

SACRAMENTO STATE AT MONTANA • KICKOFF: 6 P.M. SATURDAY • TV: MTN • THURSDAY, NOV. 2, 2023

GRIZZLY GAME DAY

Missoulian



GRAVES

Senior safety Garrett Graves carries team-first mentality beyond the field

NEW WORLD

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Q&A: TE EVAN SHAFER PAGE 4 • BIG SKY NOTEBOOK PAGE 5 • PICKS: SPELTZ PICKS THE BIG SKY PAGE 8

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Graves is a selfless contributor

Eureka native finds new identity through his volunteer work

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Garrett Graves likes to volunteer.

The Montana senior safety doesn't like to talk about his community service. He doesn't keep track of the service projects he's done over the years. When his academic adviser recently asked him about submitting his civic engagement for an award nomination, he had a hard time recalling.

Graves says that in the most humble way. For him, volunteer work isn't about recognition from others. He's not taking pictures when he visits students at elementary schools because he wants some sort of social media clout. He just wants to help people however he can.

"I feel it's important to give back because this community has given so much to me," he said prior to Montana's game against Sacramento State at 6 p.m. Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. "It's just a no-brainer to go there and try to give something back."

"Here in Missoula and the whole state of Montana, everyone is just good people. I've gained so much from everyone. I'll never be able to give back as much as I've gotten. I want to learn and I want to help out where I can. I think that understanding the world better is something that's important to me and something that I think I've gained a lot of through volunteering."

Graves was recognized for his community engagement when he was named UM's Montana Athlete in Service awardee in 2020. He was one of 12 student-athletes around the state, and the only football player, recognized by Montana Campus Compact.



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana safety Garrett Graves (5) dodges a tackle against Idaho State wide receiver Champion Edwards (21) after catching a pass on a fake punt during the Big Sky Conference football game between the Griz and Idaho State on Sept. 30 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

Graves has volunteered with youth after-school programs and mentored elementary students and served in the Martin Luther King Jr. Read for Peace program and engaged as a discussion leader with St. Ignatius High School's One Book One Community program and helped at youth soccer camps and assisted students moving into dorms and fed families at a local church and participated in a bone marrow registry and collected firewood or raked leaves for people in need. It's exhausting just reading that even though it's not an exhaustive list.

Perhaps Graves' most meaningful experience has been being involved in Montana's Athletics Diversity & Inclusion Committee. It was something newer to him, like learning about the homeless

problem in Missoula, something he hadn't seen much of in Eureka before coming to town.

"I've seen a lot of my teammates just tell me how big a deal that was to them," he said of the ADIC. "Coming from different states to Montana and there's not a lot of diversity, a lot of my teammates that are minorities here are feeling kind of like sticking out like a sore thumb."

"Having people that they know are looking out for them and trying to incorporate things that make them feel a little bit more at home, just hearing the personal stories of the things they've had to go through and how people here are helping and being one of those things that's helped, that's made an impact on my heart. That's something that I've felt really good about."

Graves was one of 10 inaugural student-athletes on the committee when it was launched in September 2020. The group focuses on awareness and advocacy of diversity and inclusion issues, first educating themselves, then the athletic department and then the community.

Griz volleyball coach Allison Lawrence is one of five coaches on the committee. She has seen how Graves is dedicated to serving those around him. He's a role model even if he doesn't set out for that title. That's partly because he chooses to be about more than just football.

"Garrett's really rare in his ability to see the big picture," Lawrence said. "He thinks well in systems. He was able to be broad in his assessment of what we needed and when and how he

could show up for his teammates. He was so loyal to his teammates and his community in the sense that he would verbalize a lot: If something is affecting a teammate of mine, it affects me."

"I think that piece was so powerful as a white male who could easily look the other way or not identify with experiences of some of his teammates of color and say, 'Well, that's not my problem because it's never affected me.' The thing he taught our group and made him so powerful was that statement and that sentiment: If it's affecting someone that I love, then it's affecting me."

From the cradle

Graves felt he had some good role models to look up to growing up: his parents.

His father, Joel, is the superintendent of Eureka Public Schools. His mother, Leslie, is the owner of Pintler Billing Services, which she founded in 2001 to provide medical billing services to health care providers.

"My parents really emphasized doing the right thing every time you get a chance," he said. "They really emphasized that to whom much is given, much is required. I really feel like I'm living the dream. I'm a Division I football player at the greatest university in the country. Things are pretty easy for me. I've been given a lot and I feel a lot is required of me."

Graves also saw how people around town volunteered while he was growing up in Eureka. In the town with a population of about 1,400 people just 9 miles from the Canada-U.S. border, it's easier to see the struggles some people go through because everyone knows almost everyone.

He also looked up to his coaches and he admired older athletes. He remembered how they impacted him through their interactions. He's similarly made sure to give back to kids when he's had the same opportunities as an athlete that younger people across the

Shafer makes seamless transition

Division II transfer has become starter at tight end for Griz

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Evan Shafer has given the Montana Grizzlies a much-needed boost at the tight end position in his first season.

The transfer from the NCAA Division II level has played in all eight games and started the past four for UM, which began the season without its top four tight ends from 2022. He has four catches for 35 yards and two touchdowns, but it's his blocking that's been more needed and more impactful.

Shafer, a junior who stands at 6-foot-5 and 278 pounds, caught a 1-yard score at Utah Tech on Sept. 9 and a 15-yard TD against Idaho State on Sept. 30. He added a 10-yard catch against UC Davis on Oct. 7 and a 9-yard reception against Northern Colorado on Oct. 28.

Shafer played in nine games in 2022 with no stats at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. He appeared in two games in 2021 as a true freshman and caught one pass for a 2-yard touchdown. He played prep football at Connersville High School in Connersville, Indiana.

Shafer sat down with 406mtsports to talk about his first season in Missoula prior to the Grizzlies' home game against Sacramento State at 6 p.m. Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Q: Nice to finally meet you. How have you been enjoying Missoula? Have you gotten to do anything unique?

A: Missoula has been amazing. Being out here in the mountains is something I'm not used to. I've always lived around corn fields. This city compared to mine is huge. Being able to see how much everybody cares about football



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana tight end Evan Shafer (84) catches a pass in the end zone for a touchdown during the Big Sky Conference football game between the Griz and Idaho State on Sept. 30 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

is amazing. In the Midwestern states, they all have NFL teams. There's not a professional sports team out here, so that's what the Griz become. Moving out here, it was a culture shock. I've never been fly fishing before. Over the bye week, I got to go up to Fisher River, which does not have cell-phone service, for like two days. It was super nice. Me and our long snapper, Grayson Pibal, managed to make it up there and go fishing.

Q: I thought it was a crazy athletic combo that you were successful as both a heavy-weight wrestler and a hurdler

on the track. Did you consider either of those sports in college or was it always football?

