

NORTH DAKOTA AT MONTANA • KICKOFF: 1 P.M. SATURDAY • TV: MTN • THURSDAY, SEPT. 11, 2025

GRIZZLY GAME DAY

Missoulian

SUPER BROWN BROS.

SENIOR LIAM BROWN FORGED
BY DIVISION I OLDER BROTHERS

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Q&A WITH WR IAN FINCH, PAGE 3 • SPELTZ PICKS THE BIG SKY, PAGE 4 • ROSTERS, PAGE 5

Strength Within

Wellness Throughout



Montana

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of all we do



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana offensive lineman Liam Brown (79) looks on during the college football game between Montana and Central Washington at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula on Saturday. The Oregon native is the youngest of four boys in his family and is the third one to play NCAA Division I football.

Brown delivers for Grizzlies

Offensive lineman from Oregon is in 4th year starting

FRANK GOGOLA
406 MT Sports

Liam Brown was spared some of the physical tussles as a kid. The Montana offensive lineman wasn't allowed to be thrown through walls or get beat up by his older brothers as he was the youngest of four boys growing up

in Beaverton, Oregon. That began to change when he started playing football in third grade and his dad had a preposterously sounding task.

"I was a little babied growing up until I got into football," he said. "Then I was told if I stopped before contact he'd make me hit a tree until it moved. So I hit a tree in

our backyard until it would sway. Or until he got tired of watching me hit it."

Brown doesn't remember the type of tree he was ramming his shoulder pads into other than it was full grown. He might certainly have more luck with that tree as a

See Brown, **PAGE 6**



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana wide receiver Ian Finch (5) takes the field during the college football game between Montana and Central Washington at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula on Saturday. The Hellgate grad caught his first career touchdown last year.

No flinch in Missoula's Finch

Hellgate grad keeps on grinding entering 4th season with Griz

CARSON CASHION
406 MT Sports

Montana redshirt junior wide receiver Ian Finch has spent his entire life in Missoula.

Before donning the maroon and silver, he broke out on the Hellgate football team, earning all-state honors in 2020 and 2021. Then, as a Griz, Finch made a name for himself in 2024 when he caught his first career pass against Northern Colorado, a reception that also became his first career touchdown.

Now, entering year four as a Griz, Finch is a member of a wide receiver room that saw 10 different Grizzlies receive targets in Montana's season-opening win over

Central Washington.

Finch sat down with 406 MT Sports prior to Montana's game against North Dakota at 1 p.m. Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Q: What have been the biggest changes for you from year one to year four at Montana?

A: I think the biggest difference is, they call it like 'paralysis by analysis.' I think in my first two years, at least, I

was so worried about if I was gonna mess up or do something wrong. Now, in my fourth year, I know how to do it and I can just go out there and play as fast as I want to.

Q: How is this year's Griz wide receiver room different than the ones you've been a part of in the past?

A: I mean, the rooms in the past were awesome. Each year, you grow and you

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HOW WE SEE THE BIG SKY

BILL SPELTZ | 406 MT Sports

With a tradition of wacky games against North Dakota, Montana fans have plenty to be excited and anxious about heading into Saturday afternoon's showdown at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.



**BILL
SPELTZ**

22-1



**FRANK
GOGOLA**

20-3



**VICTOR
FLORES**

21-2



**CARSON
CASHION**

22-1

turned the ball over on its first three possessions.

Hauck was 6-5 that season — his first since returning for a second stint in Missoula — and the Grizzlies have taken flight

Start with last year and one of the most head-scratching losses for the Griz in recent history at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. Montana led 24-7 with under 10 minutes left in the third quarter and ended up losing, 27-24.

That game marked Montana's fifth in a row playing UND in its home dome.

Thirteen years ago, Fighting Hawks QB Braden Hanson set a then-Big Sky Conference record with 660 yards passing in a 40-34 win over the Griz. Greg Hardin's 32-yard scoring reception with 12 seconds left was the difference and Hardin set a then-league record with 333 yards receiving.

A year later, Montana was back in the Alerus Center and exacted revenge, posting a 55-17 win. Jordan Johnson completed 15 of 19 passes for 354 yards and five touchdowns and Ellis Henderson had three TD catches and 124 yards receiving.

In 2014, Montana returned to Grand Forks a third year in a row — an oddity that stemmed from scheduling UND as a foe before the team joined the Big Sky — and the Mick Delaney-led Grizzlies prevailed in a thriller, 18-15. Daniel Sullivan's 35-yard field goal as time ran out was the difference.

Montana returned to Grand Forks to face North Dakota one last time as a conference foe in 2018 and the Fighting Hawks humbled the Bobby Hauck-led Grizzlies, 41-14. Montana



Montana wide receiver Brooks Davis (3) runs the ball against Central Washington at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula on Saturday.

