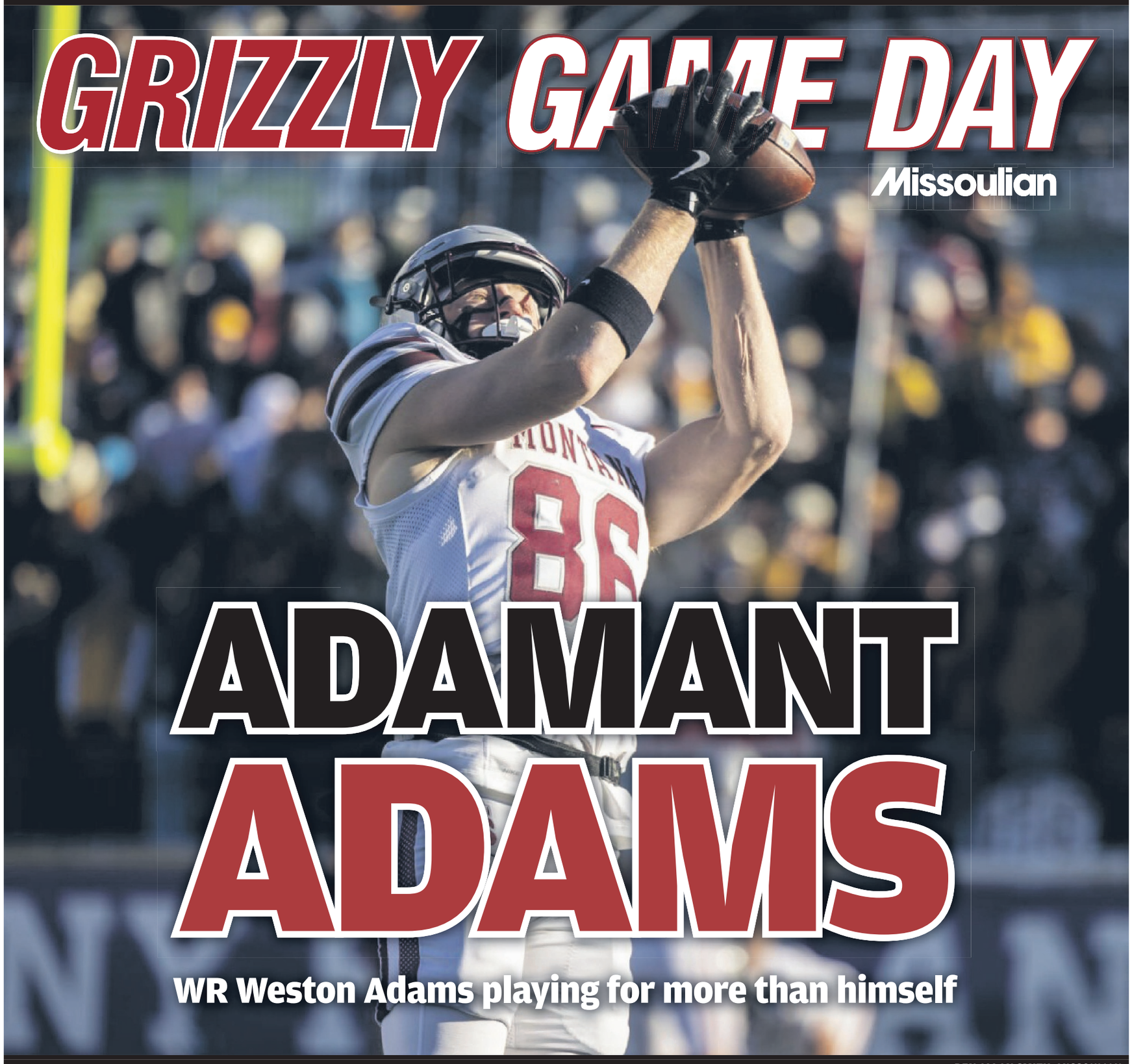
GRIZZLY GAME DAY

Missoulian



ADAMANT ADAMS

WR Weston Adams playing for more than himself

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Q&A WITH WR LANDON RANSOM-GOELZ, PAGE 3 • SPELTZ PICKS THE BIG SKY, PAGE 4 • ROSTERS, PAGE 5

WESTON'S WILD RIDE

WR Adams shows unwavering focus in winding journey

FRANK GOGOLA
406 MT Sports



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana wide receiver Weston Adams (7) walks off the field during the college football game against Eastern Washington on Oct. 31 at Roos Field in Cheney, Washington. Adams changed from jersey No. 86 to No. 7 in his second and final season with the Grizzlies after he began his college career at Illinois.

Weston Adams looks at a military-style dog tag every time before he steps onto the field for the Montana football team.

Inscribed on the custom memorial piece is a saying: "Behind the man that you've become is the man who helped you get there. Play for him." The "him" in that inscription refers to his late father, Jeffrey Adams.

His sister, Brea, gifted him the engraved dog tag his freshman year of high school, his first football season since his father's passing on Nov. 18, 2017. Nearly nine years since, Weston has been striving to make him proud.

He has gone from North Carolina to Wyoming to Florida to Illinois on a cross-country journey that now has him in Montana for his final season of eligibility. He's closing his five-year college career with his biggest role yet.

"I promised my dad to try and make it as far as I could, before he passed," he said prior to Montana's game against Portland State at 1 p.m. Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

"I always said I want to play in the League (the NFL). I still do. I'm always trying to live that promise that I gave to him. So, every single day, that's that extra why for me."

Before Adams decided to begin college at Illinois, before he later decided to enter the transfer portal and before he signed with the Grizzlies in 2025, he had another important decision to make in the recruiting space.

He could've played small-town high school football in Wyoming, although he might not get the highest recruiting exposure. He also had the once-in-a-lifetime chance to play for national powerhouse IMG Academy in Florida.

