

GRIZZLY GAME DAY

Missoulian



BRINGING UP

Family, 8 siblings help propel Junior Bergen to superstardom

BERGEN

BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

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Bergen blossoms in Garden City

Billings native becomes lauded return specialist, wide receiver for Griz

FRANK GOGOLA
406 MT Sports

Junior Bergen would find himself walking around his home wearing his father's oversized football cleats when he was a kid.

He'd sometimes put on the shoulder pads or helmet of Simon Bergen, a Texas native who played for Rocky Mountain College and the Billings Outlaws. Enthralled with football, Junior even tried to wear his own gear to kindergarten.

"My grandpa nicknamed me 'Cleatus' because when I was younger I tried to wear cleats on the first day of school," he said prior to Montana's season opener against Missouri State at 7 p.m. on Saturday at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. "My mom wouldn't let me, so I threw a big fit about that."

Bergen grew up in a big sports family. Big both in terms of how obsessed they were with sports but also in terms of the size of the family.

He lived in a house with often eight other kids, sometimes even nine. Some are brothers by blood, some are cousins in the group of mostly boys.

They all considered themselves one family. They also all played sports, whether it was football, basketball, baseball, track or anything else.

"My parents made sure we were in sports and keeping our heads clear and taking care of school," he said.

The siblings also considered themselves competitors with each other, keeping one another on their toes. Bragging rights were on the line for everything as competition was a constant.

That included video games like Madden, 2K and MLB, which Bergen preferred over Call of Duty. It also included backyard sports like football, wiffle ball and playing "21" on the basketball court.

"I'd always stay after if I'd lose a



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana wide receiver Junior Bergen (5) stuffs Montana State defensive back Blake Stillwell (0) during the Big Sky Conference college football game between Montana and Montana State on Nov. 18 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula. Bergen's rise to stardom began in Billings, where he grew up in a house with eight siblings.

game and do a little bit of extra stuff just so I could get better than those guys," he said. "That carried over into high school and college. It was just a hardworking mentality since I was young"

Bergen didn't like to lose, so resiliency became key. But he lost often against his cousin Oran Nash-Bergen, which stoked his competitive fire.

Oran is one year older than Junior. They were among the younger half of the sibling group, in which most kids were separated by a year or two.

"He used to beat me in everything," Junior said. "He was way more athletic than me, faster than me, stronger than me, everything. I would always chase him, chase him, chase him. Then finally I felt like I caught him."

The competition continued when Junior and Oran were teammates at Billings Senior High School. Head coach Chris Murdock would hear

them often comparing their stats after games to debate who had the better outing.

They both were two-way players, and Junior showed his versatility as an all-state wide receiver who later was an all-state quarterback his senior season. Murdock, who has coached four boys from the Bergen household, saw how growing up in that family was an influential force in their formative years.

Still, there was something different about Junior.

"I wouldn't limit anything as far as Junior goes because you just rarely have a kid that has the talent that he has but also he has so much football knowledge combined with instincts," he said. "Lots of times you get a kid that's super athletically talented but maybe doesn't understand the game very well or they have really good instincts but don't have the athletic ability.

"But he's a complete player from

that end."

Bergen's father, Simon, has been an assistant coach for the Broncos football and basketball teams as well as a therapist at Billings Senior. His mother, Autumn, works at a surgery center in the Magic City.

Looking back and seeing how they provided for such a large family has left an impact on Junior.

"They were constantly working, picking up extra jobs and doing whatever they could to make sure we didn't go without anything," he said. "It definitely instilled the hard work into me. I just do everything for them because they sacrificed so much at a young age for all of us."

Bergen went on to earn a scholarship to play football for the Grizzlies. He's been an all-around athlete who has played wide receiver, running back and return specialist at the NCAA Division I level.

Some of the key skills to play at such a high level can be traced back

to childhood.

"My parents both worked with me a lot with my hand-eye coordination when I was younger," he said. "I was catching footballs and hitting baseballs at a really young age. When I got older, that stuff pretty much came naturally."

The importance Bergen places on his faith can also be traced back to his upbringing. His father, Simon, is a pastor in Billings.

He relied on conversations with his parents and prayed on his situation when he was debating whether to flip from Montana State to UM after a coaching change at the former. Ditto on his choice to return to UM this year or enter the transfer portal to try his hand in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

His faith is imprinted in his mind and on his body. He got a tattoo below his right wrist with symbols that mean "God is greater than the highs and lows."

"It just felt right for life," he said. "It just keeps me grounded and level-headed no matter which way things are going on the roller coaster of life."

Bergen also recently got another tattoo, this one behind his left ear. The tattoo is the number "031944," which is shorthand for March 1944.

That's the year that Bergen's grandfather on his mother's side, Joe Morin, was born. Morin was part of cultivating athletics as he would load up many of the siblings in a wagon and take them down to the park to play sports.

"He always let us know anything is possible," Bergen said. "He'd always push us. He was our biggest supporter. He'd be at all of our games — basketball, football, baseball. He was always one of the first people there too."

Morin, 79, died in April 2023, so he never got to see Bergen reach superstardom during the FCS playoffs. He didn't get to see Bergen return a punt and kickoff for a touchdown against Furman in the quarterfinal win or run back a punt for a score against North Dakota State in the semifinal victory.

Jackson plays with heavy heart

Grizzlies cornerback lost friend from high school over summer

FRANK GOGOLA
406 MT Sports

Ronald Jackson Jr. has had some extra motivation this fall while competing for a starting cornerback role with the Montana football team.

Jackson, who is entering his junior year with the Griz, lost one of his best friends from high school just a couple weeks before UM opened fall camp. Andre Seldon Jr. died on July 20 in an apparent drowning at a Utah reservoir.

