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ROAD TO RECOVERY

Money Melton is back after 'freak accident' ends 2016 season

ERIK C. ANDERSON
406mtsports.com

They call him Money Melton.

In truth, Drew Melton isn't quite sure how the nickname came to be. He has an idea, but the 22-year-old from Lewiston, Idaho, is still surprised when peers and people he hardly knows use the moniker. He thinks it may be rooted in his application to intern with the Montana Board of Investments, dressing sharp in a suit and tie – "to the nines." He doesn't mind the name. There are far worse nicknames out there, he figures.

On the football field, Money Melton is most apt.

Melton, all 6 feet and 190 pounds of him, has been a standout in Carroll's secondary this season. The Saints keep tabs of how productive players are each game day, an in-house metric to backup the eye-test. Melton usually appears high on the charts. In five games, Melton has 10 pass breaks and two interceptions. His average of two break ups per game puts him in the nation's elite, ranking No. 4 in the NAIA in the category. Teams test Melton in the air, and more often than not Melton aces it. He's added in 18 total tackles, too.

For a position with a future that left many wondering a season ago after the graduation of two seniors, Melton, Isazah King, Ryan Beaulieu and Chandler Arbizanni have shored it up. Mike Van Diest has felt more confident in his top four corners, saying this is the most depth his defense has had at the position in years.

Melton entered the season wondering, too.

Not if he and his corner brethren would perform, but rather whether he would perform at all.

Melton was tabbed as the third corner on 2016's version of the Saints. Ryan Gregory had been an all-conference corner entering the season and starter Vince DiGiallonardo would go on to become a second team all-conference corner that season. Gregory started the season on a slow note, hobbled by an ankle injury. It meant more snaps – and inevitably more passes – would be coming Melton's way. The Saints



Gary Marshall, BMGphotos.com

Drew Melton completely shredded his ACL, partially tearing his lateral meniscus in one non-contact motion, in a game against Rocky Mountain College last year.

started off the season with a shocking win over Montana Tech, and then went into a week two matchup against Rocky Mountain College.

Melton got the start.

Early in the game, Melton backedpedaled before breaking on a receiver's route. He saw a hitch route coming, and planted on his knee to explode forward. As he planted, he completely shredded his ACL, partially tearing his lateral meniscus in one non-contact motion. Doctors called the injury rare for a football player. While ACL injuries are not foreign to football, the way Melton's tore was.

"It was a freak accident," Melton said.

He exited the turf field in Billings, forming a hesitation about playing on the surface – one that still triggers to this season. Saints head trainer Brian Coble and Rocky's team doctor both surmised Melton had frayed his ACL, though it would be a full two weeks before any type of surgery would be done.

As those days passed, Melton accepted his reality: His season was over. An MRI confirmed his ACL tear,

and he scheduled a surgery. Expecting his leg to atrophy, Melton did light leg presses to build strength up before. He knew he'd be losing some of the strength that made him the corner he had become.

"Stronger you go into surgery the better results you have," Melton said.

Carroll's physician, John Michelotti, performed Melton's surgery.

"He's awesome," Melton said of Michelotti. "I've had no problems or complications."

A few days after his tear, and a day after surgery, rehabilitation started. Still loopy from painkillers – "pretty messed up" – Melton began his road to recovery.

"I was in the training room every day for a good three or four months until Christmas," Melton said.

He remembers retraining his quadriceps to constrict and fire. An electric stimulus machine sent a current into his leg, and as his muscle contracted, he flexed his leg as much as he could. That process unfolded every day – save Saturdays – for nearly a month. Then, he relearned range of motion. Melton rode an exercise bike and simply focused on doing a full revolution with the pedals.

"I was literally just focusing on doing a full circle on the bike," he said. "It was excruciating to be able to do a full revolution."

He rehabbed with a band of Carroll College soccer players. Three members of the women's soccer team tore their ACLs a season ago, and the four would rehab together. The process went a bit differently after initial phases, but Melton and the ladies spent a lot of time in the training room in those early months.

He watched as his leg muscles shrunk, noting his legs are still slightly different sizes even today. As his rehab progressed and this past summer came along, Melton still wasn't sure if he'd be back to normal. He'd experience an unfamiliar soreness, sapping him of confidence in his knee. When the team did 7-on-7 skeleton drills, Melton didn't play his best, further feeding into his anxiety.

"I'd talk to trainers about getting my confidence, speed and agility back,"

he said.

He pressed on in the weight room, working to get his max lifts back to the numbers he held a year prior. Melton was relentless with his work, and didn't let small doubts shake him.

"He worked as hard as you could ask anybody to work," Van Diest said. "I've been around guys that have injuries and they don't take it to heart. But Drew wanted to get back on the field with his teammates. He's a great teammate."

The legwork done, Melton still needed something. He needed to make plays before he felt confident on the field again. His coach knew the questions would need to be answered by his play, too.

"Coming off a knee injury, you never know at that position," Van Diest said.

Melton didn't know until the second day of fall camp, the first week the team came back together, and just mere weeks away from the beginning of the season. Melton started breaking up passes against some of the Saints receivers, a crop that featured an all-conference receiver a season ago.

"When I was able to cover those guys and I got the confidence back," Melton said. "From there I didn't really think about my knee."

Melton had won the physical battle, and he's also controlling the mental trials, too. Stepping on turf still gives him flashbacks to Rocky, flashbacks to his knee crumbling.

"I have to remember I have a brace on," said Melton, noting the brace is in place as more of placebo at this point.

"I did all the rehab," Melton said. "I did well in fall camp. There's no reason to be worried about. I have to think back about the process."

His confidence is back.

Even as he was making plays, he still had to not only make plays but prove he belonged among the top defensive backs for Carroll. Anybody could grab a starting

job, and his cohorts were healthy entering the season. Melton approached it with an all-business attitude. Melton proved himself every day – on the field, or studying film.

"I would say that Drew is one of the hardest working guys on the team and that even though he's a gifted athlete he still focused on the little things like footwork and hand placement," Carroll safety McBride Galt said. Galt said one of the most rewarding things about being on the field this season has been seeing his good friend Melton back on the field.

"He also spends a lot of time studying film and just his competitive spirit that brought him back to 100 percent after his knee injury last year," Galt said.

Melton earned his way. Each weekend against tough receivers in the Frontier, he continues to earn his keep. Teams continue to throw at Melton, and he, more often than not, is in a position to make a play. Melton's success isn't happenstance. The defensive back draws from fundamentals and technique each snap. Often times, it's the work he puts in during the first instances after a ball is snapped. Melton's timing with the receiver, his positioning, his hand placement all start to take place. All of this is done before the ball is thrown, setting the foundation for a pass breakup or interception once the ball is on the way. Once the ball is in the air, Melton becomes a receiver. It's not enough to be in position to put one hand up and knock a pass down.

"On deep balls, it's a pretty good feeling when you turn and you get the guy with your off hand and you run with him and you're fighting with his hands. You look up and lean in and you see that ball in the air and it's like 'Oh man – I have a chance at a pick here.' You get that pass breakup, it's a cool feeling."