Choosing a potentially life-altering opportunity meant leaving home and living on his own. With his father having died less than a year earlier, his brother heading to college and his mother getting engaged, which would've meant moving and attending a different high school, he had a lot on his plate.

"I sat there and I was like, with everything going on, I think this is the best thing because I also wanted to pursue the football journey," he said. "So, I said, you know what, this is the best opportunity for me to pursue my journey. So, I kind of sucked it up and kind of made a big decision at a very young age in my life."

IMG Academy is located in Bradenton, Florida, which has a population of about 58,000 people in between Tampa and Sarasota. It is a college preparatory boarding school that has a nationally ranked high school football team.

Adams, who was 2,300 miles away in Wyoming, filled out IMG's questionnaire and submitted a letter and video highlights he said his mother filmed. Bobby Acosta, who was the IMG head coach at the time, brought him in to compete in a camp and then invited him to join the team.

Part of Acosta's recruiting process was researching a family's financial situation, like their home value, to get a better understanding if they could afford to send their kid. IMG's varsity team, which competes against Florida high school teams, costed $90,000 per year in tuition at that time, he said.

The national team, which competes across the country, is largely made up of four-star and five-star recruits who are committed to or getting recruited by big-time college programs. Players on that roster receive scholarships.

"I lost my dad in college also," Acosta said. "After he said that to me, it really hit me. He said if I play on the national team, will I have the opportunity to play Division I. I said I'll do whatever in my power to develop him.

"The fact that I knew what his motivation and his goals were allowed me to coach him to that standard every single day."

Kim Adams, Weston's mother, was heartbroken to see her youngest son leave home at 14 years old. She was a stay-at-home mother who hadn't been away from her children for extended periods. Nightly family dinners were a treasured ritual. She also tried to attend all her kids' home sporting events.

She realized through her faith that Weston venturing out on his own is what he needed because he was going through a lot losing his father. She was also on the same page with Weston that he was meant to go there and he had the right motivation for doing so after praying on the decision.

While him leaving was tough on her, she also knew of Weston's love for football and she felt the former NFL players who were coaches at IMG would be role models for him. She saw how he flourished in learning discipline, leadership and serving others.

Weston's journey has been fueled by the inheritance his father left him. He has used that money to pay for boarding school and college so he could play high-level football.

"He's pretty much used it all up because he has so much love for football and his dreams and his goals," Kim said. "It's pretty cool that a kid at that age would make those decisions. That's hard for me as a parent. Do I invest this?

"He so wanted to go. It was so expensive. He knew going there he was using up his inheritance and he chose it anyway and took that risk. He risked it on himself and that's a beautiful thing. That showed how much Weston believed in himself and his dreams."

Kim Adams had tried to instill in her kids that money wasn't the most important thing in life. Who you are as a person and how you live your life were the lessons she wanted her children to learn from her.

Please see **ADAMS,** Page 6



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana wide receiver Landon Ransom-Goelz (2) runs the ball in the college football game against Eastern Washington on Oct. 31 at Roos Field in Cheney, Washington. He is in his first season playing for the Grizzlies after he transferred from Rice.

RANSOM-GOELZ MAKING IMPACT

Rice transfer steps up as No. 2 WR in 1st year with Griz

CARSON CASHION | 406 MT Sports

Playing alongside 1,000-yard receiver Brooks Davis, wide receiver Landon Ransom-Goelz has put together a quality season in his first fall in Missoula.

After spending the first three years of his collegiate career at Rice in Houston, Texas, the 6-foot-1, 188-pound senior from Trophy Club, Texas, transferred to Montana after graduating. Ransom-Goelz, or "LRG," played for Griz head coach Bobby Kennedy when the latter was the Owls wide receiver coach.

Ransom-Goelz has accrued 404 receiving yards for Montana as the Grizzlies enter the final month of the regular season, most recently hauling in four catches for 33 yards at Eastern Washington. Before that contest, he had found the end zone in three of the previous four games.

Against UC Davis, he caught seven balls for 28 yards, scoring his first touchdown as a Grizzly. Two weeks later, he racked up 128 yards on seven receptions and a touchdown. Against Idaho, he recorded 67 receiving yards and a score on three catches.

As opposing defenses continue to try to slow down Montana's offense, the addition of Ransom-Goelz has provided UM another piece to the puzzle that can break games open.

Ransom-Goelz sat down with 406 MT Sports ahead of Montana's return home against Portland State at 1 p.m. Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

Please see **RANSOM,** Page 7

HOW WE SEE THE BIG SKY

BILL SPELTZ | 406 MT SPORTS

Even though the numbers aren't pretty for Portland State, Montana would do well to ignore them heading into Saturday's clash at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

Why? Because the Vikings are capable of putting it all together. They proved it in late September when they stunned 18th-ranked Weber State 44-41 in Ogden, Utah.

It's hard to believe that ever happened based on Portland State's recent results. Two weeks ago at Idaho State it was ugly, with the Vikings dropping a 38-8 decision and managing just 56 yards rushing. They trailed 24-0 at halftime.

Last week Portland State started slow again in dropping its third-straight game. The Vikings allowed visiting Idaho to build a 24-7 lead in the first half and things didn't get much better after intermission.

Portland State ranks dead last in the Big Sky Conference defensively, allowing a jaw-dropping 513.3 yards per contest in league competition. The 384 points they have surrendered in conference play are the most of any Big Sky team — even more than cellar dweller Utah Tech.

Montana's offense ranks first in the Big Sky in yards per game (471.7), so the Grizzlies will be licking their chops heading into Saturday's contest in front of the home folks.