A: I did have a full scholarship offer to wrestle for Liberty University in Virginia. The head coach actually flew to Indiana to watch me my senior year, when I got fourth in state. I had to pray about it. It was something I spent two to three weeks praying about, asking God to give me direction on where I was supposed to go. I ended up picking Div. II football because I felt football was a platform for me to express my faith. Track, there were some small-time offers.

Even as I got bigger as a football player, track helped me maintain flexibility, leg speed, movement speed and agility, and wrestling works on the different muscle groups nobody ever touches. When I combined everything, it always got me ready for the next football season.

Q: How did your time at Hillsdale College go and why were you looking to transfer?

A: I loved Hillsdale. It was an amazing place. The coaches were absolutely amazing. Nothing bad to say about them. What ended up happening was I had a situation

with the academic side of things. I was looking to transfer because they are very high academics. It's very prestigious. They're very selective with how many people get in each year. They restrict it to about 1,400 students because they want that high-rigor, high-academic person.

Q: So how did the recruiting with the Griz go down and what sold you?

A: I ended up going into the portal and within a week or so, coach Justin Green contacted me

UC Davis suffers costly loss

Aggies must win out to even make it onto FCS playoff bubble

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What appeared to be perfect timing turned out to be too little, too late.

UC Davis star running back Lan Larison returned from a knee injury last week and was productive in his first game since Sept. 23. But the Aggies fell 38-21 to Northern Arizona on Saturday in Flagstaff, Arizona. The loss delivered a big blow to Davis' Football Championship Subdivision playoff hopes.

Larison finished Saturday's game with a game-high 101 rushing yards on 24 carries. The junior from Idaho also made four catches for 14 yards and completed 1 of 2 passes for 15 in the loss.

The Aggies outgained NAU 476 to 289 in total yards and forced three turnovers, but Davis quarterback Miles Hastings threw three interceptions and lost a fumble that George Steele returned 90 yards for a touchdown to put NAU up 17-10 in the second quarter.

A 17-13 halftime score ballooned to 31-13 early in the fourth, and the Lumberjacks made it 38-21 shortly after Davis scored its final TD.

Larison, who's also a steer wrestler, got hurt late in the third quarter of Davis' Big Sky Conference opener against Eastern Washington on Sept. 23 in Davis, California. The Aggies led 24-20 when Larison left the game, and they were outscored 7-0 in the fourth.

Davis might've won that game if Larison was available for the final quarter. He had rushed for 255 yards and a TD on 22 carries before an EWU defender injured Larison's knee on a tackle. The



ANTONIO IBARRA OLIVARES, MISSOULIAN

Montana running back Nick Ostmo shakes off a tackle from UC Davis linebacker Teddy Buchanan (15) on Oct. 7 at UC Davis Health Stadium in Davis, California.

Aggies went three-and-out twice and missed a field goal on their three drives following Larison's exit.

With Larison on the sideline, Davis lost a close home game to Montana two weeks after the EWU loss.

Davis is now 4-4 overall and 2-3 in Big Sky play with three games remaining: at home against Portland State this Saturday, at Idaho State the week after that and at home against Sacramento State in the season-ending Causeway Classic. Sac State is ranked in the top 10 of the FCS, and neither PSU or ISU are pushovers.

The Aggies could reach the playoffs if they win out, considering they'd have a ranked victory on

their resume and would reach the FCS playoff committee's benchmark of seven Division I wins. But their losses to unranked EWU and NAU, plus a one-point win at unranked Weber State, make winning out look unlikely. Davis would be on the playoff bubble even if it beats its next three opponents.

Five Big Sky teams made the 2022 FCS playoffs, and Davis had a case to get selected as well. One of those five teams, Weber State, is out of the playoff running this season. The other four — Idaho, Montana, Montana State and Sacramento State — haven't secured a playoff berth yet but should make it easily if they don't suffer multiple upsets.

Two Big Sky teams rise, three fall in Top 25

Idaho's win over Montana State shook up the Stats Perform FCS Top 25.

Idaho rose six spots to No. 3, while MSU fell four spots to No. 6 in this week's rankings. Montana moved up three spots to No. 4, Sacramento State fell one spot to No. 7 and UC Davis fell out of the rankings. Davis, which was No. 25 last week, still received a few votes.

The new No. 2 is Furman, which was No. 3 last week. South Dakota State remained No. 1, and Delaware stayed put at No. 5.

Week 9

Slim playoff hopes for Eastern Washington and Idaho State were squashed Saturday. EWU lost at Portland State, and ISU fell at Sacramento State. Both teams have three Division I wins with three to play.

Week 9 Big Sky football scores:

Idaho 24, Montana State 21

Montana 40, Northern Colorado 0

Northern Arizona 38, UC Davis 21

Portland State 47, Eastern Washington 35

Sacramento State 51, Idaho State 16

This week Big Sky schedule:

Northern Arizona at Montana State, 1 p.m. MT

Idaho at Northern Colorado, 1 p.m.

Cal Poly at Eastern Washington, 2 p.m.

Weber State at Idaho State, 4 p.m.

Portland State at UC Davis, 5 p.m.

Sacramento State at Montana, 6 p.m.

Big Sky standings (overall, conference):

T1. Montana (7-1, 4-1)

T1. Idaho (6-2, 4-1)

T1. Montana State (6-2, 4-1)

T4. Sacramento State (6-2, 3-2)

T4. Portland State (4-4, 3-2)

T4. Idaho State (3-5, 3-2)

T4. Northern Arizona (3-5, 3-2)

T8. UC Davis (4-4, 2-3)

T8. Eastern Washington (3-5, 2-3)

T10. Cal Poly (3-5, 1-4)

T10. Weber State (3-5, 1-4)