Melton knows playing

corner is fickle. There's no place to hide on the field, good or bad. Everybody sees mistakes, and the big plays. It's a position that requires a short memory. The glory of an interception can quickly be forgotten by the despair of a big play.

"I'm surprised how much he's targeted," Van Diest said. "He's there. He's contesting plays. If a guy catches a ball, it's a great catch."

The Saints pursued Melton while he was still in high school. Melton had a trip planned to visit Montana Tech, and before the visit to Tech, he received a phone call from offensive coordinator Nick Howlett.

"He told me, 'Don't sign anything,'" Melton said, laughing. Melton and his parents drove through a snowstorm to visit Butte, and then added a trip to Helena. The winning tradition, often-cited Carroll brotherhood and academic track record

set Carroll apart. At the time, Melton figured he'd study engineering or finance. He settled on Carroll and a business major.

Even as the Saints are off to a rocky start this season, Melton relishes the chance to take the field with his teammates. Seeing his good friends make plays is more rewarding than a win or loss.

"Win or lose, we get to do that every week," Melton said. "I appreciate it. Guys on our team appreciate to play with each other and for each other. That is unique here at Carroll."

Melton's younger brother, 20, nearly joined him at Carroll. Health complications meant the younger Melton couldn't pursue college sports. His brother is now studying finance at the University of Idaho. Coaches regularly inquire about how the Melton family is doing.

Money Melton is doing quite well.

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Saints study Tech's tendencies

ERIK C. ANDERSON
406mtsports.com

The key this week may be in the film.

More specifically, Montana Western's film.

The Carroll College Saints host No. 11 Montana Tech this weekend, and many expected the Orediggers to enter Nelson Stadium with a 6-0 record.

The Bulldogs of Montana Western had something to say about that. Western upset Tech 42-35, knocking the Orediggers from No. 5 to No. 11 in the Top 25 poll.

"We watched a little bit of that (Sunday), and some of the Rocky game," Saints coach Mike Van Diest said.

The Saints will be looking closer at the film and have charted out tendencies. Even though Tech scored 35 points against Western, the Saints will try to find some areas on defense from Western that they can implement – if their personnel match Western's.

"You're aware of it," Van Diest said. "You say, is it within our scheme? Can we do it? The difference is in the personnel and are they better at some positions? Are we better at some positions? It's a matter of where our matchups are. We didn't match up well with their receivers last time. I think we are little bit better than we were at the start of the year."

Van Diest said a big focus for the offense will be working Reece Hiibel into the starting lineup as Tanner Gustavsen recovers from a left hand injury. Van Diest said he didn't anticipate offensive coordinate Nick Howlett would makeover of his entire offense, but that it would be tailored to Hiibel's skillset. The important part of the young quarterback will be getting reps in practice with



Troy Shockley, troy.shockley@helenair.com

Carroll College coach Mike Van Diest said receiver Shane Sipes is among the weapons on offense that will give the Saints enough playmaking ability to be able to score on Tech.

Carroll's starters, a luxury he didn't have last week.

"Tanner is not in there now," Van Diest said. "Reece has to step up and take over. Nick isn't going to change his whole offensive philosophy, but he has to taper some things for Reece to have success."

"These guys are athletes. Reece is smart kid and he's savvy. He's going to spend a lot of time with Howlett this week."

Carroll's rushing attack had a good day in the 21-6 loss to College of Idaho last week – until the Saints got in short yardage situations. The Saints will look for new ways to create and pick up third-and-short situations this week.

Van Diest said the weapons on offense – Shane Sipes and

Troy Arntson at receiver, Eric Dawson at tight end, Major Ali and Ryan Walsh at running back – give the Saints enough playmaking ability to be able to score on Tech. The Saints showed that for a half in their week one matchup against the Orediggers, but Tech ran away with the game in the second half and won 45-28.

Tech is led by quarterback Quinn McQueary, who has thrown for 1,685 yards, 16 touchdowns and six interceptions this season on 128 of 192 passes. He's also added 140 yards rushing on 37 attempts for seven more scores. His favorite target has been Dion Williams, who has 35 catches for 450 yards and five scores.

The Tech running attack is also strong again this season, a year after graduating Nolan

Saraceni. Jed Fike transferred into the program from Dickinson State and has established himself as one of the best runners in the Frontier Conference. Fike has rushed 114 times for 765 yards and eight touchdowns.

Tech owns the best offense in the conference, scoring an average of 49 points per game. Carroll enters the game with the second worst offense, averaging 19 points per game.

Tech's defense gives up an average of 27.8 points per game, while the Saints give up one more point at 28.8 points per game.

Carroll will see if it can upset the Orediggers like it did a season ago, winning in the opening week at Nelson Stadium 27-24.