Here's a look at this week's games:

Portland State (2-4, 2-7) at No. 12 Montana (4-2, 6-3), 1 p.m. TV: Scripps Sports/ESPN+. The Grizzlies need to get better defensively to make a deep run in the playoffs. How that's going to happen is anyone's guess, but they should generate some confidence this week against Portland State's sputtering attack. The Vikings rank last in the Big Sky in yards per game in league play (317.4). Plus they're not very consistent throwing the football, averaging 210 yards per game with seven interceptions. This game has blowout written all over it because Portland State, unlike last week's opponent for Montana (Eastern Washington), just doesn't appear to have the firepower to keep up with the Grizzlies' explosive offense. Stockpiling wins at home the next two weeks should help Montana's standing as it pertains to the FCS playoff committee. Then comes the Brawl of the Wild on Nov. 21 in Bozeman. That will be a tall order for the maroon and silver but weird stuff happens sometimes in rivalry games. **Bill Speltz:** Grizzlies 66, Vikings 10. **Frank Gogola:** Montana 56, Portland State 27. **Carson Cashion:** Montana 45, Portland State 14. **Victor Flores:** Griz 49, Vikings 24.



FRANK GOGOLA

59-17



BILL SPELTZ

59-17



CARSON CASHION

55-21



VICTOR FLORES

53-23



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana cornerback Nohi Casco (27) celebrates with teammate Styles Goodman during last Saturday's game at Eastern Washington. The Grizzlies will shoot for their second-straight win Saturday at home against Portland State.

No. 3 Montana State (5-1, 8-1) at No. 22 Idaho State (3-3, 6-3), 4 p.m. TV: Scripps Sports/ESPN+. The Bengals have won two in a row but those wins have come against Portland State and Utah Tech, so it's hard to know whether the team has turned a corner or it's just a matter of poor competition. Prior to this current two-game win streak, Idaho State lost three in a row. The low point came on Oct. 10 when the Bengals dropped a 25-24 home decision to Cal Poly. Anyway, it's all just idle chatter now. Saturday's game hinges on which version of Montana State shows up. If the Cats play like they did at home last week against Cal Poly, or like they did three weeks ago at Eastern Washington, Saturday may be a blowout. If the Cats start slow, we could be in for a good game in Pocatello's dome. The Bengals have been the second-most-effective passing team in the Big Sky behind Montana. And their pass defense has been the best in the league. Look for a high-scoring game with Montana State outlasting Idaho State. **Speltz:** Bobcats 41, Bengals 28. **Gogola:** Montana State 42, Idaho State 21. **Cashion:** Montana State 35, Idaho State 21. **Flores:** Cats 44, Bengals 17.

Eastern Washington (1-5, 2-7) at Idaho (4-2, 4-5), 3 p.m. TV: ESPN+. The Vandals are arguably the best feel-good story in the Big Sky this season. They're living proof that an 0-4 start doesn't necessarily mean a season is lost. They're currently riding a three-game win streak, with victories over No. 12 Montana and No. 3 Montana State. Idaho is tied with the Grizzlies for fourth place in the Big Sky at 4-2 and a playoff berth is a possibility. The Vandals may need to win out to reach that pinnacle. It's possible despite the relatively stiff competition ahead (hosting UC Davis next week and finishing the regular season at Idaho State). Anyway, you can only play 'em one at a time and this week the Vandals get to unleash their explosive offense against a team with defensive issues. **Speltz:** Vandals 41, Eagles 30. **Gogola:** Idaho 37, Eastern Washington 31. **Cashion:** Idaho 31, Eastern Washington 20. **Flores:** Idaho 42, EWU 31.

No. 6 Northern Arizona (5-1, 7-2) at Cal Poly (3-4, 4-6), 3 p.m. TV: ESPN+. It's hard to get used to the fact the Lumberjacks are ranked six spots ahead of the mighty Montana Grizzlies in November. This sports scribe has been writing about Big Sky football for 20 years and can't remember that ever happening before. Give credit to the surging Lumberjacks, who own the league's longest winning streak at four games. The remainder of their regular season includes two teddy bears in the Mustangs and Northern Colorado and one fierce foe in Weber State. Fortunately for the Jacks, they get to play the Wildcats in Walkup Skydome next week. But first thing's first: NAU needs to dispatch the struggling Mustangs, which shouldn't be too hard. Cal Poly has lost three in a row and last week's blowout loss to Montana State was ugly. **Speltz:** Jacks 49, Mustangs 24. **Gogola:** Northern Arizona 35, Cal Poly 20. **Cashion:** Northern Arizona 28, Cal Poly 10. **Flores:** NAU 38, Cal Poly 17.

Utah Tech (1-5, 1-8) at UC Davis (3-3, 5-4), 5 p.m. TV: ESPN+. The Aggies finally dropped out of the rankings after last week's 38-14 loss at Weber State. Davis has been on a roller coaster ride for a while, alternating between wins and losses since early September. The Aggies are due for a win but it might not be so easy against a Trailblazers team that won at Cal Poly two weeks ago and almost knocked off No. 22 Idaho State last week, losing 34-27 in St. George. **Speltz:** Aggies 31, Trailblazers 20. **Gogola:** UC Davis 28, Utah Tech 23. **Cashion:** UC Davis 38, Utah Tech 10. **Flores:** Davis 27, Tech 21.

Northern Colorado (2-4, 3-6) at Southern Utah (2-4, 3-6), 1 p.m. TV: ESPN+. Of all the teams in the lower half of the Big Sky standings, Southern Utah seems like the most formidable. Maybe it's because I'm putting too much emphasis on their solid performance at Montana early in the season (Grizzlies won, 28-21). Or maybe it's because they beat Weber State the following week. Over the past two weeks, the Thunderbirds have lost close games to Idaho and Northern Arizona. Their skid ends this week and don't be surprised if they finish the regular season with three-straight victories. **Speltz:** Thunderbirds 38, Bears 28. **Gogola:** Southern Utah 34, Northern Colorado 24. **Cashion:** Southern Utah 21, Northern Colorado 17. **Flores:** SUU 28, UNC 14.