12. Northern Colorado (0-8, 0-5)

See DAVIS, PAGE 11

MONTANA ROSTER

No.	NAME	YEAR	POS.	HGT.	WT.	HOMETOWN	40	Cooper Barnum	Jr.	LB	6-2	216	Vancouver, Wash.
0	Kale Edwards	R-Jr.	DE	6-5	240	Coeur d'Alene, Idaho	41	Brayton Boyer	Fr.	K	5-11	170	Madison, N.J.
2	Drew Deck	R-So.	WR	5-9	165	Kalispell, Mont.	42	Riley Wilson	R-So.	LB	6-2	210	Prosper, Texas
3	Ronald Jackson	R-So.	CB	6-1	195	Detroit, Mich.	43	Grayson Pibal	R-So.	LS	6-3	207	Clackamas, Ore.
2	Tralon Cotton	R-Sr.	S	6-1	204	Sacramento, Calif.	44	Ryan Tirrell	R-Jr.	LB	6-2	225	Missoula, Mont.
3	Nick Williams	R-So.	WR	6-5	200	Oceanside, Calif.	45	Vincent Genatone	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	213	North Platte, Neb.
4	Nash Fouch	R-Sr.	S	6-2	205	Woodinville, Wash.	46	Wyatt Wegener	R-So.	DL	6-3	228	Algona, Iowa
4	Ryan Simpson	R-Jr.	WR	6-6	215	Bozeman, Mont.	47	Kellen Derrick	R-So.	DL	6-3	245	Havre, Mont.
5	Junior Bergen	Jr.	WR	5-11	184	Billings, Mont.	48	Hayden Harris	R-Jr.	DE	6-5	251	Mill Creek, Wash.
5	Garrett Graves	R-Sr.	S	6-3	207	Eureka, Mont.	49	Cooper Walton	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	216	Johnstown, Colo.
6	Lamar Campbell	R-So.	CB	6-1	190	Lacy, Wash.	50	Erich Ooster	R-Jr.	LB	6-2	220	Simi Valley, Calif.
6	Keelan White	R-Jr.	WR	6-2	186	North Vancouver, B.C.	51	Austin Buehler	Fr.	OL	6-5	243	Helena, Mont.
7	Sam Vidlak	R-So.	QB	6-1	195	Applegate, Ore.	52	Cy Stevenson	Fr.	LB	6-2	201	Libby, Mont.
7	Jelani Warren	R-Jr.	CB	6-0	199	Oakland, Calif.	53	Branson Henriksen	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	236	Poison, Mont.
8	Keali'i Ah Yat	Fr.	QB	6-1	181	Kaneohe, Hawaii	54	Tyler Flunk	R-Sr.	LB	5-11	225	Missoula, Mont.
8	Corbin Walpark	Sr.	CB	5-11	183	Renton, Wash.	55	Chris Walker	R-Sr.	OT	6-6	300	Lincoln, Neb.
9	David Koppang	R-Sr.	S	6-0	208	Missoula, Mont.	56	Garrett Hustedt	R-Jr.	DE	6-2	245	Omaha, Neb.
9	Sawyer Racanelli	R-Jr.	WR	6-3	210	Brush Prairie, Wash.	57	Al Forbes	R-Sr.	OL	6-3	302	Bellevue, Neb.
10	Eli Gillman	R-Fr.	RB	6-0	204	Dassel, Minn.	58	Clay Owen	Fr.	DE	6-3	194	Billings, Mont.
10	TJ Rausch	R-So.	S	6-3	196	Missoula, Mont.	59	Hayden Opitz	Fr.	LB	6-2	214	Helena, Mont.
11	Cole Grossman	R-Jr.	TE	6-4	225	Vancouver, Wash.	60	Dillon Botner	R-Jr.	OL	6-6	285	Whiterfish, Mont.
11	Gabe Longin	R-So.	S	5-11	190	Great Falls, Mont.	61	Hunter Mayginnis	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	325	Chandler, Ariz.
12	Elijah Brady	Fr.	CB	6-1	175	Seattle, Wash.	63	Dylan Cohen	Fr.	OL	6-1	257	Seattle, Wash.
12	Kris Brown	R-Jr.	QB	6-4	220	Bozeman, Mont.	64	Ethan Barney	R-Fr.	OL	6-4	300	Sumner, Wash.
13	Xavier Harris	Jr.	RB	5-10	180	Oxnard, Calif.	66	Brandon Casey	Jr.	OL	6-5	295	Sandpoint, Idaho
13	Ryder Meyer	R-Jr.	S	5-9	178	Fairfield, Mont.	69	Nash Kaschmitter	Jr.	DE	6-3	250	Grangeville, Idaho
14	Aaron Fontes	Jr.	WR	6-1	172	Oxnard, Calif.	69	Connor Panfiloff	R-So.	OL	6-6	285	Roy, Utah
14	Robert Whitehead	Sr.	CB	6-1	183	El Cajon, Calif.	72	Tate Templeton	Fr.	OL	6-3	291	Missoula, Mont.
16	Tanner Barbour	Fr.	S	6-2	171	Pullman, Wash.	73	Colin Dreis	R-Jr.	OL	6-7	275	Tucson, Ariz.
16	Kaden Huot	R-Fr.	QB	6-4	208	Helena, Mont.	74	Kukila Lincoln	R-So.	OL	6-5	286	Kamuela, Hawaii
17	Kade Boyd	Fr.	S	6-0	188	Billings, Mont.	75	Declan McCabe	R-So.	OL	6-4	279	Waco, Texas
17	Clifton McDowell	Sr.	QB	6-4	220	Spring, Texas	76	Journey Grimsrud	R-So.	OL	6-3	280	Huntley, Mont.
18	Sam Alford	R-Fr.	WR	6-3	193	Park City, Utah	77	Michael Ray	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	281	Yakima, Wash.
18	Chase McGurrain	R-So.	S	6-0	179	Helena, Mont.	78	Lucas Freitas	Fr.	OL	6-6	312	Snoqualmie, Wash.
19	Padraig Lang	R-Fr.	S	6-1	181	Bozeman, Mont.	79	Liam Brown	R-So.	OL	6-5	310	Beaverton, Ore.
19	Gage Sliter	Fr.	QB	6-1	187	Kalispell, Mont.	80	Brady Lang	R-So.	WR	6-1	180	Bozeman, Mont.
21	Iverson Young	Fr.	RB	5-10	196	Waxahachie, Texas	81	Joseph Grezmak	So.	TE	6-5	249	Pilot Mountain, N.C.
23	Beau Dantic	R-Fr.	RB	5-9	178	Laurel, Mont.	82	Ian Finch	R-Fr.	WR	6-3	197	Missoula, Mont.
24	Cameron Gurnsey	Fr.	WR	6-0	188	Butte, Mont.	83	Drew Klumph	R-Fr.	WR	5-11	180	Missoula, Mont.
25	Jaxon Lee	Jr.	S	6-1	200	Missoula, Mont.	83	Nico Ramos	R-Sr.	P/K	5-11	194	Miami, Fla.
26	Nick Ostmo	Sr.	RB	6-0	218	Portland, Ore.	84	Evan Shafer	Jr.	TE	6-5	270	Connersville, Ind.
27	Jordan Dever	Fr.	WR	6-0	164	Spokane, Wash.	85	Micha Ashton	R-So.	TE	6-5	243	San Diego, Calif.
27	Trevin Gradney	R-Jr.	CB	6-0	180	Billings, Mont.	86	Jo Weida	R-Fr.	TE	6-4	228	Missoula, Mont.
28	Travis Benham	R-Sr.	P	6-3	210	Pacificia, Calif.	87	Jake Olson	R-So.	TE	6-7	247	Butte, Mont.
28	Isiah Childs	Jr.	RB	6-1	213	Manhattan, Kan.	88	Erik Barker	Jr.	TE	6-4	250	Keizer, Ore.
29	Tanner Huff	R-So.	CB	6-0	196	Butte, Mont.	89	Lucas Prendergast	Fr.	WR	6-4	284	Seattle, Wash.
30	Colter Janacaro	R-So.	RB	5-11	214	Missoula, Mont.	90	Jareb Ramos	R-Fr.	DL	6-4	213	Centennial, Colo.
31	Geno Leonard	R-So.	LB	5-11	224	Missoula, Mont.	92	Will Jenkins	Fr.	DL	6-5	220	Everett, Wash.
32	Tyson Rostad	R-Fr.	S	6-1	197	Hamilton, Mont.	93	Sloan McPherson	R-So.	DL	6-4	243	Savage, Mont.
33	Carson Rostad	Jr.	LB	6-3	221	Hamilton, Mont.	94	Brendan Murphy	Fr.	DL	6-2	227	Seattle, Wash.
34	Asher Croy	R-So.	LB	6-0	219	Bozeman, Mont.	95	Dylan Smith	R-So.	DL	6-4	230	Whitehall, Mont.
35	Braxton Hill	Sr.	LB	6-2	226	Anaconda, Mont.	96	Henry Nuce	Jr.	DL	6-4	245	Kalispell, Mont.
37	Levi Janacaro	R-Sr.	LB	6-0	237	Missoula, Mont.	97	Grant Glasgow	R-Fr.	K	6-1 <th>195</th> <td>Lawrence, Kan.</td>	195	Lawrence, Kan.
38	Marcus Evans	R-Fr.	LB	6-0	217	Helena, Mont.	98	Matai Mata'afa	R-So.	DL	6-1	220	Lahaina, Hawaii
39	Jace Klucwicz	R-So.	CB	5-10	165	Frenchtown, Mont.	99	Alex Gubner	R-Sr.	DT	6-3	285	West Hills, Calif.