**BEN ALLAN
SMITH,
MISSOULIAN**

since then. They're drawing record-setting home crowds and should contend for the Big Sky title this season.

Here's a look at Saturday's Big Sky Conference games:

No. 16 North Dakota (1-1) at No. 5 Montana (1-0), 1 p.m. TV: Scripps Sports. The Grizzlies looked good in the second half Saturday against Central Washington. Running back Eli Gillman finished with 198 rushing yards and three touchdowns. But what does it all mean when it comes against an NCAA Division II foe? We need to see Montana against one or two decent FCS opponents to find out what the team is all about. The Fighting Hawks will give the Griz a run for their money after losing a heartbreaker at Kansas State two weeks ago and whipping Portland State Saturday. I'm picking Montana to win a close one simply because its fans will rattle North Dakota in an otherwise evenly matched game. **Speltz:** Montana 28, North Dakota 24. **Gogola:** UM 31, UND 27. **Flores:** UND 28, Montana 24. **Cashion:** Montana 31, North Dakota 28.

San Diego (1-1) at No. 4 Montana State (0-2), 1 p.m. TV: The Spot-MTN. For what it's worth, and it's not much, I predicted the final score of Montana State's game last week (South Dakota State 30, Cats 24). I also mentioned the MSU offense is a work in progress. It continues to be, especially in the wide receiver department. Whether it was the receivers not getting open, the quarterback not finding them or a conservative game plan, something needs to change. Of course, Montana State's two-straight losses have a lot to do with the elite competition. Now the Cats have a much more favorable schedule for

at least the next three weeks. It's a chance to work out some of their offensive issues. **Speltz:** Cats 37, Toreros 21. **Gogola:** MSU 42, USD 10. **Flores:** Cats 48, San Diego 7. **Cashion:** Montana State 38, San Diego 14.

Utah Tech (0-2) at No. 8 Idaho (1-1), 2 p.m. TV: ESPN+. The pollsters think a lot of the Vandals and it's tied to their close call at Washington State two weeks ago. Idaho and Wazzu were deadlocked at 10-10 with under 2 minutes left before the latter used a field goal to pull out a 13-10 win. The problem I have with Idaho's No. 8 ranking is the team narrowly escaped with a 37-30 home win over St. Thomas last weekend. I'll take the Vandals again this week, but Utah Tech is no slouch and it's going to be close. **Speltz:** Vandals 33, Trailblazers 30. **Gogola:** Vandals 28, UTU 24. **Flores:** Idaho 31, Utah Tech 13. **Cashion:** Idaho 35, Utah Tech 24.

Eastern Washington (0-2) at Northern Iowa (1-1), 3 p.m. TV: ESPN+. These teams are hard to pin down. The Eagles gave 14th-ranked Incarnate Word a run for its money in Texas two weeks ago before falling, 31-21. Then EWU lost a laugh against Boise State. Northern Iowa beat Butler in its home opener and then lost handily against Wyoming. I suppose the smart thing to do is go with the home dome team and its loud support system. **Speltz:** Panthers 35, Eagles 30. **Gogola:** UNI 31, Eags 21. **Flores:** UNI 31, EWU 28. **Cashion:** Northern Iowa 31, Eastern Washington 28.

Northern Colorado (1-1) at No. 12 South Dakota (0-2), Noon. TV: ESPN+. The Bears surprised a lot of folks by putting a scare into Colorado State last Friday before falling, 21-17. I still don't have enough faith in them to pick them over the Coyotes

in the DakotaDome. South Dakota's losses have come on the road against Iowa State and 24th-ranked Lamar. **Speltz:** Coyotes 24, Bears 21. **Gogola:** USD 38, UNC 20. **Flores:** Yotes 35, Bears 17. **Cashion:** South Dakota 42, Northern Colorado 10.

Weber State (0-2) at McNeese State (1-1), 5 p.m. TV: ESPN+. The Wildcats used to be a power in the Big Sky. Now, not so much. They lost their first two games by a combined score of 93-13 and they're coming off a 4-8 season. They may struggle with the heat in Louisiana. **Speltz:** Cowboys 28, Wildcats 14. **Gogola:** McNeese 35, Weber 16. **Flores:** McNeese 24, Weber 17. **Cashion:** McNeese State 34, Weber State 20.

No. 18 Northern Arizona (1-1) at Southern Utah (1-1), 5:30 p.m. The Jacks beat a good Utah Tech team in Flagstaff last week. I don't have as much faith in them on the road, but SUU is coming off a loss to non-scholarship San Diego, so I'll go with NAU in a close one. **Speltz:** Jacks 28, Thunderbirds 27. **Gogola:** Jacks 42, T-Birds 24. **Flores:** NAU 34, SUU 20. **Cashion:** Northern Arizona 28, Southern Utah 24.