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

MONTANA GRIZZLIES

No.	Name	Year	Pos	Ht	Wt	Hometown
0	Monte Gillman	Jr.	RB	5-8	167	Dassel, Minn.
0	Gabe Stroud	Jr.	CB	5-11	185	Tyler, Texas
2	Hunter Haines	Jr.	S	6-2	212	West Linn, Ore.
2	Landon Ransom-Goelz	Sr.	WR	6-1	188	Trophy Club, Texas
3	Brooks Davis	Jr.	WR	6-0	180	Brentwood, Calif.
3	Jeilani Davis	Jr.	CB	6-0	201	Inglewood, Calif.
4	Luke Flowers	Jr.	QB	6-1	191	Rigby, Idaho
4	Dane Parker	Jr.	S	6-1	180	Puyallup, Wash.
5	Ian Finch	5th	WR	6-3	210	Missoula, Mont.
5	Hudson Schrader	Fr.	S	6-2	194	Los Gatos, Calif.
6	Chris Johnson II	Jr.	CB	6-1	190	Fort Worth, Texas
6	Legend Lyons	So.	WR	6-2	185	Covina, Calif.
7	Weston Adams	5th	WR	5-11	192	Shell, Wyo.
7	Kash Goicoechea	Jr.	S	6-1	199	Kalispell, Mont.
8	Keali'i Ah Yat	Sr.	QB	6-1	210	Kaneohe, Hawaii
8	Adama Fall	Gr.	S	6-3	210	Dakar, Senegal
9	Jordan Dever	Sr.	WR	6-0	175	Spokane, Wash.
9	Kougar Kappel	Fr.	S	6-0	178	Red Lodge, Mont.
10	Eli Gillman	5th	RB	6-0	215	Dassel, Minn.
10	Styles Goodman	So.	LB	6-2	230	Austin, Texas
11	Cameron Gurnsey	Sr.	WR	6-1	195	Butte, Mont.
11	Jayden Nicholas	Fr.	CB	6-0	168	Concord, Calif.
12	Elijah Brady	Sr.	CB	6-1	176	Seattle, Wash.
12	Gage Sliter	Sr.	QB	6-1	199	Kalispell, Mont.
13	Brock Beaner	So.	S	6-0	202	Anacortes, Wash.
13	Lekeldrick Bridges	Jr.	WR	5-11	175	Cedar Hill, Texas
14	DeAnte Gentry	So.	CB	5-11	170	Fort Worth, Texas
14	Korbin Hendrix	Sr.	WR	6-3	190	McKinney, Texas
16	Brady Jay	Fr.	QB	6-1	177	Moses Lake, Wash.
16	Braeden Orlandi	Sr.	S	6-1	200	Valley Springs, Calif.
17	Kade Boyd	Sr.	S	6-0	198	Billings, Mont.
17	Bridger Smith	So.	WR	6-1	178	Kalispell, Mont.
18	Devin Dunn	5th	DB	5-10	190	Chandler, Ariz.
18	Cody Schweikert	Jr.	QB	6-3	217	Columbia Falls, Mont.
19	Drew Price	So.	QB	5-10	179	Jacksonville, Fla.
19	Rodney Weatherspoon	Fr.	CB	6-0	170	Forth Worth, Texas
20	Sage Salopek	So.	CB	6-0	171	Seattle, Wash.
21	Ashton Paine	Sr.	DB	6-1	193	Tumwater, Wash.
21	Courtney Rogers	Fr.	RB	6-2	211	Blytheville, Ark.
23	Dane Kellner	Fr.	S	5-11	170	Honolulu, Hawaii
23	Dylan Paine	Gr.	RB	5-9	198	Tumwater, Wash.
24	Justin Eklund	5th	LB	6-2	235	Rocklin, Calif.
25	Brady Beaner	So.	S	6-0	191	Anacortes, Wash.
26	Chase Cook	So.	RB	5-11	197	Red Lodge, Mont.
27	Nohi Casco	Fr.	CB	5-11	195	Lahaina, Hawaii
28	Hashim Jones	So.	RB	6-0	200	Hartford, Conn.
29	Tanner Huff	Gr.	S	6-0	208	Butte, Mont.
30	Kade Cutler	5th	S	6-0	207	Phillipsburg, Mont.
31	Tanner Williams	Jr.	LB	6-1	218	Orange, Calif.
32	Peyton Wing	5th	LB	6-0	225	Sumner, Wash.
33	Taylor Jones	So.	LB	6-1	210	Missoula, Mont.
34	Parker Link	Fr.	S	5-10	191	Missoula, Mont.
35	Cooper Neer	Fr.	LB	6-3	202	Kennewick, Wash.
36	Garrett Speer	Jr.	DB	6-0	195	Sherwood, Ore.
37	Clay Oven	Sr.	LB	6-2	225	Billings, Mont.
38	Nai Mose	5th	LB	6-0	225	Euless, Texas