The Montana Grizzlies pray after defeating Northern Colorado during the Big Sky Conference football game on Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

GRIZZLY GAME DAY | SACRAMENTO STATE AT MONTANA

GRIZZLY GAME DAY MATCHUPS

MONTANA STARTING OFFENSE

MONTANA STARTING OFFENSE

The diagram illustrates the Montana Starting Offense, a pro-style offense. It features a quarterback (QB) in the center, flanked by two running backs (RB) and two tight ends (TE). The offensive line consists of a center (C) and four linemen (LG, RG, LT, RT). The defensive line is represented by a single line of five players (DE, DT, DE) at the bottom. The offensive line is positioned in front of the QB and RBs, while the RBs and TE are positioned behind the line. The QB is positioned in the center of the backfield. The RBs are positioned on either side of the QB. The TE are positioned on the outer edges of the backfield. The LG and RG are positioned on the left and right sides of the offensive line, respectively. The LT and RT are positioned on the left and right sides of the offensive line, respectively. The C is positioned in the center of the offensive line. The DE, DT, and DE are positioned in a three-point defensive line at the bottom of the diagram.

Position	Player Name
WR 6	Keelman White
LT 55	Chris Walker
LG 79 -OR- 61	L. Brown -OR- H. Mayginnnes
C 57	AJ Forbes
RG 76	Journey Grimsrud
RT 66	Brandon Casey
TE 84	Evan Shafer
QB 17 -OR- 7	Clifton McDowell -OR- Sam Vidlak
WR 5	Junior Bergen
WR 14	Aaron Fontes
RB 10 -OR- 26	Eli Gillman -OR- Nick Ostmo
K 97	Grant Glasgow

SACRAMENTO STATE STARTING DEFENSE

**SACRAMENTO STATE
STARTING DEFENSE**

CB 3 Dillon Juniel	DE 94 Ben Ahio	DT 93 Tyler Hardeman	DT 55 Jett Stanley	DE 41 DeShawn Lynch
CB 1 Caleb Nelson	DE 94 Ben Ahio	DT 93 Tyler Hardeman	DT 55 Jett Stanley	DE 41 DeShawn Lynch

MONTANA BACKUPS ON OFFENSE

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			
LT	69	Cannon Panfiloff			

SACRAMENTO STATE BACKUPS ON DEFENSE

DE	95	Mason Brosseau	SLB	13	Jeremy Harris
DE	40	Josh Cashiola	NB/SS	27	Gavin Davis-Smith
DT	45	Xavier Williams	CB	19	Zelmar Vedder
DT	56	Brandon Knott	CB	38	DJ Houston
MLB	32	Nakian Jackson	FS	28	Kameron Rocha

SACRAMENTO STATE STARTING OFFENSE

SACRAMENTO STATE STARTING OFFENSE

The diagram illustrates the Sacramento State Starting Offense. It features a central column of players, with additional players positioned to the left and right. The players are represented by grey rounded rectangles containing their position, jersey number, and name. The background is a light green field with white yard lines.

Position	Jersey Number	Name
WR	5	Devin Gandy
WR	8	Jared Gipson
RT	52	Ivan Garza
RG	79	Kaden Richardson
C	59	Nathan Mejia
LG	76	Jackson Slater
LT	71	Troy Stiefel
TE	16	Marshall Martin
WR	0	Carlos Hill
QB	1	Kaiden Bennett
RB	9	Marcus Fulcher
K	97	Zach Schreiner

MONTANA STARTING DEFENSE

The diagram illustrates the starting defense for Montana, with players positioned on a field represented by a grid of vertical lines. The players and their positions are as follows:

- CB 8 Corbin Walker**: Cornerback, positioned on the left side of the field.
- DE 48 Hayden Harris**: Defensive End, positioned on the left side of the field.
- NT 99 Alex Gubner**: Nose Tackle, positioned in the center of the field.
- DE 0 Kale Edwards**: Defensive End, positioned on the left side of the field.
- CB 27 Trevin Gradney**: Cornerback, positioned on the left side of the field.
- LB 35 Braxton Hill**: Linebacker, positioned in the center of the field.
- LB 44 -OR- 54 Ryan Tirrell -OR- Tyler Flink**: Linebacker, positioned in the center of the field.
- LB 37 -OR- 42 Levi Janacaro -OR- Riley Wilson**: Linebacker, positioned in the center of the field.
- SS 13 Ryder Meyer**: Strong Safety, positioned in the center of the field.
- FS 4 -OR- 25 Nash Fouch -OR- Jaxon Lee**: Free Safety, positioned on the right side of the field.
- Nickel 3 TraJon Cotton**: Nickelback, positioned on the right side of the field.
- P 28 Travis Benham**: Punter, positioned on the right side of the field.

The title **MONTANA STARTING DEFENSE** is located in the top right corner of the diagram.