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2017 Carroll College Saints

#	Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown / High school
1	Connor Fohn	WR	6-1	200	Jr	Salem, Ore. / South Salem
2	Ryan Beaulieu	DB	5-11	185	Jr	Las Vegas, Nev. / Palo Verde
3	TJ Abraham	WR	5-8	178	Fr	Powell, Wyo. / Powell
3	Major Ali	RB	5-7	200	Soph	Gig Harbor, Wash. / Peninsula
4	Isazah King	CB	6-1	190	Soph	Hidden Valley, Calif. / Lower Lake
5	Joe Farris	WR	6-1	190	Soph	Meridian, Idaho / Mountain View
6	Chandler Arbizzani	DB	6-1	190	Sr	Billings / Skyview
6	Brayden Frohlich	QB	6-7	240	Fr	Missoula / Hellgate
7	Brian FauntLeRoy	DB	6-1	195	RS-Fr	Whitefish / Whitefish
8	Conner Poulson	RB	6-1	240	Jr	Boise, Idaho / Capital
9	Colin Sassano	DB	6-0	180	Fr	Helena / Capital
10	Kolby Killoy	QB	6-1	190	RS-Fr	Pasco, Wash. / Pasco
11	Tony Madsen	DB	6-2	202	Jr	Missoula / Loyola Sacred Heart
12	Tanner Gustavsen	QB	6-1	195	Sr	Boise, Idaho / Boise
12	Anthony Olmes	WR	5-11	175	Fr	Vallejo, Calif. / St. Patrick/St. Vincent
13	Cameron Hardt	DB	6-1	185	Fr	Cheney, Wash. / Cheney
13	Dylan Torgerson	P/K	6-2	200	Sr	Kalispell / Flathead
14	Troy Arntson	WR	5-8	170	Jr	Helena / Helena
15	Matt McHugh	QB	6-2	205	Jr	Missoula / Loyola Sacred Heart
16	Ryan Arntson	RB	5-7	180	Fr	Helena / Helena
17	Reese Hiibel	QB/DB	6-1	175	RS-Fr	Afton, Wyo. / Star Valley
18	McBride Galt	DB	6-2	205	Jr	Helena / Helena
19	Xavier Pace	DB	5-9	175	Fr	Great Falls / C.M. Russell
19	Paul Wilson	WR	5-11	175	Soph	Bonner / Hellgate
20	Griphen Le	RB	5-11	210	RS-Fr	Coeur D'Alene, Idaho / Coeur D'Alene
21	Parker Bernhardt	LB	6-1	202	Soph	Billings / West
22	Henry Hill	RB	5-9	190	Jr	Glenwood Springs, Colo. / Glenwood Springs
23	Drew Melton	DB	6-0	190	Soph	Lewiston, Idaho / Lewiston
24	Thomas Trefney	RB	6-0	215	RS-Fr	Kalispell / Glacier
25	Matt Kvech	DB	6-1	190	Soph	Renton, Wash. / Eastside Catholic
26	Wesley Harshbarger	RB	6-1	205	Fr	Twin Bridges / Twin Bridges
26	Ryan Walsh	RB	6-1	195	Sr	Wilsonville, Ore. / Wilsonville
27	Parker Stenersen	DB	5-11	160	Soph	Idaho Falls, Idaho / Skyline
28	Kyle Kazmierski	DL	6-0	190	Fr	Coeur D'Alene, Idaho / Lake City
28	Jack McIntyre	RB	5-8	182	RS-Fr	Buffalo, Wyo. / Buffalo
29	Cole Adams	DB	5-10	175	Jr	Glenwood Springs, Colo. / Glenwood Springs
30	Colbey Bruney	DB	6-1	180	Soph	Sheridan, Wyo. / Sheridan
30	Kyle Harrington	RB	6-0	215	RS-Fr	Butte / Butte Central
31	Chase Bowen	LB	6-2	225	Soph	Emmett, Idaho / New Plymouth
32	Beaugh Meyer	DT	6-2	275	Sr	Boise, Idaho / Capital
33	Tyler Matteucci	OLB	6-2	216	RS-Fr	East Helena / Helena
34	Tucker Johnson	DB	6-1	200	Sr	Billings / Junipero Serra
35	Erik Haun	LB	6-3	225	Fr	Boise, Idaho / Mountain View
36	Cole Greff	DE	6-4	260	Soph	Golden, Colo. / Golden
37	Derek David	RB	5-11	210	Soph	Idaho Falls, Idaho / Hillcrest
38	Stephen Lindsey	RB	5-9	195	RS-Fr	Columbia Falls / Columbia Falls
39	Craig Kein	LB	6-1	225	Soph	Burlington, Ill. / Burlington Central
40	Payton Sexe	LB	6-1	245	Soph	Great Falls / C.M. Russell
41	Zachary Hanser	DB	6-4	205	RS-Fr	Billings / Billings Central
42	Dylan Kresge	LB	6-1	225	Soph	Helena / Helena
43	Thomas Robitaille	LB	6-2	205	Fr	Casper, Wyo. / Natrona County
44	Reece Quade	LB	6-3	232	Jr	Billings / Skyview
45	Nate McGree	LB	6-2	205	Fr	Butte / Butte Central
46	Luke Gleasman	TE	6-4	250	RS-Fr	Chelan, Wash. / Chelan
47	Josh Kraft	K	5-11	170	Fr	Billings / Billings Central
48	Eric Dawson	TE	6-1	235	Jr	Great Falls / C.M. Russell
49	David Anderson	LB	6-0	220	Sr	Frenchtown / Frenchtown
49	Ken Roth	OLB	6-0	195	Fr	Missoula / Loyola Sacred Heart
50	Archie Petritz	LB	6-1	200	Fr	Butte / Butte Central

#	Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Yr	Hometown / High school
51	Dylan Piva	LB	6-2	215	Soph	Rathdrum, Idaho / Lakeland
52	Alex Reid	DL	6-1	255	RS-Fr	Spokane, Wash. / Mead
53	Billy Lewis	DL	5-11	230	Fr	Larkspur, Calif. / Redwood
54	Michael Monaco	DL	6-2	250	Soph	Anaconda / Anaconda
56	David Barnett	OT	6-3	280	Sr	Hermiston, Ore. / Hermiston
57	David Petersen	DL	6-1	245	RS-Fr	Helena / Capital
58	Brandon Ahlgren	OL	6-4	265	Fr	Canby, Ore. / West Linn
59	Dustin McLean	OL	6-3	250	Fr	Lewiston, Idaho / Lewiston
61	Joel Kramer	C	6-0	280	Sr	Missoula / Hellgate
64	J.D Lyle	OL	6-3	270	Soph	Middleton, Idaho / Middleton
65	Tim Pays	OL	6-4	295	Sr	Sandpoint, Idaho / Sandpoint
67	Todd Pays	OL	6-4	290	Sr	Sandpoint, Idaho / Sandpoint
68	Willy Clements	OL	6-3	295	Jr	Nederland, Colo. / Holy Family
70	Tanner Steele	OL	6-4	255	Fr	Lynden, Wash. / Lynden
71	John Boynton	OL	6-4	275	Jr	Richland, Wash. / Richland
74	Anthony Donofrio	OL	6-4	250	Fr	Coeur D'Alene, Idaho / Lake City
75	Tyson Frayley	OL	6-2	240	Fr	San Carlos, Calif. / Sequoia
76	Chris Emter	OL	6-4	302	Sr	Livingston / Park
77	Anthony Reisch	OL	6-2	280	Fr	Pasco, Wash. / Chiawana
79	Jacob Clark	OL	6-4	250	Fr	Bonney Lake, Wash. / Sumner
80	Sam Stratton	TE	6-6	240	Soph	Spokane, Wash. / Shadle Park
81	Shane Sipes	WR	6-2	190	RS-Fr	Newbury Park, Calif. / Newbury Park
82	Addison Vergara	WR	6-2	210	Jr	Greeley, Colo. / Greeley West
83	William Noce-Sheldon	WR	6-0	190	Soph	Camas, Wash. / Seton Catholic
84	Walker Ray	OLB	6-4	245	Sr	Nampa, Idaho / Skyview
85	Connor McGree	TE	6-3	245	Jr	Butte / Butte Central
86	Kyle Pierce	WR	6-3	190	Fr	Nampa, Idaho / Skyview
87	Paul Hart	WR	6-3	190	Soph	Helena / Helena
88	Chase Fossum	WR	6-5	206	R-So.	Glasgow / Glasgow
89	Patrick Kosena	WR	6-3	190	Jr	Missoula / Loyola Sacred Heart
90	Alex Hoffman	TE	6-4	245	RS-Fr	Draper, Utah / Juan Diego
91	Alec Basterrechea	DE	6-2	250	Sr	Gooding, Idaho / Gooding
92	Alex Thomas	LB	6-1	230	Jr	Great Falls / C.M. Russell
93	Alex Hurlbut	DE	6-2	260	Soph	Ventura, Calif. / Ventura
94	Garrett Kocab	DL	6-3	265	Fr	Phelan, Calif. / Serrano
96	Jackson Griffin	OLB	6-3	200	RS-Fr	Powell, Wyo. / Powell
97	Hunter Mycke	LB	6-2	215	Fr	Conrad / Conrad
99	Seamus Tully	DL	6-2	280	RS-Fr	Bellows Falls, Vt. / New Hampton School
	Brigham Baker	K	6-0	180	Fr	Lakeside, Ore. / North Bend
	Decker Bicoy	DB	5-9	160	Fr	Kaunakakai, Hawaii / Molokai
	Joseph Brangwin	DE	6-2	220	RS-Fr	Tum Tum, Wash. / Mary Walker
	Connor James	WR	5-10	175	Fr	Glendive / Dawson County
	Ryan James	DB	5-11	195	Fr	Yakima, Wash. / La Salle
	Zach Leahy	QB	6-1	175	Fr	Milton-Freewater, Ore. / DeSales
	Jordan Martin	WR	6-0	175	Fr	Yakima, Wash. / La Salle
	Jesus Parra-Gutierrez	RB	5-11	195	Fr	San Rafael, Calif. / San Rafael
	Austyn Sherwood	DB	5-11	185	Fr	Eureka / Lincoln County
	Eddie Starz	QB	5-11	185	Fr	Big Sky / Lone Peak
	Liam Vincent	DB	6-0	200	Soph	Riverton, Wyo. / Riverton
	Matt Wiltsey	WR	6-1	180	Soph	Sublimity, Ore. / Regis
	Dawson Zebarth	WR	5-11	180	Fr	Boise / Timberline