39	Fynn Ridgeway	Sr.	RB	6-1	208	Whitefish, Mont.
40	Colton Lentz	So.	LB	6-3	223	Nooksack, Wash.
41	Ryder Barinowski	Jr.	K	6-0	203	Whitefish, Mont.
42	Giovanni Pifferini	Sr.	DL	6-4	230	Placerville, Calif.
43	Cooper Cyphers	Fr.	DL	6-2	253	Fort Worth, Texas
44	Titus Rohrer	5th	TE	6-7	235	Bryan, Ohio
45	Wyatt Redding	5th	KP	6-1	212	Sumner, Wash.
46	Jo Silver	5th	KP	6-0	221	Fremont, Ohio
47	Jace Eastlick	Jr.	LS	6-3	222	Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
48	Isaac Keim	Jr.	DL	6-4	280	Kalispell, Mont.
49	Elijah Rincon	Fr.	DE	6-3	226	Hacienda Heights, Calif.
50	Sam Merriman	So.	LB	6-0	230	Seattle, Wash.
51	Spencer Tripp	So.	DL	5-11	268	Missoula, Mont.
53	Mac Olsen	Fr.	DL	6-4	253	Manti, Utah
54	Evan Pyron	Fr.	DE	6-3	244	Missoula, Mont.
55	Austin Buehler	Sr.	OL	6-5	295	Helena, Mont.
55	Zaiden Wallace	Jr.	DL	6-4	300	Ewa Beach, Hawaii
57	Jake Mason	Sr.	DL	6-2	265	Ferndale, Wash.
58	Solomon Tuliaupupu	Gr.	LB	6-3	260	Pomona, Calif.
59	Nui Tovey	So.	DE	6-3	250	Lake Oswego, Ore.
60	Wyatt Sandford	5th	OL	6-4	298	Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
61	Lincoln Hoefer	So.	OL	6-6	306	Everson, Wash.
62	Lincoln Senter	Fr.	OL	6-5	240	Great Falls, Mont.
63	Kaikoa Kanakaole	So.	OL	6-5	295	Kapa'a, Hawaii
64	Matt Hilden	Jr.	OL	6-6	304	Santa Rosa, Calif.
65	Dylan Jemtegaard	Gr.	OL	6-4	296	Yelm, Wash.
66	Ezra Meyer	So.	OL	6-5	292	Missoula, Mont.
68	Torin Jeske	Jr.	OL	6-6	295	Bozeman, Mont.
69	Trevor Steinbach	Jr.	OL	6-5	300	Sammamish, Wash.
70	Josiah West	Fr.	OL	6-6	317	Prosser, Wash.
71	Quinlan Hyatt	So.	OL	6-7	295	Spokane, Wash.
72	Jack D'Ambra	Gr.	OL	6-3	303	Wildomar, Calif.
74	Owen Liechti	Fr.	OL	6-7	250	Ankeny, Iowa
75	Dyllan Drummond	Jr.	OL	6-4	315	Tyler, Texas
76	Campbell Vandiver	Sr.	OT	6-8	285	Nashville, Tenn.
77	Carter Bowen	Sr.	OL	6-7	305	Dawson, Minn.
78	Lucas Freitas	Sr.	OL	6-6	310	Snoqualmie, Wash.
80	Malaki Davis	Fr.	TE	6-5	230	Tacoma, Wash.
81	Mariano Birdno	Jr.	TE	6-5	255	Flagstaff, Ariz.
82	Merek Fisher	Fr.	TE	6-6	238	Billings, Mont.
83	Dawson Hammond	Fr.	WR	6-0	176	Malta, Mont.
84	Grady Walker	Jr.	TE	6-4	235	Missoula, Mont.
85	Wesley Ehret	Fr.	WR	6-2	190	Belgrade, Mont.
86	William Snell	Fr.	WR	6-4	189	Billings, Mont.
87	Everett O'Donnell	Jr.	P	6-2	199	Melbourne, Aus.
88	Reese Brooks	So.	TE	6-4	230	Round Rock, Texas
89	Danny Sirmon	Jr.	TE	6-6	265	Missoula, Mont.
90	Tyler King	Sr.	DL	6-5	252	Happy Valley, Ore.
91	Cooper Buffington	So.	DL	6-4	275	Winfield, Iowa
92	Zekiel Seumalo	Sr.	DL	6-0	265	Kent, Wash.
94	Cole Harpole	So.	DL	6-3	240	Gunter, Texas
95	Manase Tupou	Jr.	DL	6-1	315	Kihei, Hawaii
96	Logan Knaevelsrud	So.	DL	6-4	252	Snoqualmie, Wash.
97	Hayden Schwartz	5th	DL	6-4	245	Jacksonville, Fla.
98	Derek Opitz	Fr.	DT	6-3	244	Helena, Mont.
99	Braydon Bailey	5th	DT	6-2	302	Kona, Hawaii