SACRAMENTO STATE BACKUPS ON OFFENSE

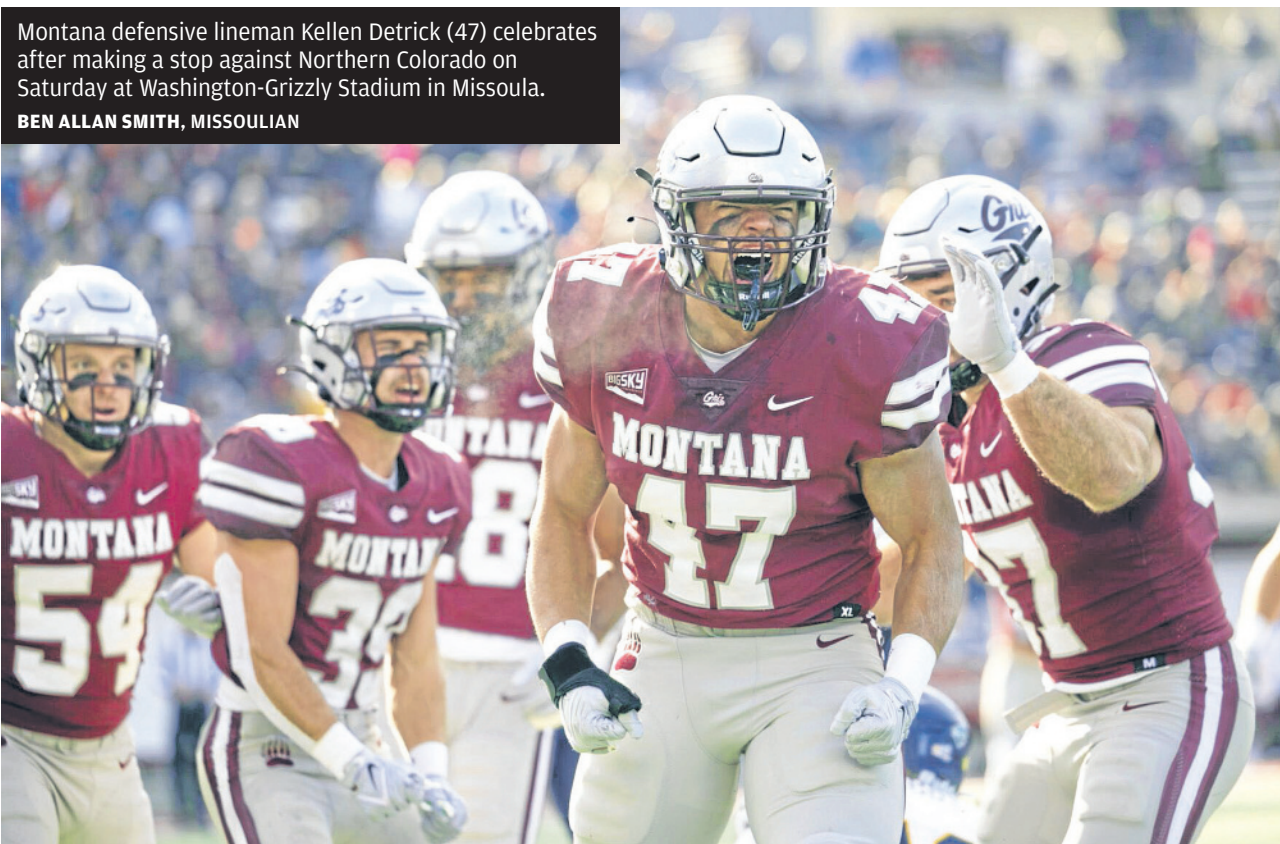
QB	7	Carson Camp	TE	88	Charlie McBride
RB	25	Elijah Tau-Tolliver	RT	53	Jordan Stanley
WR	11	Parker Clayton	RG	77	Tyler Perez
WR	26	Anderson Grover	LG	64	Brandon Sousa
WR	3	Christian Miller	LT	72	Sawyer Hays

MONTANA BACKUPS ON DEFENSE

DE	98	Matai Mata'afa	CB	2	Ronald Jackson
DE	56	Garrett Hustedt	SS	5	Garrett Graves
NT	47	Kellen Detrick	Nickel	10	TJ Rausch
LB	33	Carson Rostad			
CB	39	Jace Klucewich			

Montana defensive lineman Kellen Detrick (47) celebrates after making a stop against Northern Colorado on Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN



SACRAMENTO STATE ROSTER 2023

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Hgt.	Wt.	Hometown						
0	Carlos Hill	Sr.	WR	5-11	173	Miami, Fla.	36	Nova Kebeli	R-Fr.	RB	5-10	214
0	Elan Moore	Sr.	S	6-0	189	Sacramento, Calif.	38	DJ Houston	Jr.	CB	5-10	189
1	Kaiden Bennett	Jr.	QB	6-0	193	Sparks, Nev.	40	Josh Cashiola	Jr.	DL	6-3	230
1	Caleb Nelson	Sr.	CB	6-1	192	Roseville, Calif.	41	DeShawn Lynch	So.	DL	6-5	283
2	Patrick Dean	Jr.	CB	5-11	174	Ontario, Calif.	42	Ashton Moultrie	Sr.	S	6-1	190
3	Dillon Janiel	Sr.	CB	5-9	167	Sacramento, Calif.	44	Carter Sullivan	So.	DL	6-3	231
3	Christian Miller	Jr.	WR	6-2	179	Los Angeles, Calif.	45	Xavier Williams	So.	DL	6-4	271
4	Armon Bailey	Sr.	LB	6-1	231	Vallejo, Calif.	49	Elliott Johnson	Jr.	DL	6-1	285
5	Devin Gandy	So.	WR	6-1	170	Victorville, Calif.	50	Oge Feo	So.	LB	6-1	230
5	Ezra Moleni	Jr.	RB	6-0	193	Midvale, Utah	51	David Dean	Jr.	OL	6-3	300
6	Jace O'Hara	Jr.	NB	5-11	199	Rolling Meadows, Ill.	52	Ivan Garza	Jr.	OL	6-5	295
7	Cameron Broussard	Jr.	S	6-3	200	Folsom, Calif.	53	Jordan Stanley	Sr.	DL	6-4	288
7	Carson Camp	Jr.	QB	6-3	213	Bloomington-Normal, Ill.	54	Riley Hernandez	R-Fr.	DL	6-2	229
8	Jared Gipson	Jr.	WR	6-1	206	Stockton, Calif.	55	Jett Stanley	Jr.	DL	6-4	284
9	Marcus Fulcher	Sr.	RB	5-9	215	Fresno, Calif.	56	Brandon Knott	Sr.	DL	6-3	275
10	Brock Mather	Sr.	LB	6-0	230	Ridgecrest, Calif.	57	Zach Corbitt	So.	LB	6-2	230
11	Parker Clayton	Sr.	WR	6-0	186	Folsom, Calif.	59	Nathan Mejia	So.	OL	6-3	299
12	Jason Oliver	So.	CB	6-0	172	Bakersfield, Calif.	60	AJ Campos	So.	LS	6-2	213
13	Zeke Burnett	R-Fr.	RB	5-10	196	Sacramento, Calif.	62	Kenndel Riley	So.	OL	6-3	336
13	Jeremy Harris	Sr.	LB	6-0	223	Simi Valley, Calif.	63	Maximilian Haro	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	305
14	Darian Pollard	So.	NB	6-1	212	Stockton, Calif.	64	Brandon Sousa	R-Fr.	OL	6-4	295
15	Sawyer Merrill	Jr.	WR	6-0	188	El Dorado Hills, Calif.	66	Franklin Daniels	Jr.	OL	6-3	315
16	Kaleb Higgins	So.	S	6-2	190	Austin, Texas	67	Kinnick Manley	So.	LS	6-3	216
16	Marshall Martin IV	Sr.	TE	6-2	230	Vallejo, Calif.	71	Troy Stiefel	Sr.	OL	6-5	298
17	Carson Conklin	Fr.	QB	6-1	194	Yorba Linda, Calif.	72	Sawyer Hays	So.	OL	6-6	282
18	Xavier Mason	Jr.	WR	6-0	207	Tacoma, Wash.	74	Aidan Meek	So.	OL	6-5	290
18	Fata Puloka	Fr.	NB	6-3	219	Elk Grove, Calif.	75	Tyler Henry	R-Fr.	DL	6-3	312
19	Zelmar Vedder	R-So.	CB	6-3	181	Manteca, Calif.	76	Jackson Slater	Jr.	OL	6-4	306
20	Jalin Speed	So.	CB	6-0	181	Lancaster, Calif.	77	Tyler Perez	So.	OL	6-5	299
21	Kylen Ross	Sr.	S	6-0	178	Los Angeles, Calif.	79	Kaden Richardson	Jr.	OL	6-3	280
22	Elias Mullican	R-Fr.	CB	6-1	170	Rocklin, Calif.	80	Ashar Granger	R-Fr.	WR	6-1	204
23	Michael Johnson	So.	RB	5-7	189	Oxnard, Calif.	81	Tao McClinton	Sr.	WR	6-4	203
23	Lamont Johnson-Burrell	R-Fr.	CB	6-3	179	Sacramento, Calif.	82	Coleman Kuntz	So.	TE	6-3	228
24	Davion Ross	Jr.	S	5-11	196	Sacramento, Calif.	86	Ty Smith	So.	WR	6-1	182
25	Elijah Tau-Tolliver	So.	RB	6-1	200	Sparks, Nev.	87	Will Schalde	So.	DL	6-5	230
26	Daizon Allen	R-Fr.	CB	6-1	177	Fresno, Calif.	88	Charlie McBride	Sr.	TE	6-3	258
26	Anderson Grover	Jr.	WR	6-3	190	Modesto, Calif.	89	Austin Jarrard	Jr.	TE	6-3	235
27	Gavin Davis-Smith	Jr.	S	5-11	192	Folsom, Calif.	90	Pate Haugard	Jr.	DL	6-2	270
28	Kameron Rocha	Jr.	S	6-0	177	San Jacinto, Calif.	91	Cal McGough	So.	P	6-2	185
29	Koa Akui	R-Fr.	S	5-10	180	Hilo, Hawaii	92	Evani Kiely	Fr.	K	6-4	215
30	Mitchell Wolfe	So.	LB	6-3	232	Sydney, Wash.	93	Tyler Hardeman	Sr.	DL	6-3	280
31	Elijah Gable	Jr.	RB	5-5	146	Sumner, Calif.	94	Ben Ahio	R-Fr.	DL	6-4	257
32	Nakian Jackson	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	226	Stockton, Calif.	95	Mason Brosseau	So.	DL	6-3	272
33	Alex Rocha	R-Fr.	LB	6-2	218	Bakersfield, Calif.	96	Connor Stutz	So.	P	6-2	216
34	Cobe Weeks	So.	DL	6-3	229	Roseville, Calif.	97	Zach Schreiner	Jr.	K	6-0	170
35	Hunter Boeddeker	R-Fr.	LB	6-0	218	Santa Barbara, Calif.	99	Leke Fasola	Jr.	DL	6-4	258

HOW WE SEE THE BIG SKY

BILL SPELTZ
Missoulian | bill.speltz@406mtsports.com

Sacramento State's roller-coaster ride this season makes Saturday night's game at Montana tough to predict.

Actually the Big Sky Conference has been tough to predict in general this season with all the parity. Both Missoulian prognosticators have been wrong on three picks in the last two Grizzly Game Days and I cannot remember the last time that happened.



BILL SPELTZ

50-12



FRANK GOGOLA

49-13

The parity reached a new level last Saturday when clear-cut league favorite Montana State lost at Idaho. Suddenly the Bobcats are in a three-way tie for first with Montana and Idaho. And there's a four-way tie for second with Sacramento State, Portland State, Idaho State and Northern Arizona all at 3-2 in league play.

The Hornets have been an enigma. Three weeks ago they escaped with a 21-13 win at Northern Colorado in a game that saw the Bears throw for 257 yards. The next week they pushed Montana State for three quarters before fading in a 42-30 home loss.

Last week's 51-16 homecoming win for Sacramento State over Idaho State was impressive. The Hornets trailed 16-14 late in the second quarter before reeling off 37 unanswered points.

Which version of the Hornets will show up at Washington-Grizzly Stadium? My guess is the best version since the Hornets are coached by former Montana Grizzly Andy Thompson (1999, 2001-2003).



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana safety Jaxon Lee (25) celebrates with Montana linebacker Braxton Hill (35) after he scores a pick-6 during the Big Sky Conference football game between Montana and Northern Colorado on Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

That and Sac State's recent success make Saturday tough to predict. I foresee a close game for Montana against a foe that has fared well on the road (3-1). It may come down to turnovers and special teams play and it's going to be edge-of-your-seat exciting.

SATURDAY GAMES

No. 7 Sacramento State (3-2, 6-2) at No. 4 Montana (4-1, 7-1) (6 p.m., MTN SPORTS): The Grizzlies have lost to the Hornets three games in a row and the buck stops here. Montana's defense has been consistently good and last week's shutout of Northern

Colorado was a masterpiece. The Griz defense will rise to the occasion and Montana will keep its spot atop the league standings. **Speltz:** Grizzlies 30, Hornets 27. **Gogola:** Montana 34, Sac State 28.

