

CENTRAL WASHINGTON AT MONTANA • KICKOFF: 6 P.M. • TV: MTN • THURSDAY, SEPT. 4, 2025

# GRIZZLY GAME DAY

Missoulian

## PIBAL'S PARADISE

Senior Grayson Pibal  
living football,  
fishing dreams

SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

Q&A WITH LB CLAY OVEN, PAGE 3 • SPELTZ PICKS THE BIG SKY, PAGE 4 • ROSTERS, PAGE 5

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# PIBAL IS REAL CATCH FOR GRIZ



SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

Montana's Grayson Pibal runs drills during fall camp at Dornblaser Field on Aug. 20 in Missoula. He enters this fall as the only Grizzlies player who has appeared in all 42 games since the start of the 2022 season.

## Oregon native enters 4th year as long snapper

**FRANK GOGOLA**  
406 MT Sports

Grayson Pibal was hooked on Montana from the start.

That began when the long snapper came to Missoula for a campus tour while in high school. He reached out to recruiting coordinator Justin Green to find out how he could be recruited and learned he had to attend a summer camp. He gladly returned and caught

the eye of head coach Bobby Hauck. The offer eventually came for Pibal, who had already been lured in and now kicks off his senior season when the Griz host Central Washington at 6 p.m. Saturday.

"When I came here, I'm like this is where I want to be," he said. "There's a river going through the university. I can go over to that bridge and fish. Yeah, I think I want to go here."

That river is the Clark Fork River, which is just over a football field's length away from Washington-Grizzly Stadium. It's even closer to the Riverbowl, the outdoor field where the Griz put in their work to try to net a

national title.

Pibal has enjoyed a pair of passions — football and fishing — in the Garden City, where he has played more games in a Griz uniform than any other player on the roster. He's felt right at home on the field and the water as he heads into his sixth year as one of four Griz who reeled in All-Big Sky preseason honors.

"I've always been around a boat my whole life, so it's been pretty fun just to keep doing that out here too," he said.

When he's not working on guiding the football to a punter or holder, he's guiding fishing trips. He works as an independent contractor with a couple different lo-

cal outfitters, he said.

He'll lead those trips in the spring and summer, when the rigors of a college football season and a full load of classes are lessened. It can make for some long days, but they're also fun because he's doing what he loves.

"There's nothing better to do in the summer than that in my opinion," he said. "I'll go to the 6 o'clock morning lift and that'll take two hours. Then I'm running out the door to pick up clients, wolfing down a protein shake and sandwiches and hoping I smell good."

Pibal has taken people on the Missouri, Bitterroot, Blackfoot, Clark Fork and Rock Creek rivers,

he said. He's taught people from all walks of life, but it's especially rewarding molding newcomers who are fly fishing for the first time.

"I have a great time and get to tell people football stories and they absolutely love it," he said. "I've taken corporate CEOs, people with a lot more money than I could ever imagine. I've also taken just the two blue collar buddies.

"They're all fun. My favorite ones are probably taking the little kids. Those are always fun. They load up on cookies, snacks, juice boxes. And if they catch one fish, it's the time of their life."

Please see PIBAL, Page 6

# Meet the Grizzlies' new No. 37

Billings' Oven to carry on legacy jersey tradition

**CARSON CASHION**  
406 MT Sports

Clay Oven left Dana J. Dykhouse Stadium in Brookings, South Dakota, after Montana's season-ending defeat last December as a redshirt freshman.

When he returns to Washington-Grizzly Stadium to kick off the new season on Saturday, he'll be returning as one of the newly anointed faces of the program. Oven, hailings from Billings, was chosen to carry on the Grizzlies' No. 37 legacy tradition by fellow Billings native Trevin Gradney in June.

A rising redshirt sophomore linebacker, Oven is one of the few familiar faces on a defense otherwise characterized by new talent. As Montana looks to turn its defense around, Oven will be one of the names in the mix for snaps.

*Oven sat down with 406 MT Sports after a recent practice ahead of Montana's season opener against Central Washington at 6 p.m. Saturday in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.*

**Q: You were named the co-defensive scout team player of the year as a redshirt in 2023. What was that year like for you and what do you think you took from the experience most?**

**A:** Just looking up to the older guys and seeing kind of how they do stuff, really getting the opportunity to kind of just put your head down and lift and work out. Learn from the guys that came before you, kind of just a workman's mentality. The ability to be fresh for every lift and really lock in mentally on what's going on really helped me a ton.