Western Oregon (1-0) at Cal Poly (1-1), 6 p.m. TV: ESPN+. The Mustangs sent notice two weeks ago that they're on the rise with a 41-17 road win over San Diego. Cal Poly was blown out at Utah last week but nothing to be ashamed of there. UCLA was blown out by Utah the week before. **Speltz:** Mustangs 45, Wolves 17. **Gogola:** Cal Poly 41, WOU 13. **Flores:** Cal Poly 42, WOU 14. **Cashion:** Cal Poly 28, Western Oregon 10.

Mercyhurst (1-1) at No. 21 Sacramento State (0-2), 7 p.m. ESPN+. The Hornets looked like maybe they were going to pull an upset by Nevada last Saturday with a 17-13 lead and under 3 minutes left. Then disaster struck as coach Jeff Choate's Wolf Pack scored on a pick-6. Sac State will pick up its first win this week in a shootout against a foe coming off a 48-14 home win over New Haven. **Speltz:** Hornets 45, Lakers 42. **Gogola:** Sac State 38, Mercyhurst 10. **Flores:** Sac 37, Mercyhurst 7. **Cashion:** Sacramento State 24, Mercyhurst 14.

Portland State (0-3) at Hawaii (2-1), 7 p.m. The Vikings fall to 0-4 this week. If I were them, I'd soften the schedule a little. Maybe make arrangements with a D-II team. It's nice to win once in a while. **Speltz:** Hawaii 55, Portland State 14. **Gogola:** Hawaii 49, Viks 13. **Flores:** Hawaii 38, PSU 17. **Cashion:** Hawaii 38, Portland State 6.