PORTLAND STATE VIKINGS

No.	Name	Year	Pos	Ht	Wt	Hometown
0	Jaylen Lynch	Sr.	WR	6-2	185	Murrieta, Calif.
1	Devon Anderson	So.	WR	6-2	180	Eugene, Ore.
2	Jason Robinson Jr.	So.	WR	5-10	150	Long Beach, Calif.
2	Terahiti Wolfe	Jr.	S	5-10	175	Kahalu'u, Hawaii
3	Terence Loville	Sr.	WR	6-0	185	San Mateo, Calif.
4	Micah Avery	So.	RB	5-10	185	Antioch, Calif.
4	Isaac Redford	Jr.	S	5-11	200	Everett, Wash.
5	Gabe Downing	Jr.	QB	6-0	185	Olympia, Wash.
5	Marcellous Ryan	Fr.	CB	6-0	155	Gardena, Calif.
6	Jaxton Helmstetler	Sr.	LB	6-2	220	Seattle, Wash.
6	Cru Newman	So.	WR	6-0	185	Portland, Ore.
7	Kaleb Jammer	Fr.	WR	5-11	165	Missouri City, Texas
7	Gio Kafentzis	So.	S	5-10	190	Puyallup, Wash.
8	Diontaye Moorman	So.	CB	6-0	185	Everett, Wash.
8	Zui Shelton	Fr.	WR	5-9	160	San Francisco, Calif.
9	Davin Beason	Jr.	LB	6-1	235	Bellingham, Wash.
9	John-Keawe Sagapolutele	Jr.	QB	6-1	205	Ewa Beach, Hawaii
10	Tanner Beaman	Jr.	TE	6-4	235	Vancouver, Wash.
12	Deryk Farmer	Fr.	S	6-2	190	Medford, Ore.
12	Andre Miller	So.	WR	6-0	180	Happy Valley, Ore.
13	Jackson Presley	Fr.	QB	6-1	195	Kalispell, Mont.
13	Lamarr Stephens	Jr.	CB	6-1	195	Downey, Calif.
14	Tyrese Smith	So.	QB	6-2	225	Henderson, Nev.
14	Theo Thompson	So.	S	6-0	195	Upland, Calif.
15	Ki'Mauri Washington	Jr.	CB	6-2	175	Fresno, Calif.
16	Darius Bailey	Jr.	WR	6-2	205	Tacoma, Wash.
16	Hunter Herrera	Jr.	QB	6-3	200	Redlands, Calif.
16	Marcus Post	Fr.	S	6-0	195	Lake Oswego, Ore.
17	Jonathan Epperson Jr.	Fr.	LB	6-0	225	Meridien, Miss.
17	Jeremiah Hill	Jr.	WR	5-9	170	Fairfield, Calif.
19	Zyon Floyd	Fr.	CB	5-10	175	Lake Oswego, Ore.
19	Bo Gionet	So.	ATH	6-4	215	Seattle, Wash.
20	Derrick Blanche Jr.	Fr.	RB	5-8	165	Concord, Calif.
20	Andrew Powell	Fr.	CB	5-11	170	Sherman Oaks, Calif.
21	Kenen Elder	So.	CB	6-0	175	Tualatin, Ore.
22	DaMari Washington	So.	CB	6-1	185	Las Vegas, Nev.
23	Niall Raby	Jr.	RB	5-10	200	Cottonwood, Calif.
24	Tre Kramer-Taylor	Sr.	S	6-0	190	Majuro, Marshall Islands
24	Delon Thompson	Jr.	RB	5-9	200	Newbury Park, Calif.
25	Kayin Booker	Fr.	LB	6-2	225	Oxnard, Calif.
26	Sanborne Melson	Jr.	CB	6-2	195	Portland, Ore.
27	Quincy Springs	Sr.	CB	6-2	185	San Jose, Calif.
28	Dionte West	Fr.	S	6-1	195	Perris, Calif.
29	Oteko Mwamba	Fr.	WR	5-9	190	Seattle, Wash.
30	Lono Solomon	Fr.	S	5-11	170	Waianae, Hawaii
31	Logan Lisherness	Jr.	LB	6-2	230	Puyallup, Wash.
32	Carson Cox	Jr.	LB	6-2	230	Redondo Beach, Calif.
33	Jonah Henry	Sr.	LB	6-2	200	Kapahulu, Hawaii
34	Brogan De'Asis	Sr.	DE	6-3	235	Sumner, Wash.
35	Nash Burkart	Fr.	S	6-1	195	Lihue, Hawaii
36	Solomon McDaniel	Jr.	LB	5-11	225	Milwaukie, Ore.
37	Joshua Hossmann Lees	Jr.	K	6-1	185	La Mesa, Calif.
38	Kyler Phillips	Fr.	K/P	5-10	165	Everett, Wash.
39	Henry Amposta	Sr.	LB	6-2	225	Mission Viejo, Calif.
40	Jayden Pauling	Fr.	LB	6-4	205	Victorville, Calif.
41	Kayce Tinner	Fr.	LB	6-4	215	Lake Oswego, Ore.
42	Jaylun Nowickas	Jr.	DE	6-3	240	Salem, Ore.
43	Chaz Katoanga	Fr.	S	6-2	190	Oregon City, Ore.
44	Kekama Cosma	Jr.	DE	6-4	245	Kaneohe, Hawaii
45	Brock Fleming	So.	LS	6-1	180	Bothell, Wash.
46	Pablo Escamilla	So.	RB	6-1	185	Milwaukie, Ore.
47	Justin Craigwell	Fr.	RB	5-11	205	Lake Oswego, Ore.
48	Titus Andrus	Fr.	RB	5-11	215	Chico, Calif.
50	Austin Goetz	Jr.	DE	6-2	245	Tigard, Ore.
51	Cash Larsson	Fr.	LS	6-0	225	Lake Oswego, Ore.
52	James Minot	Sr.	OL	6-2	290	Sacramento, Calif.
54	Cole Graber	Fr.	OL	6-7	285	Phoenix, Ariz.
55	Abraham Zhyryada	Fr.	DT	6-5	310	Happy Valley, Ore.
56	Caine Elroy	Sr.	LB	6-0	225	Fountain Valley, Calif.
57	Cole Wilson	Fr.	DT	6-4	245	North Plains, Ore.
59	Zeliah Wade	Fr.	DT	6-4	260	Yakima, Wash.
61	Gavyn Welch	Fr.	OL	6-4	285	Oregon City, Ore.
62	Juan Pasillas-Stanton	Fr.	OL	6-3	315	Vancouver, Wash.
63	Mohammad Othman	So.	OL	6-6	305	Sacramento, Calif.
64	Tristan Lewis	Jr.	OL	6-5	305	Eatonville, Wash.
66	DeQuan Freeland	Fr.	OL	6-4	330	Bremerton, Wash.
67	Brody Sahlfeld	Fr.	OL	6-4	270	Hillsboro, Ore.
68	Semisi Latu	Sr.	OL	6-2	305	San Mateo, Calif.
69	Kapeliele Hausia	Sr.	OL	6-4	305	Moreno Valley, Calif.
70	Sebastian Santana	Jr.	OL	6-1	280	Encino, Calif.
71	Braylon Cornell	Sr.	OL	6-6	285	West Linn, Ore.
72	Damian Herrera	Fr.	OL	6-2	300	Truckee, Calif.
73	Gobi Goodson	Fr.	OL	6-3	300	Seattle, Wash.
74	Pule Leatigaga	So.	OL	6-4	335	Seattle, Wash.
76	Joey Ellis	Fr.	OL	6-6	300	Sacramento, Calif.
77	Trevor Newkirk	So.	OL	6-7	310	Ladera Ranch, Calif.
78	Duncan Broughton	Fr.	OL	6-5	315	Carmichael, Calif.
79	Gabe Crawford	Fr.	OL	6-7	270	West Seattle, Wash.
80	Eddie Vega	Jr.	DT	6-3	290	Dinuba, Calif.
81	Joshua Feuerbach	Jr.	TE	6-5	225	El Dorado, Calif.
82	Tyson Hunt	So.	TE	6-4	235	Tualatin, Ore.
83	Landon Bailey	Fr.	TE	6-6	235	Prosser, Wash.
84	Colton Kennedy	Fr.	TE	6-4	225	Castro Valley, Calif.
85	Gage Williams	Fr.	TE	6-4	230	Pasco, Wash.
86	Tyler Weaver	Fr.	TE	6-6	230	Boise, Idaho
87	Lucas Whitehall-Gilkes	Fr.	WR	6-1	175	Auburn, Wash.
88	Emiliano Rodriguez	Fr.	P	6-2	175	Cupertino, Calif.
89	Skyler Ormita	Fr.	WR	5-8	175	Chandler, Ariz.
90	Herbert Ware	So.	DT	6-4	290	Henderson, Nev.
91	Trey Kennedy-Coleman	Fr.	DT	6-2	280	Medford, Ore.
92	Cole Goldsworthy	Fr.	DE	6-5	220	Pleasanton, Calif.
93	Oliver Macy	Fr.	DE	6-3	230	Lake Oswego, Ore.
94	Avery Ducsik	Fr.	DE	6-5	225	West Linn, Ore.
95	Siaosi Langi	Jr.	DT	6-2	255	Merced, Calif.
97	Javon Taylor	Jr.	DT	6-1	280	Corona, Calif.
98	Alexander Esuk	Fr.	DT	6-1	275	Beaverton, Ore.
99	Elijah Eason	Jr.	DE	6-5	250	Fresno, Calif.

