill.speltz@missoulian.com.

Detrick

From 4

A: We practiced that play all week. We called it coming out, and we would check out of it if it wasn't there. When we called it, the defense stemmed down and it was open, so Kale Edwards called it. As soon as I heard that it was going to get called, my heart immediately started racing. Then to be able to get the ball and to run for 20 yards, it felt like a mile to me. But to be able to run and get a first down in Wa-Griz and hear the roar of the crowd, it meant the world. It meant a lot to my family, it meant a lot to myself and a lot to my hometown too.

Q: Then you had another first against Northern Colorado with your first sack, so what are your memories of that play and how did it feel to do that for the first time in college?

A: The feeling is indescribable. I can't really put it to words. It's just something seeing everything come full circle. The sack just worked out. It was Kale Edwards that kind of slowed the quarterback down and then I was able to get to him and bring him down. Having my whole family be here, having a lot of people from Havre be here because we were celebrating Marc Mariani that day, it was honestly amazing and I couldn't have asked for anything more.

Q: With the Brawl of the Wild coming up, what are your favorite memories from it growing up?

A: Just cheering Marc Mariani on. I never came to a Griz-Cat game here. Just being able to cheer Marc on and have somebody to look up to and try to follow in his footsteps. Watching Marc was awesome, not just to me but to everybody in the Havre community.

Q: Seeing how this will be your first time playing in the Brawl, what do you expect the experience and the atmosphere here to be like?

A: I'm expecting that there's going to be a lot of energy in this stadium. I'm very excited about it. I don't really know what to think about it yet because I haven't played in it yet. But I'm excited about everything about it.

Q: Lastly, what has it meant to you as a Montana native to get to wear the maroon and silver, have Montana across your chest and get to play in Wa-Griz?

A: It's meant everything for me to be a Griz. Just seeing the community, the whole town of Missoula comes out, and to be able to support us, it means the world. I can't be any more grateful for it. It's awesome. I'm going to cherish every moment that I have going on.



Montana defensive lineman Kellen Detrick (47) sacks Northern Colorado quarterback Hank Gibbs (18) during the Big Sky Conference football game between Montana and Northern Colorado on Oct. 28 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

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Koppang

From 3

with that. Knowing that I don't have some of those attributes, I just understand my role on the team.

"Whatever role I'm placed in, I'll give 100 percent. That's all that I care about. Whatever situation I'm in, whatever role it is, I'm going to give the best of my ability. That's my mentality and all I care about."

Koppang had been a star in high school at Loyola Sacred Heart in Missoula. He was a three-year team captain who played varsity football all four years. He earned all-state honors his senior year playing receiver, safety, punt returner and punter. He helped the Rams finish as the state runner-up in Class B in 2016.

He was also a basketball team captain for two years and played on varsity three seasons. He even ran varsity track and field for three years, earning all-state honors as a senior.

That Koppang is still at UM, contributing after injuries and despite a lack of playing time on defense, doesn't surprise Todd Hughes, his football coach at Loyola.

"David has always been the ultimate

competitor," he said. "He was a special talent here. But I don't think he ever looked at himself as a star. He never played for stardom. He played because he loved the team. It's who he is. He has an extreme passion for the game of football. He never acted like a star even though he was an outstanding player."

Growing up Griz

Koppang is the son of a former Griz football player. He also grew up in Missoula. It all made playing for UM a big dream since childhood.

"From the moment we started coming to games here — I don't even remember when because I was so young, I couldn't tell you my first game — all I ever wanted to do was wear the maroon and silver," he said. "It was a dream of mine. It was a goal.

"For me, I couldn't think of anything else better than wearing these colors. The fact that I was able to achieve that goal, it's a dream come true. I love it here. I have no regrets, no remorse. It's probably one of the best decisions I've ever made."

Koppang has been on the field wearing the maroon and silver for 37 games across his six years with the Griz. He was part of

head coach Bobby Hauck's first recruiting class in 2018.

He did make it onto the two-deep last year as the backup strong safety. He also earned Academic All-Big Sky honors in 2022 for the first time in college.

"The game doesn't just provide value to those that are All-Americans," Hauck said. "It provides great value to everybody that participates and sticks with it. Credit to David for having persistence and loving football and loving his football team. But he's better for it too.

"I've always liked him as a young man, but he's really matured and just grown into a reliable good guy. He's going to be a great teacher and coach. He's really matured into a guy that you have high hopes for because I think he's going to do great at what he's chosen to do."

Koppang hasn't been on the defensive depth chart this year. He still has kept plugging away, a credit to what his parents taught him as a child.