**Q: How different was 2024,**



**SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN**

Grizzlies linebacker Clay Oven runs drills during fall football camp on Aug. 25 at the University of Montana in Missoula. The Billings native will wear the No. 37 legacy jersey this season.

**your first season on the active roster?**

**A:** Coach Hauck always preaches a workman's mentality, which I think you really have to buy into in order to succeed here. You kind of keep that same base layer, and then everything else is just a bonus. You get to keep stacking on experiences as you go.

**Q: What were the biggest adjustments from year one to year two?**

**A:** I think just that game speed,

you know, truly seeing guys of different colored jerseys. Being able to see how fast the pace is, being able to adapt to that and adjust on the fly.

**Q: Were there any moments early last season when you could feel the difference in speed or adrenaline level?**

**A:** That first game is kind of a shock to the system. Then, those big rivalry games, your blood is always going so you're feeling the pressure and the heat for sure.

You're able to kind of build on that.

**Q: You received the UM President's Award for maintaining the highest individual GPA in all of Grizzly athletics. What do you think has contributed to your success?**

**A:** I think, kind of going back to that workman's mentality, you know, you just put your head down and work. Those first couple years when you're not on the field as much, you get to learn from

the older guys and you're able to spend more time studying and all that stuff. I think that really kind of helped me.

**Q: What does your week-to-week schedule look like? How are you able to balance all of your commitments?**

**A:** Kind of just focus on school in the morning, then go get treatment and hit your lift. Then you can shower up and really go focus

**See OVEN, PAGE 7**

# HOW WE SEE THE BIG SKY

**BILL SPELTZ**  
406 MT Sports

The four nonconference home games Montana will play are a little like one of those sugary Peeps you sample a week after Easter.

They're mostly soft and marsh-mallowy with one rough edge.

I'm not trying to be critical and I know it's a challenge to attract nonleague FCS teams to Zootown. I just prefer exciting matchups where the outcome is in question. The kind the players remember long after they've left football behind.

Indiana State and Sacred Heart (no, not Loyola) are the other two nonconference home tilts for Montana. Not much pizazz there.

Ah well, there's more than one way to play yourself into a preferred postseason draw. If UM wins all the games it's supposed to win over inferior foes — both conference and nonconference — it will probably cash in with a few home playoff dates.

But if you're like me and believe in the old adage that steel sharpens steel, you're probably not a big fan of the Grizzlies' nonconference schedule as a whole.

*Here's a look at this weekend's games (all are Saturday except EWU at Boise State, which is Friday night):*

**Central Washington (1-0) at No. 6 Montana (0-0), 6 p.m. TV: Scripps Sports.** I'll be watching to find out what the Grizzlies have up their sleeve at quarterback. Last year's platoon approach wasn't exactly a home run. Keali'i Ah Yat would seem to be the heir apparent after starting six games and seeing action in 11 last year. But is he consistent and durable enough to take the Grizzlies to the promised land? Or will this new guy, USC transfer Jake Jensen, take the state by storm? I'll be watching for subtle clues Saturday while taking it all with a grain of salt since UM is facing a Division II foe. **Speltz:** Grizzlies 30, Central Washington 13. **Gogola:** UM 49, CWU 3. **Flores:** Griz 45, CWU 7. **Cashion:** Montana 41, Central Washington 6.

**No. 2 South Dakota State (1-0) at No. 3 Montana State (0-1), 6 p.m. TV: Scripps Sports.** You could make the argument the Bobcats' humbling loss at Oregon has nothing to do with how tough they will be on the FCS level. I think it showed Montana State is a work in progress offensively and will have a tough time staying with the Jackrabbits — even in Bozeman. South Dakota State is going to show a lot of folks why it is ranked No. 2 in

the nation. **Speltz:** Jackrabbits 30, Bobcats 24. **Gogola:** Cats 28, Jacks 27. **Flores:** Cats 24, SDSU 20. **Cashion:** South Dakota State 28, Montana State 21.