MONTANA GRIZZLIES ROSTER

No.	Name	Year	Position	Height	Weight	Hometown														
0	Monte Gillman	R-Fr.	WR	5-8	162	Dassel, Minn.	24	Diezel Wilkinson	So.	S	6-0	193	Spokane, Wash.	62	Everett Johnson	R-Sr.	OL	6-7	290	Turlock, Calif.
0	Terahiti Wolfe	So.	S	5-11	173	Kahalu'u, Hawaii	25	Brady Beaner	Fr.	S	6-0	187	Anacortes, Wash.	63	Kaiko Kanakaole	Fr.	OL	6-5	335	Kapa'a, Hawaii
2	Drew Deck	R-Sr.	WR	5-9	165	Kalispell, Mont.	26	Chase Cook	Fr.	RB	5-11	198	Red Lodge, Mont.	64	Matt Hilden	R-Fr.	OL	6-6	309	Santa Rosa, Calif.
2	Micah Harper	R-Sr.	S	5-10	194	Chandler, Ariz.	28	Hashim Jones	Fr.	RB	6-0	208	Hartford, Conn.	65	Dylan Jemtegaard	R-Sr.	OL	6-4	281	Yelm, Wash.
3	Brooks Davis	R-Fr.	WR	6-0	174	Brentwood, Calif.	29	Tanner Huff	R-Sr.	S	6-0	210	Butte, Mont.	66	Ezra Meyer	Fr.	OL	6-5	290	Missoula, Mont.
3	Jeilani Davis	R-Fr.	S	6-0	204	Inglewood, Calif.	30	Kade Cutler	R-Jr.	S	6-0	200	Phillipsburg, Mont.	68	Torin Jeske	R-Fr.	OL	6-6	271	Bozeman, Mont.
4	Blake Bohannon	R-Sr.	WR	6-1	195	Woodstock, Ga.	30	Tommy Running Rabbit	R-Fr.	RB	6-1	195	Browning, Mont.	69	Cannon Panfiloff	R-Sr.	OL	6-6	294	Roy, Utah
4	Dane Parker	R-Fr.	S	6-1	175	Puyallup, Wash.	31	Geno Leonard	R-Sr.	LB	5-11	230	Missoula, Mont.	70	Colin Amick	R-Fr.	OL	6-6	292	Sammamish, Wash.
5	Ian Finch	R-Jr.	WR	6-3	209	Missoula, Mont.	32	Peyton Wing	Jr.	LB	6-0	229	Sumner, Wash.	71	Quinlan Hyatt	Fr.	OL	6-7	285	Spokane, Wash.
5	Kyon Loud	So.	CB	6-2	175	San Mateo, Calif.	33	Taylor Jones	Fr.	LB	6-1	205	Missoula, Mont.	72	Cade Klimczak	Gr.	OL	6-1	285	Rockford, Mich.
6	Prince Ford	R-Sr.	CB	5-11	170	Concord, N.C.	34	Talen Reynolds	R-Fr.	RB	5-11	170	Missoula, Mont.	73	Trevor Steinbach	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	300	Sammamish, Wash.
6	Michael Wortham	R-Sr.	WR	5-9	190	North Highlands, Calif.	35	Grady Walker	R-Fr.	LB	6-4	224	Missoula, Mont.	74	Tate Templeton	R-So.	OL	6-3	290	Missoula, Mont.
7	Malae Fonoti	R-Fr.	RB	5-11	207	Laie, Hawaii	36	Ty Morrison	Sr.	KP	6-3	220	Valencia, Calif.	75	Jose Balver-Mendoza	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	287	Athens, Ga.
7	Kash Goicoechea	R-Fr.	S	6-1	197	Kalispell, Mont.	37	Garrett Speer	R-Fr.	DB	6-0	191	Sherwood, Ore.	76	Patrick Matan	Gr.	OL	6-4	295	Chevy Chase, Md.
8	Keali'i Ah Yat	R-So.	QB	6-1	200	Kaneohe, Hawaii	38	Clay Owen	R-So.	LB	6-2	216	Billings, Mont.	77	Carter Bowen	Jr.	OL	6-7	318	Dawson, Minn.
8	Kenzel Lawler	R-Sr.	CB	6-0	190	Corona, Calif.	39	Fynn Ridgeway	R-So.	S	6-1	204	Whitefish, Mont.	78	Lucas Freitas	R-So.	OL	6-6	318	Snoqualmie, Wash.
9	Justus Breston	Sr.	CB	5-11	178	Atlanta, Ga.	40	Colton Lentz	Fr.	LB	6-3	213	Nooksack, Wash.	79	Liam Brown	R-Sr.	OL	6-5	316	Beaverton, Ore.