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Nick Howlett	Offensive Coordinator/QB
Alex Kastens	Defensive Line/Video Coordinator
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FRONTIER CONFERENCE LEADERS

TOTAL OFFENSE PER GAME

		Games	Rush	Pass	Total	Yds/Gm
1	Trosin, Tanner	Southern Oregon	5	141	1737	1878 375.6
2	McQueary, Quinn	Montana Tech	5	140	1685	1825 365
3	Gibson, Bennett	Montana Western	5	-23	1416	1393 278.6
4	Peterson, Darius-James	College of Idaho	5	404	985	1389 277.8
5	Quinn, Kai	Eastern Oregon	5	390	825	1215 243
6	Wilson, Tommy	Montana State-Northern	5	47	1066	1113 222.6
7	Bakken, Jacob	Rocky Mountain	5	261	761	1022 204.4
8	Fike, Jed	Montana Tech	5	765	0	765 153
9	Gustavsen, Tanner	Carroll	5	65	693	758 151.6
10	Thomsen, Hunter	Montana Western	5	467	0	467 93.4
11	Melby, Mason	Rocky Mountain	5	389	0	389 77.8
12	Ali, Major	Carroll	5	375	0	375 75
13	Sparks, Sam	Rocky Mountain	5	315	0	315 63
14	Lesser, John	Eastern Oregon	5	278	0	278 55.6
15	Blanchard, Trey	Montana State-Northern	5	248	0	248 49.6

RUSHING PER GAME

		Games	Rsh	Rsh Yds	Yds/Rush	Rsh TD	Yds/Gm
1	Fike, Jed	Montana Tech	5	114	765	6.7	8 153
2	Thomsen, Hunter	Montana Western	5	114	467	4.1	1 93.4
3	Peterson, Darius-James	College of Idaho	5	99	404	4.1	5 80.8
4	Quinn, Kai	Eastern Oregon	5	61	390	6.4	5 78
5	Melby, Mason	Rocky Mountain	5	57	389	6.8	7 77.8
6	Ali, Major	Carroll	5	73	375	5.1	4 75
7	Sparks, Sam	Rocky Mountain	5	64	315	4.9	1 63
8	Lesser, John	Eastern Oregon	5	63	278	4.4	2 55.6
9	Bakken, Jacob	Rocky Mountain	5	57	261	4.6	3 52.2
10	Blanchard, Trey	Montana State-Northern	5	50	248	5	0 49.6
11	Walsh, Ryan	Carroll	5	51	223	4.4	1 44.6
12	Vega, Rey	Southern Oregon	5	58	216	3.7	2 43.2
13	Dias, Victor	Eastern Oregon	5	38	208	5.5	2 41.6
14	Kirby, Mike	College of Idaho	5	39	177	4.5	3 35.4
15	Olson, Jade	Rocky Mountain	5	21	148	7	0 29.6

PASSING PER GAME

		Games	ATT	Comp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Avg
1	Trosin, Tanner	Southern Oregon	5	187	118	2	0.631	1737	11 347.4
2	McQueary, Quinn	Montana Tech	5	192	128	6	0.667	1685	16 337
3	Gibson, Bennett	Montana Western	5	155	95	4	0.613	1416	11 283.2
4	Wilson, Tommy	Montana State-Northern	5	192	103	11	0.536	1066	7 213.2
5	Peterson, Darius-James	College of Idaho	5	131	72	9	0.55	985	2 197
6	Quinn, Kai	Eastern Oregon	5	137	74	3	0.54	825	5 165
7	Bakken, Jacob	Rocky Mountain	5	114	70	2	0.614	761	4 152.2
8	Gustavsen, Tanner	Carroll	5	109	58	4	0.532	693	5 138.6
9	Cox, Tyler	College of Idaho	5	11	6	2	0.545	97	1 19.4
10	Williams, Dion	Montana Tech	5	1	1	0	1	33	0 6.6
11	Cliff, Broch	College of Idaho	5	1	0	1	0	0	0 0

RECEIVING PER GAME

		Games	Rec	Yards	Avg/Catch	Yds/Gm
1	Williams, Dion	Montana Tech	5	35	450	12.9 90
2	Suell, Jordan	Southern Oregon	4	17	317	18.6 79.3
3	Boudreaux, Matt	Southern Oregon	5	20	352	17.6 70.4
4	Sherwood, George	Montana Western	5	21	337	16 67.4
5	Simkins, Nate	Montana Western	5	18	321	17.8 64.2
6	Kelly, Brenden	Eastern Oregon	5	22	310	14.1 62
7	Lachance, Chris	Montana Tech	5	13	303	23.3 60.6
8	Sullivan, Sean	Montana Tech	5	28	290	10.4 58
9	Williams, Marvin	Montana State-Northern	5	19	289	15.2 57.8
10	Walser, Melvin	Montana Western	5	15	276	18.4 55.2
11	Kelly, Chris	Montana Tech	5	23	273	11.9 54.6
12	Robinson, Shayne	College of Idaho	5	17	249	14.6 49.8
13	Sipes, Shane	Carroll	5	13	234	18 46.8
14	Crafton, Keegan	College of Idaho	5	16	227	14.2 45.4
15	Fike, Jed	Montana Tech	5	11	225	20.5 45

INTERCEPTIONS

		Games	Yds	TD	Int/Game	Ints
1	Janis, Zach	Montana Western	5	27	0	0.6 3
	Clark, Tristan	Montana Western	5	58	0	0.6 3
	Williams, Terrance	Rocky Mountain	5	11	0	0.6 3
	Fagan, Keenan	Rocky Mountain	5	13	0	0.6 3
5	Jefferson, Kendall	Rocky Mountain	5	0	0	0.4 2
	Melton, Drew	Carroll	5	7	0	0.4 2
	Lawrence, Keegan	Southern Oregon	5	25	0	0.4 2
	Bergen, Dequincy	Montana State-Northern	5	0	0	0.4 2
	Cortez, Anfernee	Eastern Oregon	3	0	0	0.7 2
	Ferris, Jason	Montana Western	5	29	0	0.4 2
	Oana, Sonny	Montana Western	4	0	0	0.5 2
	Owens, Jay	Montana Western	4	67	1	0.5 2