**Eastern Washington (0-1) at Boise State (0-1), 7 p.m. TV: FS1.** Few expected Boise State to lose handily at South Florida last week (34-7). It's worth noting it was a 10-7 game at halftime. You better believe that humidity in Tampa is a true challenge on the football field for out-of-staters. Just ask Notre Dame, which seemed to run out of steam in the trenches late in the fourth quarter in Sunday's loss at Miami. The refreshed Broncos will bury the Eagles. **Speltz:** Broncos 38, Eagles 13. **Gogola:** Boise 35, Eggs 10. **Flores:** Boise State 42, EWU 7. **Cashion:** Boise State 38, Eastern Washington 10.

**Idaho State (0-2) at New Mexico (0-1), 1 p.m. TV: MW Network.** The Bengals put a scare into UNLV two weeks ago in Vegas, scoring 31 points. You wondered if maybe this could be a breakout season. Then they lost 46-24 at Southern Utah last week. Now you're wondering if it's the same old Bengals. **Speltz:** Lobos 37, Bengals 17. **Gogola:** Lobos 45, Bengals 20. **Flores:** New Mexico 55, ISU 21. **Cashion:** New Mexico 31, Idaho State 14.

**St. Thomas (1-0) at No. 10 Idaho (0-1), 2 p.m. TV: ESPN+.** Interestingly, St. Thomas is the first program to jump from NCAA Division III directly to FCS. It happened four years ago. Prior to that, the Tommies were a dominant force in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. And one year prior to that league forming, they played in the 1949 Cigar Bowl where they tied Missouri Valley, a team from Marshall, Missouri. Anyway, the Tommies had a nice win over FCS Lindenwood to start the season, but they might struggle with the noise in the Kibbie Dome. **Speltz:** Vandals 35, Tommies 17. **Gogola:** Vandals 31, St. Thomas 10. **Flores:** Idaho 48, St. Thomas 10. **Cashion:** Idaho 28, St. Thomas 17.

**Utah Tech (0-1) at No. 19 Northern Arizona (0-1), 2 p.m. TV: ESPN+.** The Lumberjacks held their own for a while with 11th-ranked (FBS) Arizona State last weekend. They trailed by just 11 points with a minute left in the third quarter before eventually losing, 38-19. Utah Tech gave eighth-ranked UC Davis a run for its money before losing in St. George, 31-24. This is going to be a close one. I'll give the Jacks a slight edge since they're playing at 7,000 feet.

**Speltz:** Lumberjacks 27, Trailblazers 24. **Gogola:** Jacks 35, Tech 21. **Flores:** NAU 34, Utah Tech 24. **Cashion:** Northern Arizona 21, Utah Tech 20.

**No. 18 Sacramento State (0-1) at Nevada (0-1), 3 p.m. TV: MW Network.** It's hard to draw any conclusions based of what these teams did last Saturday. The Hornets lost 20-3 at second-ranked South Dakota State — a respectable score but where's the offense? The Wolf Pack lost 46-11 at Penn State. Coach Jeff Choate's Nevada squad isn't exactly a juggernaut, but I'll go with the Wolf Pack to win at home. If the Pack loses, its fans are going to be mighty restless. **Speltz:** Wolf Pack 19, Hornets 14. **Gogola:** Nevada 27, Hornets 13. **Flores:** Nevada 28, Sac State 14. **Cashion:** Nevada 35, Sacramento State 21.

**Cal Poly (1-0) at Utah (1-0), 4 p.m. TV: ESPN+.** The Utes roughed up UCLA last week in Salt Lake with a 43-10 victory. Cal Poly recorded an impressive road win over San Diego, 41-17. This week will not be so productive for the Mustangs' offense. **Speltz:** Utes 48, Mustangs 12. **Gogola:** Utah 56, Cal Poly 0. **Flores:** Utah 63, Cal Poly 0. **Cashion:** Utah 57, Cal Poly 10.

**Portland State (0-2) at No. 20 North Dakota (0-1), 5 p.m. TV: ESPN+.** After putting a scare into Kansas State in Manhattan last week, the Fighting Hawks will get their first win Saturday. Expect big offensive numbers for the host team. **Speltz:** Fighting Hawks 55, Vi-

kings 10. **Gogola:** North Dakota 49, Vikings 6. **Flores:** UND 52, PSU 10. **Cashion:** North Dakota 48, Portland State 3.