9	Jordan Dever	R-So.	WR	6-0	174	Spokane, Wash.	42	Giovanni Pifferini	Jr.	DL	6-4	230	Placerville, Calif.	80	Jamell Ward	Fr.	WR	6-4	170	Nacogdoches, Texas
10	Eli Gillman	R-Jr.	RB	6-0	213	Dassel, Minn.	43	Grayson Pibal	R-Sr.	LS	6-3	214	Clackamas, Ore.	81	Josh Gale	R-Sr.	TE	6-4	243	Gilbert, Ariz.
10	TJ Rausch	R-Sr.	S	6-3	208	Missoula, Mont.	44	Titus Rohrer	R-Jr.	TE	6-7	240	Bryan, Ohio	84	Evan Shafer	Gr.	TE	6-5	270	Connersville, Ind.
11	Cameron Gurnsey	R-So.	WR	6-1	197	Butte, Mont.	45	Caleb Otlewski	R-So.	LB	6-4	241	Melissa, Texas	85	Bridger Smith	Fr.	WR	5-11	170	Kalispell, Mont.
11	Elijah Tolbert	R-Sr.	LB	6-1	232	Chicago, Ill.	46	Jo Silver	R-Jr.	KP	6-0	213	Fremont, Ohio	86	Weston Adams	R-Jr.	WR	5-11	192	Shell, Wyo.
12	Elijah Brady	R-So.	CB	6-1	172	Seattle, Wash.	47	Kellen Detrick	R-Sr.	DE	6-3	240	Havre, Mont.	87	Jake Olson	R-Sr.	TE	6-7	260	Butte, Mont.
12	Gage Sliter	R-So.	QB	6-1	193	Kalispell, Mont.	48	Stykes Goodman	Fr.	LB	6-2	234	Austin, Texas	88	Malaki Davis	Fr.	TE	6-5	230	Tacoma, Wash.
13	Brock Beaner	Fr.	S	6-0	193	Anacortes, Wash.	49	Isaac Keim	R-Fr.	DL	6-4	265	Kalispell, Mont.	89	Danny Sirmon	R-Fr.	TE	6-6	255	Missoula, Mont.
13	Lekeldrick Bridges	R-Fr.	WR	5-11	170	Cedar Hill, Texas	50	Sam Merriman	Fr.	LB	6-0	225	Seattle, Wash.	90	Jareb Ramos	R-Jr.	DL	6-4	287	Centennial, Colo.
14	DeAnte Gentry	Fr.	DB	5-11	169	Fort Worth, Texas	51	Spencer Tripp	Fr.	DL	5-11	264	Missoula, Mont.	91	Cooper Buffington	Fr.	DL	6-4	252	Winfield, Iowa
14	Korbin Hendrix	R-So.	WR	6-3	192	McKinney, Texas	52	Cy Stevenson	R-So.	LB	6-2	220	Libby, Mont.	92	Zekiel Seumalo	Jr.	DL	6-0	265	Kent, Wash.
16	Jake Jensen	R-Sr.	QB	6-1	215	Pleasant Grove, Utah	54	Bridger Salvevold	Fr.	LB	6-2	207	Culbertson, Mont.	93	Cole Muilenburg	R-Fr.	DL	6-5	246	Gig Harbor, Wash.
17	Kade Boyd	R-So.	S	6-0	197	Billings, Mont.	55	Austin Buehler	R-So.	OL	6-5	285	Helena, Mont.	94	Cole Harpole	Fr.	DL	6-3	221	Gunter, Texas
17	Luke Flowers	R-Fr.	QB	6-1	188	Rigby, Idaho	56	Hunter Peck	R-Sr.	DE	6-2	252	Windsor, Colo.	95	Derek Moreland	Sr.	DL	6-1	262	Fresno, Calif.
18	Cody Schweikert	R-Fr.	QB	6-3	212	Columbia Falls, Mont.	57	Jake Mason	R-So.	DL	6-2	250	Ferdale, Wash.	96	Logan Knaevelsrud	Fr.	DL	6-4	235	Snoqualmie, Wash.
19	Drew Price	Fr.	QB	5-10	171	Jacksonville, Fla.	58	Solomon Tuliaupupu	Gr.	LB	6-3	242	Pomona, Calif.	97	Hayden Schwartz	R-Jr.	DL	6-4	248	Jacksonville, Fla.
20	Sage Salopek	Fr.	CB	6-0	168	Seattle, Wash.	59	Hayden Opitz	R-So.	LB	6-2	230	Helena, Mont.	98	Matai Mata'afa	R-Sr.	DL	6-1	236	Lahaina, Hawaii
21	Stevie Rocker Jr.	R-Sr.	RB	6-0	210	Tucson, Ariz.	60	Dillon Botner	Gr.	OL	6-6	280	Whitefish, Mont.	99	Braydon Bailey	R-Jr.	DL	6-2	280	Kona, Hawaii
23	Rashid Mansour	Jr.	CB	6-0	163	Fresno, Calif.	61	Lincoln Hoefler	Fr.	OL	6-6	279	Everson, Wash.							