TACKLES PER GAME

		Games	UA	A	Total	Avg/G
1	Fowler, Garet	Montana State-Northern	5	22	30	52 10.4
	Janis, Zach	Montana Western	5	31	21	52 10.4
3	Moore, Nate	College of Idaho	5	19	32	51 10.2
4	Bergen, Dequincy	Montana State-Northern	5	25	25	50 10
5	Arenas, Michal	Eastern Oregon	5	20	26	46 9.2
6	Olubi, Segun	College of Idaho	5	24	21	45 9
7	Gage, Devvon	Southern Oregon	5	23	19	42 8.4
8	Kelley, Dylan	Montana State-Northern	4	16	17	33 8.3
9	Lawrence, Keegan	Southern Oregon	5	26	13	39 7.8
	Johnson, Tucker	Carroll	5	33	6	39 7.8
11	Wagner, Alec	Montana State-Northern	4	20	10	30 7.5
12	Temple, Hunter	College of Idaho	5	20	17	37 7.4
13	Fernandez, Steven	Montana State-Northern	5	18	18	36 7.2
14	Criss, Devariej	Montana State-Northern	5	24	11	35 7

SACKS

		Games	Solo	Ast	Yds	Scks/Gm	Total
1	Wines, Connor	Montana Tech	5	5	2	20	1.2 6
	Rice, Ryder	Rocky Mountain	5	6	0	51	1.2 6
	Holmes, Tre	Southern Oregon	5	5	2	23	1.2 6
4	Hansen, Chance	Montana Tech	5	4	2	14.5	1 5
5	Carter, Isiah	Southern Oregon	5	4	0	9	0.8 4
6	Gauger, Armando	Southern Oregon	5	3	0	19	0.6 3
	Forrest III, August	Southern Oregon	5	3	0	13	0.6 3
8	Rogers, Sean	Southern Oregon	5	1	3	6	0.5 2.5
	Rivers, Forrest	College of Idaho	5	2	1	23	0.5 2.5
10	Van Wyck, Chase	Eastern Oregon	5	2	0	14	0.4 2

FIELD GOALS

		Games	FG	FGA	Pct	Avg
1	Amies, Griff	Rocky Mountain	6	7	10	0.7 1.2
2	Kharchenko, Mark	Montana Western	6	6	8	0.75 1
	Montano, Marcus	Southern Oregon	5	5	7	0.714 1
4	Harden, Nathan	Eastern Oregon	5	4	4	1 0.8
5	Langley, Tommy	Montana State-Northern	6	4	8	0.5 0.7

PUNTING

		Games	Punts	Yards	Avg
1	Harden, Nathan	Eastern Oregon	5	31	1383 44.6
2	Torgerson, Dylan	Carroll	5	23	969 42.1
3	DesPrez, Louis	Southern Oregon	4	15	623 41.5
4	Larson, Matt	Rocky Mountain	6	26	1048 40.3
5	Holt, Derrick	Montana Tech	5	20	764 38.2
6	Sherwood, George	Montana Western	6	29	1102 38
7	Tapia, Sam	Montana State-Northern	6	34	1246 36.6

PUNT RETURNS

		Games	Ret	Avg	Yards
1	Lynde, Levi	Montana Tech	3	7	20.7 145
2	Pattwell, Keenan	College of Idaho	5	12	8.2 98
3	Beaulieu, Ryan	Carroll	5	8	7.5 60
4	Connors, Calvin	Eastern Oregon	5	9	4.9 44
5	Christian, Devyn	Montana Western	6	10	3.8 38
	Hunthausen, Will	Montana Tech	4	7	5.4 38
7	Lyons, Nik	College of Idaho	6	1	32 32
8	Cooper, AJ	Southern Oregon	5	5	5.8 29
9	Boudreaux, Matt	Southern Oregon	5	4	6.3 25
10	Giampaoli, Dominic	Southern Oregon	5	1	23 23
11	Gray, Max	Rocky Mountain	6	5	3.8 19
12	Price, Josh	College of Idaho	6	1	14 14
13	Kelly, Brenden	Eastern Oregon	5	1	6 6
14	Mix, Sam	Montana State-Northern	4	2	2.5 5
	Williams, Marvin	Montana State-Northern	6	4	1.3 5

KICK OFF RETURNS

		Games	Ret	TDs	Avg	Yards
1	Pattwell, Keenan	College of Idaho	5	18	0	23.1 415
2	Sparks, Sam	Rocky Mountain	6	15	1	24.9 373
3	Sipes, Shane	Carroll	5	13	1	23.2 301
4	Connors, Calvin	Eastern Oregon	5	12	0	23.8 286
5	Hermanson, Jamison	Montana Western	4	11	0	20.2 222
6	Lynde, Levi	Montana Tech	3	9	0	20.7 186
7	Richie, Isaiah	Eastern Oregon	5	9	0	20.1 181
8	Jordanoglou, Fotios	Montana State-Northern	6	9	0	16.4 148

Fike

continued from Page MT4

Tech heading into its game with the Fighting Saints. The Orediggers are coming off a loss to Montana Western and need a win to stay in contention for their third consecutive conference championship.

Tech handled Carroll 45-28 in the teams' first meeting of the year and after a slow start in that contest, Fike ran for 132 yards and two touchdowns. He came up big in his first rivalry game as an Oredigger and seems to understand the importance of the game.

It still wasn't an easy task. "It was pretty overwhelming," Fike said. "There were a lot of people there and everyone was ready for the game since last spring. There was a lot of hype and we're definitely looking forward to playing those guys again."

The Tech-Carroll game is heading back to Helena and with that comes a new set of challenges.

The Orediggers haven't quite been the same team away from home and will surely be tested in a hostile environment. The only blemish in Tech's 9-1 regular season from a year ago was picked up at Carroll College.

The Saints are desperate to salvage something positive out of what has been a rough season. A huge win over a rival might be the thing to get their season back on the right track and there's little chance Carroll won't play hard.

They've already experienced the potency of Fike and the rest of the Tech offense, though the running back isn't particularly worried what Carroll College will bring to the table.