**Northern Colorado (1-0) at Colorado State (0-1), 5 p.m., TV: Altitude.** The Bears beat Division II Chadron State in Greeley last weekend, 17-3. Impressed? No? Me neither. Look for Colorado State to pick up its first win after pushing Washington last week in a 38-21 loss. **Speltz:** Rams 34, Bears 7. **Gogola:** Rams 42, Bears 0. **Flores:** CSU 49, UNC 3. **Cashion:** Colorado State 38, Northern Colorado 7.

**Weber State (0-1) at Arizona (1-0), 8 p.m., TV: ESPN+.** In this clash of Wildcats, it's important to remember Weber lost 45-10 at James Madison last week and dropped five of six to finish up last season. There's not much reason to believe the Pride of Ogden will push Arizona in Tucson. **Speltz:** Arizona 44, Weber State 17. **Gogola:** Zona 52, Weber 7. **Flores:** Arizona 56, Weber 7. **Cashion:** Arizona 48, Weber State 9.

**No. 8 UC Davis (1-0) at Washington (1-0), 9 p.m. TV: Big Ten Network.** This is arguably the second most interesting game of the week involving a Big Sky team (behind SDSU at MSU). It's a chance to see just how good the Aggies can be against a Big Ten foe. So far, Davis is a little hard to read. The Aggies should actually be 2-0, but their debut at Mercer was canceled due to lightning with Davis leading 23-17 and 7:46 remaining. Last week, the Aggies escaped with a 31-24 road win over Utah Tech. My hunch is the Huskies will have their hands full late Saturday night but will prevail. **Speltz:** Huskies 30, Aggies 23. **Gogola:** UW 34, Davis 20. **Flores:** UW 38, Davis 17. **Cashion:** Washington 24, UC Davis 21.



**BILL SPELTZ**

**10-1**



**FRANK GOGOLA**

**9-2**



**VICTOR FLORES**

**10-1**



**CARSON CASHION**

**10-1**

a run for its money Saturday. North Dakota led by four points at halftime and four with a minute left before falling, 38-35.

Bill Speltz is Missoulian sports editor. Contact him at bill.speltz@406mstsports.com or on Twitter @billspeltz