Northern Arizona (3-2, 3-5) at No. 6 Montana State (4-1, 6-2) (1 p.m., MTN Sports, ESPN+): A week after losing at home to Montana, Idaho pulled the biggest upset of the Big Sky season last Saturday when it held off the Bobcats in Moscow, 24-21. The Bobcats will bounce back in a big way against a Lumberjacks team that is 1-3 on the road. **Speltz:** Bobcats 45, Jacks 28. **Gogola:** Cats 38, NAU 24.

No. 3 Idaho (4-1, 6-2) at Northern Colorado (0-5, 0-8) (1 p.m., ESPN+): Once the calendar turns to November, it's important to consider which teams are still in the playoff chase and which teams are playing strictly for pride. This game is huge for the Vandals and the Bears are coming off a game where they failed to score at Montana. **Speltz:** Idaho 55, Northern Colorado 10. **Gogola:** Idaho 49, UNC 14.

Cal Poly (1-4, 3-5) at Eastern Washington (2-3, 3-5) (2 p.m., ESPN+): The Mustangs took last weekend off after a home win over Northern Colorado. You'd think maybe the rest would do them good but it's hard to ignore their 0-3 record on the road. On top of that, Eastern is 2-1 at home and gave Idaho a run for its money on the red turf in late September. **Speltz:** Eagles 38, Mustangs 28. **Gogola:** Eagles 35, Cal Poly 21.

Weber State (1-4, 3-5) at Idaho State (3-2, 3-5) (4 p.m., ESPN+): What a disappointing season for the overrated Wildcats. What a surprisingly good season for the underrated Bengals. Idaho State did see a two-game win streak come to an end last week at Sacramento State but I'm picking them to bounce back and beat the rival Wildcats inside Holt Arena. **Speltz:** Idaho State 37, Weber State 27. **Gogola:** Idaho State 31, Weber 24.

Portland State (3-2, 4-4) at UC Davis (2-3, 4-4) (5 p.m.): The Vikings looked good in last week's home win over Eastern Washington. However, they haven't played well on the road (1-3). Davis will keep things close but I'm picking the Vikings to win a tight one ahead of next week's showdown against Montana in Hillsboro, Oregon. **Speltz:** Vikings 30, Aggies 28. **Gogola:** Davis 31, PSU 27.

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

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Good luck this season, Montana Grizzlies!

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BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana tight end Evan Shafer (84) celebrates Montana's win over Northern Colorado during the Big Sky Conference football game on Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

Shafer

Continued from page 4

after I put out film. I also had FCS teams Indiana State, Valparaiso. I was not expecting to transfer up a division at all. It was amazing. I never even got to visit out here. It happened that fast. I was in the portal in the end of May, early June. I had so many D-II teams calling. It felt like there was somebody new calling every day. I got talking with the Grizzlies and they seemed like a program that knew what they were doing. The coaches said they needed a tight end to come out here and be a big blocker. Well, I can do that. They asked how fast can you be here. I was like, does July sound OK? Going from late May not knowing what I was doing with my life and then ending up in Missoula July 1, it was the fastest turnaround

I've ever seen.

Q: What have you noticed as the biggest differences between D-II and D-I?

A: Speed. There's a much different speed. Once you're here, it's snappy. Each and every thing, you have to be perfect on it. You can still afford to miss a couple things at the D-II level even though you're not trying to. If you miss a block, it's not going to ruin the game. Here, it's high stakes. It's a huge difference. I've come to realize it as I play more and more. The whole schematics is completely different.

Q: You've started a few games now, so how did it feel when you were finally named a starter?

A: The first three games, I was our blocking guy, came in on the hefty 12-personnel plays. Being able to move up to the starting position, it's something I've dreamt

about my whole life. Ever since I was small, I was like, I want to play D-I football, I want to go out there and play for a crowd, fans that are cheering for me. It's a dream come true.

Q: How did it feel to score your first TD on the road and then score again at Wa-Griz?

A: The touchdown in the north end zone here was the most stressful catch of my life. When you're that wide open, it's like, I'm going to get kicked off this team if I miss this catch and I'm never touching the field again. Being able to catch the one at Utah Tech, my family actually flew out and made it to the game. Being able to catch one at home is a completely different feeling. Hearing all 26,000 fans, it's just an experience. It's not something you're going to find anywhere else.

Q: Touchdowns are

nice, but it seems you take pride in blocking, so what does it take to play tight end in this offense?

A: You have to be strong and smart because as we've progressed this season, we're adding more things into our blocking schemes. We have to be able to combo up to that guy, or as that guy fills, you have to slip off and somebody takes over your block as you're going. With our newer formations, I've been in the backfield a lot of times. It's almost like a tight end/fullback hybrid. You have to be able to react quickly. You have to have endurance, smarts and tenacity. No matter what, keep blocking. At all times, I see the score as 0-0 and I have to make this block or we lose. That's how I see every single block.

Q: How did you end up playing nose tackle earlier this season? Was it

something you had ever done before?

A: I was going to play both sides of the ball at Hillsdale this year. We had a bunch of tight ends coming in, so the coaches asked me to move to the defensive line because they liked my aggressiveness. My whole spring season there, I was working on the defensive line. Then with the Griz, when they saw how short we were with Noah Kaschmitter and Kellen Detrick out, they needed a backup guy to come over. I started meeting extra with the defensive coaches to learn the defensive playbook. Whenever they'd put me in, they'd be like, make things happen. During practices, I would switch back and forth, do plays with the defense, run back and do plays with the offense. After the NAU game, I got moved up to No. 1 tight end and I couldn't go back to both anymore, and Detrick and Kaschmitter got back too.

Q: Now that you've been here several months, has it felt like you made the right decision coming here to be a Griz?

A: Not being able to visit, once I finally got out here, it was amazing. It's been one of the best decisions of my life. Just the fans, being able to go over to Albertsons and then every once in a while somebody will be like, do you play for the Griz football team? It's been a dream come true. Every single day, I'm just grateful to have the opportunity to be here, for the coaches bringing me out here. Just every day, I'm grateful to God for giving me the opportunity.

Frank Gogola is the Senior Sports Reporter at the Missoulian. Follow him on Twitter/X @FrankGogola or email him at frank.gogola@406mtsports.com.

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Graves

Continued from page 3

state look up to.