"We have to go in and play our brand of football," he said. "We're a juggernaut offense. We're one of the best

(through Oct. 7)

TEAM STATISTICS

SCORING
 Points Per Game
 FIRST DOWNS
 Rushing
 Passing
 Penalty
 RUSHING YARDAGE
 Yards gained rushing
 Yards lost rushing
 Rushing Attempts
 Average Per Rush
 Average Per Game
 TDs Rushing
 PASSING YARDAGE
 Att-Comp-Int
 Average Per Pass
 Average Per Catch
 Average Per Game
 TDs Passing
 TOTAL OFFENSE
 Total Plays
 Average Per Play
 Average Per Game
 KICK RETURNS
 PUNT RETURNS
 INT RETURNS
 KICK RETURN AVERAGE
 PUNT RETURN AVERAGE
 INT RETURN AVERAGE

MONTANA TECH

246
49.20
146
59
79
8
1110
1177
67
194
5.7
222.0
17
1761
205-136-6
8.59
12.95
352.20
16
2871
399
7.2
574.2
16-299
14-183
4-48
18.69
13.07
12.00

Montana Tech Football Statistics

OPPONENTS	Alec Steele	5	8	26	3.25	0	13	5.20
	Quade McQueary	2	2	11	5.50	0	7	5.50
	Sam McCamley	1	3	10	3.33	0	6	10.00
	Will Hunthausen	4	2	8	4.00	0	8	2.00
	Braden Feisthamel	4	1	7	7.00	0	5	1.75
	Braxton Porter	5	1	7	7.00	0	7	1.40
	Reid Nelson	4	1	5	5.00	0	5	1.25
	TOTAL	5	136	1761	12.95	16	75	352.20

PUNT RETURNS

Yards	Avg	TD	Long
145	20.71	1	88
38	5.43	0	9
183	13.07	1	88

INTERCEPTIONS

Yards	Avg	TD	Long
23	23.00	0	23
20	20.00	0	20
5	5.00	0	5
0	0.00	0	0
48	12.00	0	23

KICK RETURNS

Yards	Avg	TD	Long
162	18.00	0	47
74	18.50	0	23
63	21.00	0	24
299	18.69	0	47

PUNTING

Avg	Long	TB	FC	I20	50+	Blocked
38.20	64	2	2	8	0	1
40.00	40	0	0	0	0	0
38.29	64	2	2	8	0	1

FIELD GOALS

Pct	01-1920-	2930-	3940-	4950-	99 Long	Blkd
0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

KICKOFFS

Yards	Avg	TB	OB
2363	56.3	19	0
2363	56.3	19	0

15 DEFENSIVE LEADERS

[illegible]

Name	GP	Effi.	Comp	PASSING	
				Att	Int
Quinn McQueary	5	161.96	127	191	6
Davan Norris	2	89.32	8	13	0
Dion Williams	5	377.20	1	1	0
TOTAL	5	158.40	136	205	6

Name	GP	Att	RUSHING	
			Gain	Loss
Jed Fike	5	114	785	20
Quinn McQueary	5	37	174	34
Braden Feisthamel	4	21	93	5
Braxton Porter	5	13	86	5
Tyler Vendetti	1	3	26	1
Will Wyatt	3	3	13	0
TOTAL	5	194	1177	67

Name	GP	No.	Yards
Dion Williams	5	35	450
Chris LaChance	5	13	303
Sean Sullivan	5	28	290
Chris Kelly	5	22	273
Jed Fike	5	11	225
Tanner Osborne	4	4	64
Zeb Bloom	3	4	49
Quinn McQueary	5	1	33

offenses in the country, if not the best so we just have to go in, be relaxed, play our game and our defense will do its job.

"We'll be fine."

If Tech plays its brand of football and continues to light up the scoreboard, the Orediggers will prove Fike right.

The Orediggers will need another big game from Fike to help open up the passing offense for quarterback Quinn McQueary. There's a lot of trust in the coaching staff for the junior running back to be able to do that.

They're also not concerned with how he'll approach what should be another intense

rivalry game.

“From Jed’s standpoint, he’s just from the other side of the hill and is very familiar with these type of games,” Morrell said. “He knows a lot of the

guys that play on other teams and I think his indoctrination is probably not as steep of a learning curve as a player that's an incoming freshman or a player from out of state."

The rest of the Frontier Conference

In addition to Carroll and No. 11 Montana Tech's matchup, here's a look at how the rest of the Frontier Conference is shaking out this week.

Rocky Mountain College (3-3) at Montana State-Northern Lights (1-5)

Previous games: The Northern Lights traveled to Eastern Oregon last weekend and fell 41-12 in a night game in La Grande. Northern is searching for its first conference win of the season. MSU-N's lone victory came against Mayville State (North Dakota), 43-29. The Lights have not won a conference game since defeating Carroll College in Havre a last season. ... Rocky Mountain College enters the week fresh of a bye. Rocky is off to a strong start under first-year coach Jason Petrino. The Battlin' Bears' last game was on Sept. 30, where the Rocky fell 24-23 to Southern Oregon, the long undefeated team in the Frontier.

Last meeting: Rocky needed a touchdown on a kick return in the final minutes to put away the Lights. Rocky escaped with a 32-25 win in Billings in both teams' first conference game of the season.

College of Idaho (2-4) at Montana Western (3-3)

Previous games: Both COI and UMW enter the week coming off wins, though Western's upset of No. 5 Montana Tech certainly stands much farther out. It was Western's second consecutive win, signaling perhaps the Bulldogs are rounding back into the Top 25 team many thought they may be in the preseason. Senior quarterback Bennett Gibson earned the NAIA Offensive Player of the

Week award for throwing for a career-best 365 yards, and scoring five touchdowns. ... College of Idaho got its first win in Nelson Stadium against Carroll College last weekend, 21-6. The Coyotes were good enough behind quarterback Darius-James Peterson, while negating Carroll's passing attack, to win. It got coach Mike Moroski a second win of the season, as COI defeated Eastern Oregon 28-20 in mid-September.

Last meeting: In the first game of this season, then-No. 19 Montana Western went to College of Idaho and got a 16-14 win. The win came before Western would plummet out of the rankings and endure a three-game losing streak.

No. 7 Southern Oregon (5-0) at Eastern Oregon (2-3)

Previous games: Eastern Oregon found its second win of the season last weekend, defeating Montana State-Northern 41-12. The Mountaineers started the season with a loss before picking up a win against Montana Western 27-24. Then, a pair of losses had the Mountaineers reeling before last weekend's victory. Eastern Oregon will look for a signature win in La Grande. ... Southern Oregon had a bye week, and actually found itself at the top of the standings after Montana Tech was upset. The Raiders have played in blowouts and close wins, evidenced by their last week on Sept. 30, a 24-23 home victory over Rocky Mountain. Many think Southern's defense would be the best in the conference, and its speedy offense make the Raiders a tough out.

Last meeting: Southern hosted Eastern in the first game of the season and won 31-21.

Tyler Miller
The Montana Standard
Publisher

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WELCOME TO THE RIVALRY

1st-year 'Digger Jed Fike is no stranger to rivalry matchups

JORDAN HANSEN
406mtsports.com

BUTTE — Football players at Montana Tech take their rivalry-games seriously.

Perhaps it's because of the geographic location of the teams in the Frontier Conference or something having to do more with being in Montana, where many of those rivalries are produced at an early age.



Jed Fike

Either way, football is important here — primarily at the high school and collegiate levels.

The Orediggers really have two big traditional rivals in Montana Western and Carroll College. Most of the players on the team understand this coming into the program.

Why?