## MONTANA GRIZZLIES ROSTER

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

## CENTRAL WASHINGTON WILDCATS ROSTER

No.	Name	Year	Position	Height	Weight	Hometown	28	Coen Cronk	R-Fr.	DB	6-3	180	Olympia, Wash.	59	Riah Tua	Fr.	DL	6-0	247	Vancouver, Wash.
0	Jalen Owens	R-Sr.	DB	5-11	160	Portland, Ore.	29	Logan Lisherness	R-So.	LB	6-2	230	Puyallup, Wash.	62	Gavin McCallum	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	300	Kennewick, Wash.
1	Mason Juergens	R-So.	WR	6-2	197	Olympia, Wash.	30	Jerimyah Mitchell	Fr.	DB	6-1	175	Sacramento, Calif.	63	Tyler Luzan	R-Jr.	OL	6-5	290	Bothell, Wash.
2	Jalen Grable	R-Sr.	WR	6-3	195	Portland, Ore.	31	Brycen Indell	R-Jr.	LB	6-1	210	Eugene, Ore.	66	Chris Hauss	Fr.	DL	6-3	250	Yelm, Wash.
4	Cole Hunt	R-So.	WR	5-10	175	Sammamish, Wash.	32	Jalen Webber	R-Sr.	DB	5-10	165	Pasco, Wash.	67	Brody Sahlfeld	Fr.	OL	6-4	270	Hillsboro, Ore.
5	Justice Taylor	R-Jr.	RB	6-1	195	Lakewood, Wash.	33	Jairus Phillips	R-Jr.	LB	6-1	215	Camas, Wash.	70	Jacob Woodcock	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	307	Yakima, Wash.
6	Ryder Bumgarner	R-So.	RB	5-9	195	Stanwood, Wash.	34	Brogan De'Asis	R-Jr.	DL	6-3	235	Sumner, Wash.	71	Brady Holland	Fr.	OL	6-3	310	Portland, Ore.
7	Justin Brennan	R-Jr.	QB	6-0	180	University Place, Wash.	35	Ethan Pletcher	R-So.	DB	6-1	185	Graham, Wash.	72	Lucas Johnson	R-Fr.	OL	6-7	305	Mount Vernon, Wash.
8	Zay Jennings	R-Fr.	DB	6-1	175	Puyallup, Wash.	36	Michael Westbrook Jr.	R-So.	DB	6-1	200	Lakewood, Wash.	73	DeQuan Freeland	Fr.	OL	6-4	275	Bremerton, Wash.
9	Javonte Walker	R-So.	DB	6-2	191	Lacey, Wash.	37	David Jones	R-Jr.	DB	6-2	180	Modesto, Calif.	74	Connor Aney	Fr.	OL	6-3	285	Snohomish, Wash.
10	Logan Brady	R-Sr.	WR	6-1	190	Steilacoom, Wash.	38	Jackson Hagopian	So.	DB	5-10	160	Carmichael, Calif.	75	Kaleb Potts	R-Jr.	OL	6-6	295	Marysville, Wash.
11	Ty Snider	R-Jr.	WR	6-4	200	Ridgefield, Wash.	38	Colton Magruder	Fr.	RB	6-0	195	Ellensburg, Wash.	76	Roman Perrin	Jr.	OL	6-6	295	San Diego, Calif.
12	Kolton Mattson	Fr.	QB	6-2	180	Lake Stevens, Wash.	39	Omar Lazcano	R-Fr.	DB	6-1	180	Phoenix, Ariz.	77	Charlie Bennett	Fr.	OL	6-5	305	Ellensburg, Wash.
12	Landon Schafer	R-Fr.	DB	6-2	200	Anacortes, Wash.	40	Brett McCalla	R-Jr.	LB	6-3	215	Manhattan Beach, Calif.	78	Vance Gustafson	Fr.	OL	6-6	270	Spokane, Wash.
13	King Williams	R-Jr.	DB	5-7	168	Fairfield, Calif.	41	Cale Allen	R-Fr.	LB	6-1	230	Olympia, Wash.	79	Dylan Dean	R-Sr.	OL	6-5	285	Vancouver, Wash.
14	Beau Phillips	So.	RB	5-10	195	Snoqualmie, Wash.	42	Chase Loidhamer	R-Sr.	DL	6-5	260	Wenatchee, Wash.	80	Stephen Woodward	R-So.	TE	6-3	215	Bothell, Wash.
15	Jaden Chimeise	Fr.	DB	6-1	185	Sumner, Wash.	43	Kuma Scanlan	Sr.	LB	6-0	235	Federal Way, Wash.	81	Camden Loidhamer	R-Jr.	TE	6-4	240	Wenatchee, Wash.
15	Bo Gionet	R-Fr.	ATH	6-4	190	Seattle, Wash.	44	Chase Coalson	R-Sr.	DB	6-0	195	Gig Harbor, Wash.	82	Andrew Molloy	R-Jr.	TE	6-3	230	Arlington, Wash.
16	Caleb Christensen	R-Jr.	QB	6-3	198	Royal City, Wash.	45	Wyatt Redding	R-Jr.	K	6-1	196	Sumner, Wash.	83	Max Moenoa	R-Sr.	TE	6-2	230	Lake Stevens, Wash.
17	Kennedy McGill	R-Jr.	QB	6-0	180	Bothell, Wash.	46	Blake Borup</td												

## Pibal

From 2

Pibal is a self-described “fishing nerd.” He grew up in Clackamas, Oregon, about 20 minutes southeast of Portland in an area that he described as similar to Missoula due to the instant access to a river.

He was on the water often growing up, whether it was swimming or being in drift boats and rowing boats. At an early age, he learned all about carp fishing and fly fishing, which he credited to his father, Andy Pibal.

“I remember being 5 years old rowing a drift boat and getting yelled at to do it right, and I’m like, ‘I don’t think I’m strong enough,’” he recalled with a laugh.