NORTH DAKOTA FIGHTING HAWKS ROSTER

No.	Name	Year	Position	Height	Weight	Hometown														
0	Lance Rucker	Jr.	EDGE	6-3	230	Omaha, Neb.	25	Teagan Pfeffer	Jr.	NB	6-1	190	Alexandria, Minn.	60	Carter Gorder	Jr.	OL	6-4	300	Mason City, Iowa
1	Sam Strandell	Jr.	WR	6-3	215	Grand Forks, N.D.	26	Paine Parks	Jr.	LB	6-2	225	Grand Forks, N.D.	61	Wyatt Bell	R-Fr.	DT	6-3	295	Rogers, Minn.
2	Deng Deng	R-Fr.	WR	6-5	225	Tokio, N.D.	27	Kenten Laughman	R-Fr.	K	6-3	175	Shawnee, Kan.	62	Ben Buxa	So.	OL	6-3	310	Lake Mills, Wis.
2	Avery Scott	Sr.	NB	6-0	190	Newport News, Va.	27	Grant Noland	Fr.	DB	6-1	175	Kearney, Mo.	63	Isaac Cariveau	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	305	Detroit Lakes, Minn.
3	Nate DeMontagnac	Sr.	WR	6-3	195	Mississauga, Ontario	28	Gaven Ziebarth	Sr.	RB	6-0	205	Cambridge, Minn.	64	Kuba Tyszka	So.	OL	6-6	300	Norridge, Ill.
3	Jonnie Wiltshire	Sr.	NB	5-11	190	Middletown, Del.	29	Grant Tylutki	Fr.	NB	5-9	185	Cold Spring, Minn.	66	Nick Darling	Fr.	OL	6-1	300	Johnston, Iowa
4	B.J. Fleming	Jr.	WR	6-0	180	Aledo, Texas	30	Hudson Flom	So.	DB	5-11	180	Grand Forks, N.D.	67	Liam Becher	Jr.	OL	6-7	320	Iowa City, Iowa
4	Jy Martin	Sr.	S	5-10	190	Clover, S.C.	31	Griffin Broderick	Fr.	RB	6-0	240	Minot, N.D.	69	Jonah Reiling	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	305	Lisbon, Iowa
5	Sam Ostrenga	R-Fr.	S	5-11	195	Sun Prairie, Wis.	32	Charles Langama	Fr.	RB	5-9	195	Maple Grove, Minn.	70	Matthew Schoenecker	So.	OL	6-7	290	New Prague, Minn.
5	Jack Sulik	R-Fr.	QB	6-5	220	Burlington, Wis.	33	Jett Sutton	Jr.	S	6-0	205	Kansas City, Mo.	71	Seth Anderson	R-Sr.	OL	6-5	300	Moorhead, Minn.
6	Simon Romfo	Sr.	QB	5-10	190	Calvin, N.D.	34	Micheal Devereaux	Jr.	LB	6-1	235	El Reno, Okla.	72	William Stobbe	R-Fr.	OL	6-2	290	West Des Moines, Iowa
7	Malachi McNeal	Sr.	LB	6-1	230	Waukegan, Ill.	35	Randle Parker	R-Fr.	RB	5-9	195	Phoenix, Ariz.	74	Tyler Thaden	R-Fr.	OL	6-6	290	Elkhorn, Neb.
8	Javance Tupou'ata-Johnson	So.	QB	6-5	215	Oakland, Calif.	36	Pierre Allen Jr.	Fr.	LB	6-3	215	Lincoln, Neb.	75	Tyler Henry	Jr.	DT	6-3	275	Houston, Texas
9	Tyler Erkman	So.	S	6-1	195	Lake Zurich, Ill.	37	Owen Thielges	Fr.	S	6-1	190	Moorhead, Minn.	75	Alton Williams	R-Fr.	OL	6-8	300	Sun Prairie, Wis.
9	Sawyer Seidl	So.	RB	5-10	175	Hugo, Minn.	38	Ethan Boll	So.	LB	6-2	220	Crookston, Minn.	76	Ayden Teeter	Jr.	OL	6-5	320	Brownsville, Pa.
10	Caden Dennis	Sr.	WR	6-2	185	Kansas City, Mo.	39	Jeff Robinson	Sr.	DB	5-9	175	Shakopee, Minn.	77	Mark Bussan	R-Fr.	OL	6-7	320	Prairie City, Iowa
10	Bennett Walker	Sr.	DB	6-1	200	San Diego, Calif.	39	Seth Staloch	Fr.	WR	6-7	205	Osakis, Minn.	78	Alex Michels	Fr.	OL	6-7	275	Green Bay, Wis.
11	Jerry Kaminski	So.	QB	6-2	210	Sun Prairie, Wis.	40	Haydn Stay	Jr.	TE	6-4	260	Princeton, Minn.	79	Trace Thaden	Jr.	OL	6-8	295	Omaha, Neb.
11	Zach Lewis	Sr.	S	5-10	180	Chandler, Ariz.	42	Hunter Kallstrom	R-Fr.	TE	6-4	230	Kerkhoven, Minn.	80	Watson Hafer	So.	TE	6-4	240	West Plains, Mo.
12	Grant Romfo	Sr.	TE	6-1	230	Calvin, N.D.	42	Evan Kludt	Fr.	S	6-3	185	Alexandria, Minn.	81	Keegan Ryan	R-Fr.	WR	6-4	210	Lake City, Minn.
12	Henry Theobald	R-Fr.	NB	6-0	180	Sioux Falls, S.D.	43	Gabe Anderson	Fr.	LB	6-4	215	Hinton, Iowa	82	Tray Kuntz	R-Fr.	TE	6-4	250	Grand Forks, N.D.
13	Kristen Hoskins	Jr.	WR	5-8	170	Alexandria, Minn.	44	Mason South	Jr.	TE	6-2	245	Maple Grove, Minn.	83	Vuciri Hakim	So.	WR	6-4	205	Fargo, N.D.
13	Kaden Vig	So.	EDGE	6-6	260	Hallock, Minn.	45	Carter Kleinsasser	Fr.	EDGE	6-3	225	Mound, Minn.	84	Nathan Hromadka	Fr.	TE	6-6	230	Maple Grove, Minn.
14	Etienne Higgins	Fr.	QB	6-2	195	Council Bluffs, Iowa	46	Cam Ahlers	R-Fr.	EDGE	6-1	225	Fargo, N.D.	85	Michael Gross	So.	WR	6-4	185	Eden Prairie, Minn.
15	Korey Tai	So.	WR	5-11	185	Glen Ellyn, Ill.	46	Zach Schemper	Fr.	TE	6-3	240	West Des Moines, Iowa	85	Luke Silvernale	Jr.	K/P	6-0	190	Grand Rapids, Mich.
16	John Butsch	Gr.	LB	6-2	225	Cincinnati, Ohio	47	Myles Terry	Sr.	EDGE	6-2	240	Conroe, Texas	86	Karter Peterson	Fr.	TE	6-5	240	Thompson, N.D.
17	Nate Frankfather	Jr.	S	6-1	210	Lake Elsinore, Calif.	48	Brody Thornton	Fr.	EDGE	6-4	220	Menomonie, Wis.	87	Aidan Behymer	So.	TE	6-6	240	Overland Park, Kan.
18	Jamaal Young II	So.	WR	5-8	175	Tempe, Ariz.	49	Erick Paye	R-Fr.	EDGE	6-4	245	Grand Forks, N.D.	88	Emmanuel Olagbaju	So.	DT	6-3	295	Osseo, Minn.
19	Idrique Carmichael	Jr.	DB	5-10	175	Pasadena, Calif.	50	Jack Ames	Fr.	LB	6-1	215	Hawley, Minn.	89	Jimmie Maxson III	Fr.	WR	6-4	195	Crete, Ill.
20	Xavier Leigh	R-Sr.	RB	5-10	185	Troy, N.Y.	51	Caleb Olson	Jr.	OL	6-3	310	Fort Ransom, N.D.	91	Ethan Cole	Fr.	DT	6-4	255	Chatfield, Minn.
21	Colton Brunell	R-Fr.	RB	6-0	200	Columbus, Wis.	52	Easton Choate	Fr.	P/K	5-10	170	Syracuse, Utah	92	Grady Kentch	Sr.	EDGE	6-4	255	Snomish, Wash.
22	Antonio Bluiett	Jr.	DB	6-1	200	Buffalo, Minn.	53	C.J. Elrichs	Jr.	K	6-2	195	Olathe, Kan.	94	Braden Mohr	So.	EDGE	6-3	245	Farmington, Minn.
23	Kyjuan Vengrowsky	Gr.	EDGE	6-2	255	De Pere, Wis.	54	Frankie McAninch	Fr.	LB	6-1	210	Mankato, Minn.	96	David Neuberger	Sr.	LS	6-0	215	Davenport, Iowa
24	Jayden Jones	R-Fr.	DB	5-11	180	Chicago, Ill.	55	Wyatt Kuhn	Fr.	DT	6-4	240	New Salem, N.D.	97	Logyn Eckheart	So.	DT	6-2	295	Glenwood, Iowa
25	Sam Klestinski	So.	P/K	6-0	185	Madison, Wis.	56	Theo Grace	Fr.	LB	6-1	220	Kearney, Mo.	98	Montre Samuels-Parker	Sr.	DT	5-11	260	Jenks, Okla.
							57	Michael Wagner	Fr.	OL	6-6	250	Maple Grove, Minn.							