It's pretty simple. The majority of players on the Montana Tech roster hail from Montana and have been around the Frontier Conference for most of their lives. Other players on the team indoctrinate the athletes who



WALTER HINICK, 406mtsports.com

Montana Tech running back Jed Fike got his first taste of the Montana Tech-Carroll College rivalry by rushing for 132 yards in the Orediggers' opening-day win at Alumni Coliseum.

aren't local or familiar with the rivalries and traditions.

The coaching staff doesn't need to get involved in that indoctrination.

"Our veteran players help the new guys sort out and understand the rivalry stuff," Oredigger head coach Chuck Morrell said. "I think our veterans guys do a good job of getting guys dialed in on it."

While Jed fike, a transfer from Dickinson State isn't exactly a veteran — he's in his first year with the Orediggers — he knows a thing or two about local rivalry-games.

Fike attended Jefferson and Whitehall high schools,

spending his latter days as a Trojan. He got the unique perspective of seeing both sides of that particular rivalry.

"To me, it was huge," Fike recalled. "To the outside, it might not be the biggest rivalry game but to the players it was a big deal. It'll always be a thing I remember."

Once he graduated from high school he had plenty of opportunities and places to go play football. He settled on Dickinson State and red-shirted his freshman season.

Last year, he played in all 12 games for the Blue Hawks,

racking up 898 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns on 135 carries. His best game of the season was in a first-round playoff matchup against Montana Tech where he had 186 yards of total offense.

Shortly after that game, he decided to transfer to Montana Tech because he wanted to be closer to home.

While the Orediggers and DSU aren't exactly rivals, they have met in the playoffs in each past two seasons. Fike's move to Tech might just heat up the tension between the two teams if they end up seeing each other for a third year in a row.

Fike doesn't feel DSU really had the same type of rivalry games in the North Star Athletic Association. Just five games into his career at Tech he's already been in two rivalry games and when the 'Diggers kick off in Helena on Saturday that number will move to three.

"That's something I've really noticed about the Frontier Conference compared to the North Star: the rivalry games," Fike said. "There's a lot of tension between all the teams in this conference and in the North Star, they're kind of separated."

There's more tension than there has been all season for

*More **FIKE**, page MT6*

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Green

continued from Page MT1

the rules of blocking—where offensive line can extend its arms. We minimized how you can hit receivers. The offense really took the forefront of those changes.”

He pointed out that those changes were for the better and ultimately resulted in a more exciting game.

Green also saw schools across the board undergo a paradigm shift as college football became a focal point and programs engaged in an arms race to build better stadiums and reinvigorate their programs.

“I saw the college game evolve to where everybody wants to be good,” said Green, whose overall 40-year coaching career made stops at four colleges and two high schools. “Today all schools want to have good facilities and good coaches. I think those things have contributed to a very interesting and very passionate game that we continue to see.”

Tech was swept up in this trend of strengthening its football program, and Green oversaw many of those changes through the years; from a renovated press box, to an improved scoreboard, to the addition of a jumbo tron, to the installation of an artificial surface field which Green pointed out is not only safer and cheaper to maintain but aids in the recruiting effort.

“And grass doesn’t grow very well here at 6,000 feet,” he quipped.

Green said he’s honored that the field is titled “Bob Green Field at Alumni Coliseum” but also stressed that he’d prefer it hold another name: “Players Field.”

“When I was coaching, I didn’t have a lot of things figured out but I did know one thing — it’s players that win

games,” he reasoned.

The Frontier Conference also matured and transformed during his time with Tech.

“When I first came here in 1987, Montana Western had dropped its program for a year,” he said. “But for smaller universities, college football is absolutely important because it contributes to enrollment. Western saw that dropping football caused a decrease in enrollment so by 1988 football was back.

“As the seasons went on, Northern reinvigorated its program. We grew, adding Eastern Oregon and Southern Oregon as a full-time member. And for a while we had Dickinson State.”

Green: After football

Green loved coaching, but he’s been just as enthusiastic as a fan for the past seven seasons since hanging up his whistle.

“It’s a different feeling, and I always want the ‘Diggers to win real badly, but I love to watch from the stadium,” he said. “I haven’t missed an Oredigger game, home or away, since I retired.”

He’s as boisterous from the stands as he was from the sidelines.

“I admit it, I’m loud,” he said with a grin. “I think some people enjoy sitting with me and getting a coaches’ perspective on the game. And then I think some people just want me to be quiet.”

Now working for the Montana Tech foundation, traveling to Oredigger road games gives him a chance to connect with Montana Tech grads now spread across the Frontier Conference map.

Final thoughts

Green required only two words to summarize his emotions for Saturday’s rematch between Montana Tech and Carroll.

“Go Orediggers!”



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THE ROAD TO THE REMATCH

A look back at Montana Tech's first five games of the 2017 season to set the stage for the 4-1 Orediggers' rematch against 1-4 Carroll College in Helena.

MONTANA TECH 45, CARROLL COLLEGE 28 Aug. 31

BUTTE — Quinn McQueary racked up 338 yards and three touchdowns as the No. 6 Orediggers opened up their 2017 campaign with a home win over the Saints in the Copper Game.

McQueary was 27-for-41 passing and connected with nine different receivers.

Montana Tech trailed 7-0 early on but rallied back quickly on a 73-yard touchdown pass from McQueary to Chris LaChance in the early second quarter.

Complimenting McQueary on offense, Jed Fike rushed 26 times for 130 yards and two touchdowns. Fike helped turn the game the Digger way when he hauled in a 45-yard pass late in the second quarter.

In the second half, Montana Tech scored three touchdowns and added a 29-yard field goal to put the game out of reach. The end-cap for the Digger offensive showing was Dion Williams hauling in an 8 yard strike from McQueary with three minutes left to play.

Reid Siderius and Daniel Van Dyke led the Digger defensive effort combining for 16 tackles. Danny Mannix and Chance Hansen each added a quarterback sack.

MONTANA TECH 70, MSU-NORTHERN 27 SEPT. 9

HAVRE — The Orediggers produced a record-setting effort in a blowout win over the Northern Lights at Blue Pony Stadium.

Offensive Coordinator Pete Sterbick's offense scored a school record 70 points in three quarters of action against MSU-Northern helping the Diggers improve to 2-0 on the young season.

Quinn McQueary went 23-for-31 for 394 yards and four touchdowns while gaining 73 yards and tallying two scores with his feet. McQueary opened up the Digger scoring with a pair of touchdown runs in the first quarter to give the Diggers a 14-6 lead. McQueary also had a 23-yard reception to set up a Montana Tech red zone opportunity.

After allowing Northern to score the first points of the game, the Diggers racked up five unanswered touchdowns during the first and second quarter before Northern scored again and Montana Tech took a 42-20 lead into the break.

Senior Sean Sullivan led the Oredigger receivers with eight grabs for 119 yards while Dion Williams added four catches for 72 yards and a pair of scores. Chris Kelly had four grabs for 46 yards and a score while Chris LaChance had three receptions and one touchdown.