Pibal also got into sports at a young age, playing football and lacrosse among other activities. Football was his love because of the team camaraderie, but his dream of playing quarterback like his idol Brett Favre didn’t pan out.

When he didn’t make the eighth grade A team, he stuck it out at the insistence of his parents. He also got connected with Carter Kragero, a college-bound high school senior who showed him the ropes of long snapping.

“It was me and my dad every evening going out and snapping as often as we could – backyard, go down to the high school field,” he said. “My dad’s helped more than anyone could, just keeping me going and being like, ‘Yeah, you want to go hang out with your friends today, but you told me you want to play in college, so this is what we have to do to get there.’”

Pibal continued working on his newfound craft in high school, even winning a state title, and at Rubio Long Snapping Camps. He also went to college camps all around the Pacific Northwest trying to land a spot at the next level.

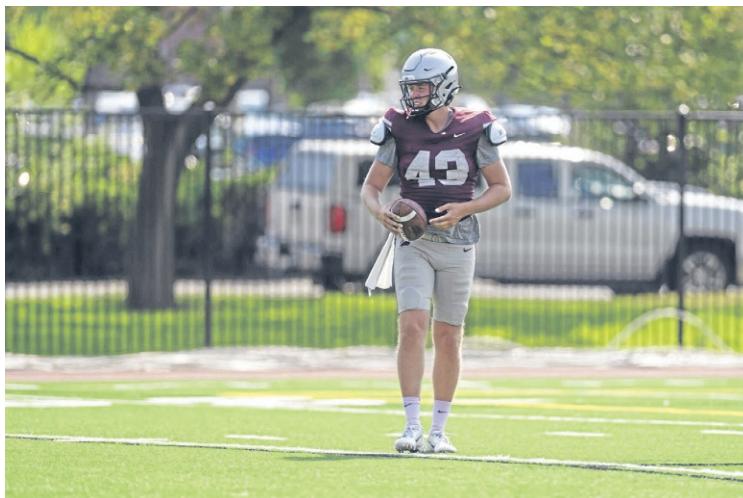
His father was the one driving him from Oregon to Washington to Montana. He was also the person who made sure the high schooler stuck to his word.

“He was a big part of it,” Pi-



SHANNA MADISON PHOTOS, MISSOULIAN

Montana’s Grayson Pibal runs drills during football practice at the University of Montana on Aug. 25 in Missoula. He’s one of four Grizzlies who reeled in All-Big Sky preseason honors.



Montana’s Grayson Pibal runs drills during football practice at the University of Montana on Aug. 25 in Missoula. He hasn’t had a bad snap over his past 293 attempts on field goals, extra points and punts.

bal said. “Even days where I was like, ‘I’m tired, I squatted today, I don’t want to go do it,’ he’s like, ‘Well, if you’re going to do this in college, you’re going to squat and you’re going to be sore going into practice.’”

Pibal was a big fish when the Griz landed him. He was graded as a five-star prospect and ranked as the No. 10 long snapper in the

country and No. 1 in the Northwest for his 2020 recruiting class by Rubio Long Snapping.

Hauck won’t take a specialist without seeing him in person, so Pibal came to a summer camp at UM. He impressed the coach with his timing, consistency and technique, setting the stage for becoming a four-year starter for the Griz.

Pibal could be the last of his kind under Hauck. Montana doesn’t have another dedicated long snapper on the team or in its next recruiting class so far as the coach is looking for position players who can also snap because someone who is only a long snapper takes up a valuable spot in the new era of roster limits.

Hauck has been pleased with Pibal’s growth as a blocker and tackler as well as how he keeps the special teams units organized in practice. Pibal has been grateful for getting to play all six years for the same head coach, particularly one who puts so much emphasis on special teams.

“This coaching staff is awesome,” he said. “Not many of them have left. We have a ton of special relationships with them and they all care about you. I’ve known them long enough where they can say funny things to me and it’s like, ‘Shoot, I was an idiot my freshman year. You got me.’”

Pibal had come to Montana in the fall of 2020 during COVID and credited the student-athlete academic center with keeping him on track while taking online classes. He has earned his bachelor’s degree in business administration and has been working on his Master of Business Administration.