Brown

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bulldozing offensive lineman in his senior season with the fifth-ranked Grizzlies, who host 16th-ranked North Dakota at 1 p.m. Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

The physicality among the brothers would ramp up playing sports in their backyard. Little did they know three of those four siblings would go on to play NCAA Division I football, with Josh Brown and Cody Brown also playing in the Big Sky Conference for the Portland State Vikings.

“My favorite experience with them was just playing tackle football,” Liam said. “Even though I was way smaller at the time, still loved it even if I got thrown around a little bit. I remember I was about to score a touchdown and I got tackled into a flower pot. Broke the pot, didn’t hurt myself.”

A big part of the reason Brown is in college football is because of his brothers, who all came from parents who didn’t play sports in college themselves. Josh is about seven years older than him and Cody is about five years older than Liam, who graduated from Sunset High School in 2021.

All of the brothers competed in a variety of sports growing up, from football to baseball to track, where Liam’s favorite memory was breaking all his brothers’ personal records in high school shot put and discus. He had particularly looked up to Josh, who was the first of them to receive a D-I offer.

“Josh actually was my idol growing up,” he said. “My original thought when joining football was I want to be like him. He was the reason I started getting into football at such a young age.”

Liam didn’t always think he’d be playing in college like them. He had started as a tight end before he realized he had “bricks for hands.” He also “enjoyed hitting people” more than scoring touchdowns, so playing on the line fit him.

He wasn’t sure if physically he’d be big enough, strong enough and fast enough to play D-I. He also didn’t know if he could be mean enough on the O-line. He earned a 2-star rating by 247Sports and an offer from the Griz.

“They were just really proud of me at that point,” he said of his brothers. “They believed I could make it even when I didn’t, so it just meant a lot.”

Liam heads into this week as Montana’s most experienced offensive lineman, having made 29 career starts while appearing in 38 games since 2022. He’s in his second year as the starting left guard after previously making starts at center and right guard while having seen some snaps at left tackle, too.



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana offensive lineman Liam Brown (79) sings the fight song during the college football game between Montana and Central Washington at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula on Saturday. The Oregon native made his team-leading 29th career start for the Grizzlies in the season opener.

When he moved to the trenches in fifth grade, he wasn’t sure if the O-line or D-line would suit him best. He got a first-hand look by watching his brothers as Josh went on to be PSU’s left tackle while Cody was a defensive end. Josh became a mentor who provided insight about playing O-line.

“Even now, I talk to him about, hey, what do you think of this situation, like how do you think you would go about doing this,” Liam said.

He still gets weight room advice from Josh, who is a personal trainer at Sunset Athletic Club in Oregon. They also talk about trying to maintain weight as Liam has become more schooled on nutrition and diet.

He first focused on just the weight room after his growth spurt to 6-foot-4 in seventh grade helped him match his brothers in height. He began to focus on his diet as a high school senior, eating over 4,000 calories a day, including the family favorite of french toast for dinner and his mother’s chili cheese dip.

He came to UM around 307 pounds, got up to 330 last year but dropped to 315 this season as he tried to convert fat to muscle.

The recipe was simple.

“Creatine, higher protein meals and lower carbs, but enough to stay fueled for the day,” he said. “And just hitting the weight room like a crazy man.”