Not lacking in the ground game, the Diggers piled up close to 300 rushing yards behind Jed Fike's 215 yard rushing performance. Fike rushed 22 times and had a pair of touchdowns while Braxton Porter added 70 yards and two touchdowns.

Clay Dean led the Digger defense with 11 tackles while Justin May added 10 tackles and an interception.

MONTANA TECH 34, ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE 28 SEPT. 16

BILLINGS — Dion Williams piled up 161 receiving yards and the 'Diggers held off a late charge by the

Battlin' Bears to improve to 3-0.

The Diggers jumped to a quick 7-0 lead courtesy of a 75-yard touchdown pass from Quinn McQueary to Williams.

Later in the first half, Montana Tech increased their lead when Quinn McQueary rumbled into the endzone twice from fifteen and two yards out.

Rocky scored on its opening possession of the second half on a Mason Melby 1-yard rush.

McQueary showed off the arm with a pair of passing touchdowns in the third quarter, connecting with Sean Sullivan and Chris Kelly in the endzone. The Kelly touchdown put the Diggers ahead 34-7 late in the third.

McQueary was 24-for-37 passing for 327 yards with three touchdowns through the air and two on the ground. The senior signal-caller found seven different receivers on the day.

Dion Williams led the Digger receiving corps with 161 yards, while Chris Kelly added 87 yards and Sean Sullivan caught six passes for 31 yards.

Jed Fike continued his dominant ground game rumbling for 142 yards on 26 carries averaging 5.5 yards per carry.

MONTANA TECH 62, EASTERN OREGON 14 SEPT. 23

BUTTE — The Orediggers responded to an early 7-point deficit by reeling off six unanswered touchdowns to rout the Mountaineers and stay unbeaten.

After allowing Eastern Oregon to jump ahead 7-0 early in the contest the Diggers replied with six unanswered touchdowns in the first half to lead 42-7 at the break.

Quarterback Quinn McQueary had another

highlight filled day completing 23-of-38 pass attempts for 341 yards and five touchdowns. McQueary threw touchdown passes to Chris Kelly, Dion Williams, Jed Fike, Sean Sullivan, and Zeb Bloom in the contest. McQueary also ran in a touchdown in the first half.

Chris Kelly led all receivers with 101 yards on five catches. Dion Williams and Sean Sullivan each added five receptions for 68 and 45 yards respectively.

Jed Fike rushed 11 times for 174 yards and a touchdown.

Defensively, Montana Tech was led by Connor Wines who had seven tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss, and 3.5 sacks. Chance Hansen added six tackles and 2.5 sacks.

Jalen Johnson and Andre Brown each had interceptions for the Tech defense.

MONTANA WESTERN 42, MONTANA TECH 35 OCT. 7

The Orediggers bolted to a 14-point lead in the first quarter but a five-touchdown performance from Bennett Gibson helped the Bulldogs rally back and deliver the upset win to hand Tech its first loss of the season and knock the 'Diggers from No. 5 to No. 11.

The 'Diggers jumped ahead to a 14-0 lead on the Bulldogs, but Western responded back and it was all tied up at 21-21 at halftime.

In the second half, both teams added a pair of touchdowns to the board to tie it up at 35-35 with just minutes left. Western found the endzone with 1:59 remaining on a 5-yard quarterback keeper from Bennett Gibson for the go-ahead score.

Tech then drove 15 yards to its own 40 before Bulldogs defensive back Sonny Oana intercepted Quinn McQueary to seal the win for Western.

RIVALRY TALK

Former Tech coach Bob Green discusses Orediggers vs. Saints

LUKE SHELTON

406mtsports.com

BUTTE — Bob Green strolled through Montana Tech's ELC building around 9 a.m. and warmly greeted just about every person he saw like an old friend.

A genial handshake here, a friendly slap on the back there peppered with some words of encouragement.

At this early hour, he probably had more energy than most of the undergraduates ducking into their morning classes.

His jovial encounters left little doubt that Green is a well-known and well-respected presence on the Tech campus — as if the football field bearing his name didn't already establish that — and his grey sweater emblazoned with a large green "Montana Tech Football" logo across the front left little doubt to his coaching pedigree and team loyalty.

The legendary former Montana Tech football coach, who revitalized a fledgling program and guided the Orediggers for 24 seasons, entered his office on the third floor — he now works for the Montana Tech Foundation and happily declared that he is "the lowest guy on the totem pole" — and pulled up a chair at his desk.

Green shared his thoughts on the Montana Tech-Carroll College rivalry.

What makes Montana Tech vs. Carroll such a unique rivalry?

Few people are as familiarized as Green with the excitement, anticipation and ensuing pandemonium that is a clash between Orediggers



LUKE SHELTON, 406mtsports.com

Former Montana Tech football coach Bob Green led the Orediggers in dozens of games against the rival Carroll College Saints.

and Fighting Saints.

And though his career took him through the high schools ranks, Division II programs and the Big Sky Conference, Green said no other rivalry he experienced was as intense as that between Tech and Carroll.

"The old coaching saying that 'every game is important' is absolutely true," said Green. "But when you have a rivalry like the one between Tech and Carroll, it really adds to it. Both teams, both schools are really into it. It's always a great contest and it's always hard-fought."

It's a great rivalry. Tech and Carroll have been playing each other for a long time. They played each other for a long time before I got here and long after I'm gone they'll continue playing each other."

Throughout his decades-long career with the 'Diggers, Green's teams compiled a 140-116-1 record and made five trips to the NAIA

playoffs. The 1996 team became the first from the Frontier Conference to play for an NAIA national championship.

Green noted that the intensity of the clashes between the 'Diggers and Saints was generated from respect between two Frontier powerhouses who rotated in taking shots at the Frontier title and making runs through the playoffs.

"Quite honestly, Carroll was always hard to beat," Green said. "They were a very good team and we always bumped heads with them."

I coached against Coach (Jason) Petrino and against Coach Van Diest. They both did a great job. Football means a lot to Carroll and football means a lot to Montana Tech. The fact that they were good and the fact that we've been good certainly contributed. We've both been successful."

The memories that come

to Green's mind when looking back at his battles against Carroll run a full gamut from the exhilarating to the painful.

"We played them in the playoffs and in the conference championship and we tied with them," said Green, trying to summarize his dozens of contests against the Saints. "Points allowed, various tie-breakers. You remember ones you won, and some of them you should have won, some heartbreaking losses, overtime games. They all stick out."

Green also acknowledged that — while there was always something special about games against Carroll — the other teams in the conference also produced some strong rivalries.

"Every game in the Frontier is tough," Green said. "We had some epic struggles with Western, Rocky, Northern and now with the advent of the Oregon schools. Truly the Frontier Conference is the apex of the football in the NAIA."

Football's evolution under Green

Green's arrival at Montana Tech spurred needed change within its football team, a program that had averaged less than two wins a season in the 78 years preceding him assuming command.

Throughout his tenure he also witnessed college football evolve as player safety became a growing area of focus.

"Obviously the game itself has changed and the college game has really changed," said Green. "We narrowed the hash marks. We changed

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