Early on, he had become friends and then roommates with teammates Micah Ashton and Peyton Brammer, who he said got him into going to church. He also got into guiding fishing trips thanks to ex-teammate Michael Matthews and has thought about one day after college getting his outfitter license.

He’s not ready for his time at Montana to be done yet. Fortunately, he still has one final run to help the Griz land that white whale: a national championship.

“I’ve made some of my lifelong best friends out here,” he said. “That’s, I think, been the most impactful thing.”

Frank Gogola is the Senior Sports Reporter at the Missoulian and 406 MT Sports. Follow him on X @ FrankGogola or email him at frank.gogola@406mstsports.com.

## Oven

Continued from 3

on school for the main part of the day, and then you get to transition out to here (the Griz practice field). You kind of flip the switch in your mind and really get to focus on the football aspect.

**Q: Were you an academic standout at Billings Central too?**

**A:** Kind of, like here and there. I feel like I've always tried to work hard in school. My parents have always taught me that, really, you have to take that serious. So I've kind of been trying to stay focused on that, that's always in the back of my mind. I never really shut that out, even when football is added on and stuff.

**Q: You're majoring in criminology, what are some of your career ideas after graduation?**

**A:** I'm leaning towards major crimes, but I'm not exactly sure yet. That stuff really interests me, and being able to go out and help people who sometimes can't help themselves, I think, has always been something in the back of my mind, so it really sparked (my interest).

**Q: What were the first conversations with Trevin (Gradney) about No. 37 like for you?**

**A:** It was awesome. He came up (to Billings), he asked me if I wanted to go get lunch. So I went and got lunch with him, and he was beating around the bush about something, I could kind of tell something was on his mind. So, eventually, he kind of came out (and) said, 'You're 37,' and we hugged it out. And then back to small talk after that.

**Q: Where'd you go in Billings?**

**A:** We went to Hooligans downtown.

**Q: Has there been a moment from the time you found out to now that has felt the most surreal?**



Montana linebacker Clay Oven runs drills during fall football camp on Aug. 15 at Dornblaser Field in Missoula. The Billings native will wear the No. 37 legacy jersey this season.

SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

**A:** I think you kind of see the support system that backs this team, you know, all over the great state of Montana. You really get to lean on that and see how those people come out, and they back you 100% no matter what. It's really, you know, it's really eye opening, and you feel super blessed to be able to experience that.

**Q: Do you have a favorite No. 37 from watching Griz football?**

**A:** Oh, gosh, I don't know. I mean, the old greats were always fun to watch, you know, but guys that played here (while I was here), Levi Janacaro, all those dudes are who you look up to when you get here.

**Q: With the amount of turnover in the defensive unit this year, what were the early practices like in the winter and spring?**

**A:** I think just the excitement, you know, you get to see the kind of group we have and the brotherhood

among all of us, how everybody can play, everybody really bought into the system. I think that kind of lifts everybody up. Not only yourself but the guys to your right and left. It's super easy to get that intensity and energy going.

**Q: Where do you feel the biggest improvements have been made amongst the defense and specifically the linebacker room?**

**A:** I think just the speed and that hitting mentality. I think everybody out here isn't afraid to hit and to get dirty, but there's also been super big leaps in agility and everything like that too. So it's just great to see how those two come together and help build an all-around football team.

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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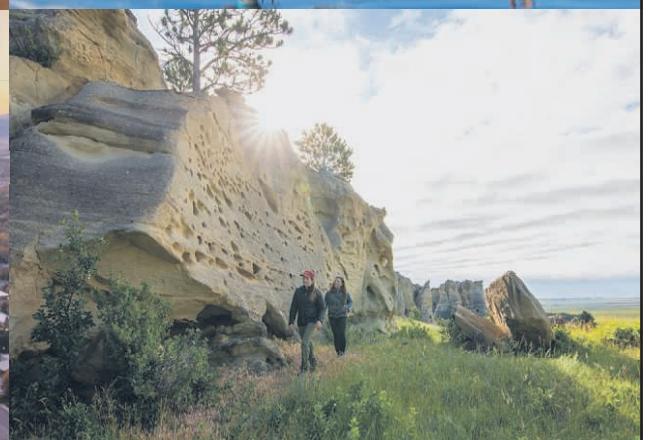
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