He has already earned a bachelor’s degree in software engineering and is working on a master’s certificate in cybersecurity. He credited the football coaches with pushing him to achieve high marks in the classroom.

He has also sought guidance from Cody, who has been a help on the academic side of college. He went to his math major brother when he was having any sort of academic issue, particularly if it had to do with a math class.

“He was basically like almost a 4.0, if not a 4.0, student at Portland State, so I could trust him to help me through all my struggles here,” Liam said.

He is last of the brothers still going through college. They stay connected by playing games with each other on PlayStation or PC, like Dungeons & Dragons and Warhammer while awaiting the release of Borderlands 4.

Liam even recently finished creating his

own horror video game about being trapped in a bunker with monsters. He’d like to one day release his own game, maybe even an updated version of that one.

His interest came from a high school game designing class where he recreated Pong and Mario. In a college class, he has used coding software Python to simulate a zombie apocalypse. It’s a bit different mindset than football.

“It gets a little robotic with how you think,” he said. “But with football you have to think fluidly. You can’t just be set. It can’t be like a set rule where if this, then you do this. It has to be fluid where each week is different.”

At least he isn’t exploding out of his stance into a tree anymore. Although it might feel like he’s banging his head against the wall if the competitive brothers ever got into a debate about who’s the best football player.

Liam, who made the East-West Shrine Bowl 1000 highlighting the top draft-eligible players this summer, would put himself at the top of the family rankings. Does he think his brothers would agree?

“I hope so.”

Finch

Continued from page 3

stick with the guys, and you learn more about each other, you become super close. I think this year, even with the added guys that we've got, I think we're just super close and we're all really, really good friends with each other. Outside of football, we hang out with each other. I think we all want the best for each other.

Q: You were named an all-state wideout at Hellgate, and your brother, Jacob, still played for the Knights as recently as last year. Have you kept up with your alma mater down the street?

A: Every summer I try to at least get out there for a couple weeks and lift with them, see how the program is doing. I stay in touch with a lot of the kids still, even though some of the kids, I mean every kid on that team now, I never played in high school with. But I mean, especially through my brother (Jacob), he's super good friends with Vinny Paffhausen and Parker Link, so I'm really close with them. And I got the opportunity to lift with them this summer, talk to coach (Quinn) Chamberlain, see how he was going to do things. I think it's awesome.

Q: Do you have any favorite memories from your time as a Knight?

A: I think my favorite memory was probably just going out there. I think Hellgate is such an awesome community in the fact that everyone in the stands is your friend. We weren't the biggest football team, but you know, we never quit.

Q: As a local, what's your favorite restaurant in Missoula?

A: I'm a big sushi fan. I haven't been to the newly opened Sushi Hana, but I would say Sushi Hana.

Q: Have you been to Sakatome?

A: See, my thing is, I don't like fruit sushi, and Sakatome always does that. So if I go to Sakatome, I scrape that part off.

Q: What do you usually do in your free time?

A: On the weekends in the summer, I'm at the lake with my friends. I go up to my cabin, just outdoor recreational stuff.

Q: What's your favorite lake in Montana?

A: Flathead, for sure.

Q: If you had to live in another town in Montana, which would it be?

A: Butte, definitely Butte. My whole family's from there.

Q: You recently finished up a degree in business management from UM and are starting to pursue a master's degree. Has the shift freed up your schedule at all?

A: It definitely loosens up my schedule. It definitely allows for more time to watch film and study. I'm in five classes, but just three classes at a time this semester, and they're all online. So it's awesome to do that.

Q: What's your favorite Griz game you attended before you joined the team?

A: I would say that 2021 game against the Cats at home before I got here. The recruits aren't allowed to stay on the sidelines, but I stayed on the sidelines and they didn't notice. It's funny, they do their hype video after the game of us, you know, beating the crap out of them, and I'm in the background. Why am I making this? I'm not even supposed to be on the field.

Q: Favorite Griz player you remember watching



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana wide receiver Ian Finch (5) looks on during the college football game between Montana and Central Washington at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula on Saturday. The Hellgate grad is a junior in his fourth year with the Grizzlies.

as you grew up?

A: Probably Mark Mariani. He was just super exciting to watch. And then, what would you say, cousin-in-law, is that a thing? Yeah? So, yeah, my cousin is married to Dylan Cook, and so I've known him like my whole life. When he got the opportunity to come play here, that was awesome.

Q: Running out of the tunnel before a Griz home opener, does that extra juice ever go away?

A: Oh, it's 100% there. It never goes away. You know, every guy that comes in, they're like, 'I've seen videos. It looks crazy! I'm like, 'Dude, I'm telling you, it's the best atmosphere ever for any football game ever.'

Carson Cashion is a sports writer for 406 MT Sports. Follow him on X @CarsonCashion or contact him at carson.cashion@406mtsports.com.

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