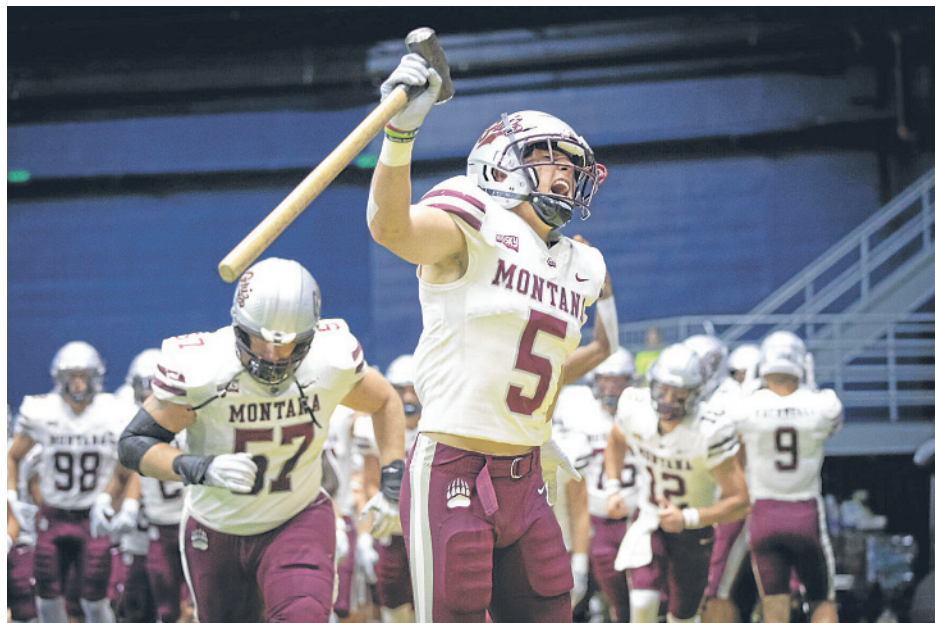
“What it’s meant to be a Grizzly to me is it’s meant the world,” he said. “It’s just given me the opportunity to represent this community and this state and my family, obviously. That’s all I could have hoped for. This is what I’m the most proud of is getting to be in a position where I get to be a reflection of those people.

“I’ve had so many people in the community and my family pouring into me and making me the man I am. Getting to just be kind of in the spotlight and be a reflection of that person a little bit is what I’m proud of and what I’m trying to do is just really show that positively and show all the positive things that the people around me have put into me.”

Graves started to grow into someone who younger athletes would admire while in high school. He played on both sides of the ball as Eureka won back-to-back state football titles in Class B in 2016 and 2017. He also won a pair of individual state championships on the wrestling mat. He finished as a four-time letter winner in football, wrestling and track.

Graves is a pride and joy of Eureka, becoming the third person from the town to play for the Griz and the first since Trevor Utter from 1995-97. Utter coached him in high school football and had been his middle school principal before that. Knowing the Graves family like he does, Utter hasn’t been surprised with how Garrett has embraced a willingness to help others.

“The thing about every Graves that I know is they’re all in wherever they’re at,” he said. “Gar-



ANTONIO IBARRA OLIVARES, MISSOULIAN

rett was a mentor when he was here. He was the first guy to enter the facility and the last guy to leave. He’s always been a hard worker. He’s always been a clean liver. He’s always been mentoring younger kids.

“To see him doing that stuff in Missoula is not new and it is not shocking to anybody here. He has a strong personality. He’s always been true to who he is and what he’s been about. He’s never wavered on that.”

Graves rising

Just like he’s volunteered off the field, Graves has been willing to help out wherever he’s been needed for the Griz football team.

He began on offense as quarterback and finished his first season as the 2018 offensive scout team player of the year. He moved to wide receiver in 2019 and also played running back. He was awarded the Bill and Phyllis Bouchee Family Football Scholarship that year.

Graves then moved to defense and found his home at safety while still starring

on special teams. He continues to play on special teams, even changing his jersey on the sideline because teammates with the same jersey number can’t be on the field at the same time.

“Just being able to be out on the field is something I feel really lucky and privileged to do,” he said. “It’s kind of funny to try to draw similarities between the two because when I’m thinking about volunteering, I’m thinking about how I can make other people’s lives easier.

“When I’m thinking about playing football, playing different positions is all just fun for me. It’s not like I’m doing anything hard or anything like that. I just feel lucky to be out there.”

Graves has started in seven games during his time at Montana since he signed in 2018 as part of head coach Bobby Hauck’s first recruiting class. Five of those starts came in 2021.

He’s played in 50 games overall, among the most on the team. He’s intercepted three passes and

tackles.

“He’s not only handled his business, he’s excelled at lots of things,” Hauck said. “He’s great in school. He’s a good citizen. He’s good with teammates. He’s an enjoyable guy to be around. Proud of him and all that he’s accomplished here on and off the field.”

Graves has taken care of business in the classroom over his six years in college. He has been an Academic All-Big Sky selection in each of the three seasons of playing that he has completed so far.

He has graduated with a bachelor’s degree in marketing, another degree in management information systems and a certificate in digital marketing. He’ll finish up his Master of Business Administration this semester.

He’ll also take with him an important lesson he

discovered about himself along the way.

“I learned that there’s more to me than just being a football player, which is kind of an interesting thing to learn about yourself while you’re doing it,” he said. “That kid that was a freshman coming in here, I was a football player and that was all I identified myself as.

“I think throughout the growth over these last six years, I’ve kept that a high priority, but I’ve learned that there’s more to my life and the world around me than that. I think that’s probably the biggest thing I’ve learned, which is funny because that’s all I’ve been doing.”

Frank Gogola is the Senior Sports Reporter at the Missoulian. Follow him on Twitter/X @FrankGogola or email him at frank.gogola@406mtsports.com.

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GRIZZLY GAME DAY



ANTONIO IBARRA OLIVARES, MISSOULIAN

Montana wide receiver Junior Bergen (5) gets tackled by UC Davis defensive back Rex Connors (4) during a college football game between the Montana Grizzlies and the UC Davis Aggies on Oct. 7 at UC Davis Health Stadium in Davis, California.

Davis

Continued from page 5

Players of the week

The latest Big Sky player of the week honors went to Portland State running back Jobi Malar, Montana linebacker Riley Wilson and Idaho kicker/punter Ricardo Chavez.

Malar, elevated to a bigger role because of an injury to Jerry Rice Award nominee Quincy Craig, tied a PSU record with six rushing TDs against Eastern Washington. Malar carried the ball 23 times for 241 yards.

Wilson finished with six tackles, four tackles for loss and three sacks in the Grizzlies' shutout win over Northern Colorado.

Chavez's 53-yard field goal was the difference in the Vandals' top-10 win. He also averaged 39.5 yards on two punts, one of which was downed inside the 20-yard line.

Other player of the week nominees:

Offense: Gevani McCoy (Idaho), Carson Conklin (Sacramento State), Trent Tompkins (UC Davis), Angel Flores (Northern Arizona), Eli Gillman (Montana)

Defense: Tyreese Shakir (Portland State), Armon Bailey (Sacramento State), Tommy McCormick (Idaho), George Steele (Northern Arizona)

Special teams: Szymon Gawlick (Northern Arizona)

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