Adams

From Page 2

She felt they weren't getting that in North Carolina. She had been a lawyer, her husband was a doctor and the family was living a million-dollar lifestyle, she said. She and her husband divorced, and she moved with her children to Shell, Wyoming, a place that reminded her of her home and her upbringing when she had previously visited a dude ranch there with her daughter.

Her kids grew up there making friends whose parents worked blue-collar jobs. Instead of going to country clubs, they made their own fun going fishing, climbing mountains and riding four-wheelers. It was a slice of "real life," Kim said, and Weston spent his formative years there arriving at 6 years old.

"It's not about how much money or what car you have or what house you live in," she said. "It was so precious to me that I felt I brought that back to them. In their other life, they weren't going to get that. When everything around them is gold, it's tough to see through the trees."

Like many Montana kids who play for the Griz, Adams is from a small town. Shell is considered a census-designated place and an unincorporated community located 90 minutes east of Cody and 100 minutes west of Sheridan in the north-central part of the state.

Shell, located in the least-populated state in the nation, had a population of 84 people when Weston was growing up. It was a 15-mile drive to his middle school in Greybull, a town of 1,651 people, according to the 2020 census. Road games could require several-hour drives.

In middle school, the seventh and eighth grade teams had 34 total players between them, he said. Had he stayed, his high school graduating class was projected to be just 32 people, he said.

Playing both sides of the ball was required. He slotted in at wide receiver, running back and tight end on offense. He then lined up at linebacker or defensive end on defense.

Making it from what he called "the middle of nowhere" to NCAA Division I football is a point of pride that has been another motivating factor for him. He hopes others in a similar situation gain hope from seeing him succeed.

"It's also to prove that you can make it from a small town," he said. "Then everything that happened in my life, I wanted to show that with everything that's going on, there can always be an outlet, there's always something that you can look forward to. I always wanted to be an inspiration to kids that have that story of I have a lot going on at home, I have this, I live in a small town."



Montana wide receiver Weston Adams (7) runs off the field during the college football game against Eastern Washington on Oct. 31 at Roos Field in Cheney, Washington. Adams played his first three college seasons in the Big Ten at Illinois after he played high school football at national powerhouse IMG Academy.

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Before he got to Wyoming, Adams spent the first 6 years of his life in Asheville, North Carolina, on the western side of the state nearly 5 hours away from the Atlantic Ocean. It was there where his parents introduced him to athletics and his father helped him develop a love for sports.

Neither of his parents were college athletes, but they gave him every opportunity to try numerous sports. He played the traditional sports of football, basketball and baseball. He also got into tennis and golf.

Football stood out to him the most. It particularly spoke to him one night when he was in middle school and was watching his older brother, Korbin, play for Greybull High School. Under those Friday Night Lights, he knew he wanted to be out there too because it was where he belonged.

"Football stuck with me," he said. "It always had my heart."

Weston is the youngest of three children in the Adams household. His brother is 4 years older than him. His sister is 7 years older than him. All three were heavily involved in sports growing up.

Competition was rampant in their household. It was especially so between Weston and his brother. Being younger and physically smaller, the outcome wouldn't often be in his favor. Sometimes hands got thrown, he said.

The battles over the years helped him grow as an athlete into becoming the first member of his immediate family to play college sports.

"My brother made me who I am today with building me, building my character, making me tough and just making me really competitive because I don't like to lose," he said.

Adams got an early taste of the highly competitive college football world and the top-tier college lifestyle at IMG. Players lived in dorms that Acosta likened to a five-star hotel with swimming pools, Jacuzzi spas, big-screen TVs, basketball courts and fishing ponds.

Days started with 6 a.m. wakeups and measurements of sleep data and mood before breakfast. Then came meetings and practice, where players wore techonology that tracked speed and hydration levels. After the weightlifting session, players attended classes in the afternoon. The night wound down with leadership development courses and various types of team bonding events.

Adams got to learn alongside players who went on to play in the NFL: wide receiver Carnell Tate, quarterback J.J. McCarthy, running back Kaytron Allen and offensive lineman Francis Mauigoa. He also got to go up against future NFL cornerback Daylen Everette and Power Four safety Kamari Wilson.

"He was never rated any star, but the work ethic was so strong and he brought joy around the team," Acosta said of Adams. "He went against five-star cornerbacks in practice and was our best route runner.

"Weston is a five-star character young man. He put a smile on my face and it made me want to coach harder. At that time, he needed me and I needed him."

Acosta dipped into his connections to help Adams land with a D-I team as a 5-foot-11, 192-pound wide receiver. Adams walked on with Illinois, an FBS team in the Big Ten, to play for wide receiver coach George McDonald, who had coached alongside Acosta at Syracuse.