His father, Chris, played at UM from 1992-93 on special teams and at linebacker. He's the only member of this year's senior class who is the son of an ex-Griz football player.

"Growing up my parents always raised

me to never be a quitter," he said. "It's not something that's in my mentality. In my family, once you start something, you finish it. It's been super easy to stay because I enjoy it so much. I've honestly never had a thought about quitting because how fun it is to be here.

"What's kept me going also is I've met my best friends here that I'll have forever. Made some of the greatest memories that I'll remember forever. I've been coached by some of the greatest coaches."

Koppang has already graduated with his bachelor's degree in elementary education. He's working on a master's degree in educational leadership.

He also has had an education in football and feels he has increased his knowledge base of the game. That should benefit him in coaching, which he sees as another type of teaching.

"It's 100 percent been worth it," he said. "I've learned so much about this sport that I didn't know coming into college. I'm a smarter football player. I know way more than I did when I was 18.

"It's going to be weird when it's all over, when I don't have to be at these meetings. It just forms into your life and I've loved it every single second, every single day!"

Go Grizzlies!



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Big Sky

From 5

Idaho State Bengals 21-14.

“Just hugged my dad, said, ‘Hey, I love you,’” Cody said in his postgame press conference. “I hated that, but love you.”

The “Hawkins Bowl” loss hit Cody like a baseball player who got “cup checked,” he said. It was ISU’s Senior Day, and the Bengals built two leads: 7-0 in the first quarter and 14-7 in the third. Davis running back Lan Larison tied it up near the end of the third, and he scored the game-winning touchdown with 2:05 left in the game.

The win kept the Aggies’ playoff hopes alive, and they will have a good chance to reach the postseason if they beat top-10 Sacramento State in Davis on Saturday in the annual Causeway Classic.

Cody is in his first season as ISU’s head coach. He coached under his father the previous five seasons, including three as Davis’ offensive coordinator. He was a star quarterback at Bishop Kelly High School in Boise, Idaho, from 2004-05, when Dan was the head coach at Boise State. Dan served as Colorado’s head coach from 2006-10, and Cody played for him there.

Cat-Griz will be top-4 clash

Montana is ranked No. 3 and Montana State is No. 4 in this week’s Stats Perform FCS Top 25.

The Griz were also No. 3 last week, while the Cats moved up one spot due to Idaho’s loss. The Vandals are now No. 6, two spots ahead of Sacramento State, which rose one spot.

Sac State’s upcoming opponent, UC Davis, received some votes in this week’s poll.

South Dakota State has been No. 1 in every Stats Perform FCS Top 25 so far this

season, and Furman is No. 2 for the third straight week.

Players of the week

Two Bobcats, an Aggie and a Wildcat earned the latest Big Sky player of the week honors.

Montana State quarterback Sean Chambers shared the offensive award with UC Davis running back Lan Larison. Chambers completed all four of his passes for 119 yards and three touchdowns and rushed for 75 yards and two TDs on five carries — all in the first half — against Eastern Washington. Larison rushed for 264 yards and all three of Davis’ TDs on 8.5 yards per carry at Idaho State.

Chambers’ teammate Brendan Hall was named the special teams player of the week after booting seven kickoffs for touchbacks and averaging 51.6 yards per punt on five attempts with a long of 62 and four inside the EWU 20-yard line.

Weber State linebacker Winston Reid got the defensive honor because of his 17 tackles (seven solo), 11/2 tackles for loss, forced fumble, pass breakup and two quarterback hurries against Idaho.

Other player of the week nominees:

Offense: Carson Conklin (Sacramento State), Kris Jackson (Weber State), Angel Flores (Northern Arizona), Clifton McDowell (Montana), Jermaine Braddock (Portland State), Sam Huard (Cal Poly)

Defense: Eloi Kwete (Northern Arizona), Zach Kennedy (UC Davis), Riley Wilson (Montana), Parker McKenna (Portland State)

Special teams: Elijah Tau-Tolliver (Sacramento State), Haze Hadley (Weber State), Brody Richter (Northern Arizona)

Email Victor Flores at victor.flores@406mtsports.com and follow him on Twitter/X at @VictorFlores406

Weber State’s Jacob Sharp hauls in a touchdown pass in front of Idaho’s Marcus Harris on Saturday at Stewart Stadium in Ogden, Utah.

WEBER STATE
ATHLETICS



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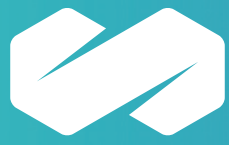
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