Adams redshirted at Illinois in 2022 and didn't play in a game in 2023. He finally saw the field in 2024, appearing in 11 games on special teams.

He felt he grew in his understanding of football and matured more physically during his time learning under both Acosta and McDonald. He has also looked up to his coaches as father figures ever since he lost his father.

"We had one-on-one meetings because how he was feeling not having his dad," Acosta said. "I was his coach, mentor, dad, sounding board. He had a big void that he was living with because he lost his dad. I think I kind of helped him with that void.

"The point that I saw him grow from the first time I met him to where he is now is his confidence. He always had that drive to work hard, but the fact he went to Illinois and played with five- and four-star athletes, I think it's really helping him with where he's at right now."

Adams was looking for an opportunity to play more heading into the 2025 season and hit the transfer portal. Illinois head coach Bret Bielema and then-Montana head coach Bobby Hauck were good friends, so another connection helped him continue living his football dream at a high level.

He played in 10 games on special teams in 2025 while learning under Bobby Kennedy, who was then the wide receivers coach and is now the head coach. This year, he's playing on offense and has caught five passes for 32 yards in nine games while being mentored by wide receivers coach Eric Price.

He also earned Academic All-Big Sky honors last year after he was a two-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree at Illinois.

"He's really smart, so he can play all the different (receiver) positions," Price said. "Whenever I need somebody, he goes in and he knows the plays. Last year, he was just a little banged up and never could get healthy enough to start proving it. He had a good offseason, good summer, and this fall, he's just been a steady guy and a really hard worker."

Adams' move to Montana also brought him closer to his mother. She was living in Idaho at the time he transferred to the Griz, is now living in Missoula and has been able to attend every one of his home games.

He, his siblings and his mother have done a FaceTime call every year for nearly the past decade on his father's birthday, he said. It's a chance for them to reconnect as they have often been living in different parts of the country while they chase their individual goals.

Weston has been unwavering on his own winding journey in which he has been playing for more than just himself. The dog tag honoring his late father reminds him of that every day.

"I think that he would be very proud of the man that I've become and everything that I've done and everything that I've accomplished in life," he said. "It kind of makes my heart wholesome realizing that."

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Ransom

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Q: Coming from Texas, is high school football down there as crazy as people make it out to be?

A: It is crazy, like the whole town is into it. Big pep rallies, sitting on cars, almost stuff you do in college, which is always fun. The city's always behind you, like in the grocery store, people come and say what's up to you. They know who you are. You've never seen them before. It's a great feeling.

Q: Coming from Rice, I'd guess you probably had more fans at some of your high school games than with the Owls?

A: 100%, at Rice, especially. We had a huge stadium and not a lot of fans, so it just felt even smaller.

Q: Do you remember where you were when you were informed of the blood clot, and what were some of the darkest moments from that time?

A: I was alone. I got a call from my doctor, like, 'Hey, go to the hospital. You have a blood clot in your brain. It's urgent.' Just called my parents really quick, called BK (Bobby Kennedy). BK was my wide receiver coach at the time at Rice. They were just telling me calm down, that it'll be okay. But that was probably the low. And then just like probably the first game, I think we played Sam Houston that year. Just not being able to be out there with my boys at Rice at the time. Those were tough moments, but I had a great support cast. My family, my friends, who held me up.

Q: You've known Kennedy longer than most anyone at Montana, what are some of your memories of him?

A: Funny, caring, a person that's just more than football. BK used to take us out to eat all the time. He used to always say, 'Just enjoy these moments, guys.' Like he was a big camaraderie guy, so he got us together a lot, made sure everybody's close. His wife didn't come down there, so we were kind of like his kids and just his family there. So he's always just been a great guy, and I've loved just having him around.

Q: Where would you go to eat in Houston with him?

A: I couldn't even tell you because Houston has some of the craziest food spots, and we would always kind of try new stuff. We went to a lot of pizza places, wing places, a seafood place. He kept us busy, for sure.

Q: How involved was he in getting you to Montana?

A: I entered, and then BK was immediately on me. Like, 'You're gonna love it here.' He started sending me videos of the games and the atmosphere. He's like, it's not like Rice, you know. I wanted to be a part of something like that and just have the fans behind me and stuff like that.



Montana wide receiver Landon Ransom-Goelz (2) reaches for a diving catch against Idaho defensive back Luca Moore (27) during the college football game on Oct. 17 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. He previously played at Rice, where he was coached by current Griz head coach Bobby Kennedy, who was the Owls wide receivers coach at the time.

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Q: How has it been getting integrated into the offense over the offseason?

A: I didn't come in the spring like a lot of guys. BK allowed me to graduate from Rice, so I'm very fortunate for that. I just came in the summer, tried to hit the ground rolling, got the playbook. Then you have fall camp, of course, and the guys integrated me well, helped me out when I'm out there.

Q: How much fun has playing with Brooks Davis been, and what has his impact on you been this season?

A: He's been good, and he's having a crazy year. So he's been good at just like telling me how to run stuff and things like that, things to look for. Because a lot of these places I've never played before, and just like 'Watch out for this field, these fans.' So he's been kind of leading me through this process of just getting integrated, you know, getting the plays on, and just making sure I do stuff right when I'm out there.

Q: What has surprised you the most about being at Montana?

A: How loud it is. It's not a huge stadium, but it packs out and it is loud. It is. It is probably the loudest place I've ever played, And I played at Texas. My very first game at Rice, we played against UT. And I think it might be louder here when the North End Zone gets cranking.

Q: There's quite a few guys from the Dallas-Forth Worth metro on the team, did you know any of those guys in high school?

A: I probably knew of them, like maybe Korbin Hendrix. But no, I don't really think I knew any of them. Kels (LeKeldrick Bridges) is from the DFW, we've got a couple guys in my room that are from DFW, which is crazy.

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