The friends graduated from Belleville High School in Belleville, Michigan, in 2020. They starred for the Belleville Tigers, with Jackson playing defensive back and running back while Seldon suited up at receiver and cornerback.

Jackson started twice and played in all 15 games last year after he transferred to UM from Akron. Seldon, 22, transferred to Utah State this summer to play cornerback after two seasons at New Mexico State and two years at Michigan.

Jackson sat down with 406 MT Sports during fall camp to reminisce about his good friend. This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Q: I saw your posts about your friend you lost this summer. How have you been coping with that the past couple weeks?

A: "Yeah, it's been hard man. He was a real close friend to me. He was at Utah State and he was on his way up. I went to the funeral and I've been thinking about him every day since I've been doing this. It's for me but it's really for him too at the same time."

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about who he was and how you became friends?

A: "That's my brother. We're both from the same city. I knew



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana cornerback Ronald Jackson Jr. (22) prays before kickoff during the FCS semifinal playoff game between Montana and NDSU on Dec. 16 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula. Jackson has had some added motivation while competing for a starting role this year following the death of a friend.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Montana Grizzlies cornerback Ronald Jackson Jr. (22) and late friend Andre Seldon Jr. (2) pose for a photo while playing football for the Belleville Tigers in Belleville, Michigan.

him since I was in the eighth grade. We've been friends ever since. We did everything together."

Q: Why did the two of you guys become so close?

A: "We went to a school where

we built it up off the ground. The school was known, but we had to build it up, and it was everybody against us. It was us that, in my opinion, made the school what it is now. That's why our connection is so strong because we did everything together, like football, camps, college visits, just hanging out. That's my brother, man. It's been tough, but I've been thinking about him every day on this field. I know he's watching over me."

Q: In what ways has he been on your mind out here?

A: "He's going to stick with me for the rest of my life. Every time I think about something, I'm always going to think about him. Every time I go up a level, I'm always going to think about him. Every time I feel like I've got an extra rep in me or anything else I can do extra, I'm going to think about him because I know how bad he wanted it."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Montana Grizzlies cornerback Ronald Jackson Jr. (center) and late friend Andre Seldon Jr. (right) pose for a photo in high school. Seldon, who was high school teammates with Jackson in Michigan, died last month as he was preparing to play cornerback for the Utah State Aggies.

Q: Did you guys ever dream of playing in college together?

A: "We dreamed about meeting each other in the NFL. That was our dream. I was with him this summer on break and we were talking about how we got to meet each other up there and what we got to do to get there. That was our whole plan was to meet each other up there and get it for our family."

Q: How did you find out the news about him?

A: "One of my other close friends ended up calling me and let me know he heard about it. Then I called some other people to clarify it. At first, I was a little shaky, but I've been cool. I just took it as I got to do this for him."

Q: Is there anything else about him you'd like to add?

A: "I'm going to carry him everywhere I go."

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@406mtsports.com.

HOW WE SEE THE BIG SKY

406 MT Sports writers like Griz, Cats to steamroll

BILL SPELTZ
406 MT Sports

The last time I covered an athletic event at Missouri State, the place was called Southwest Missouri State.

Good old Springfield, Missouri.

When I was there 25 years ago, there seemed to be a gun shop with a big neon sign on every other block and Steve Alford was coach of the Bears' basketball team. I watched Alford's troops put a whuppin' on the team I covered regularly — a salty Southern Illinois squad with Bruce Weber at head coach and Matt Painter at assistant.



BILL SPELTZ

1-0

In 1999, Alford led Southwest Missouri State to the Sweet 16, proving what a mid-major from the Show Me State is capable of accomplishing. He went on to coach at Iowa, New Mexico and UCLA before landing at Nevada.

Anyway, Southwest Missouri State wasn't much in football back then and Missouri State is not exactly the Alabama Crimson Tide of the FCS now. Since moving up to the FCS level 42 years ago, the Bears have a playoff record of 1-4 and their only win came in 1989 over Maine. Not exactly what you'd call a proud tradition of excellence.

Last year the Bears went 4-7, with losses in three of their last four games. You could argue their most impressive performance came on Nov. 18 at two-time defending national champion South Dakota State. The Jackrabbits won, 35-17, but Missouri State was within 11 points midway through the third period.

Missouri State is picked to finish ninth in the 11-team Missouri Valley Football Conference. Their opponent this week, Montana, is ranked third in the country and favored to win the Big Sky Conference.

You do the math.



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana head coach Bobby Hauck celebrates during last November's game against Montana State at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. The 2024 Grizzlies will make their home debut Saturday night.

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

Missouri State (0-0) at No. 3 Montana (0-0), 7 p.m., MTN and ESPN+:

The only Bear named to the preseason All-MVFC first team was punter Grant Burkett. Let that sink in for a moment. The team did not have a single offensive player voted to the first or second team. That sets up a favorable matchup for Montana's rebuilt defense. The Bears do have six all-league caliber defensive players that will be on the field Saturday night, which will present a challenge for the Grizzlies' new starting quarterback. But my guess is UM will get the running game going and handle the Bears comfortably. **Speltz:** Montana 38, Missouri State 10. **Flores:** Griz 34, Missouri State 7. **Gogola:** Montana 42, Missouri State 13.

No. 4 Montana State (1-0) at Utah Tech (0-0), 8 p.m., ESPN+: What a thrilling win for the Cats last Saturday in balmy Albuquerque. That, my friends, was a tremendous display of fortitude. This Saturday shouldn't be quite as tough but Montana State needs to guard against complacency. And quarterback Tommy Mellott needs to do a better job taking care of the football after allowing New Mexico to tally two scoop-and-scores. **Speltz:** MSU 42, Utah Tech 21. **Flores:** Cats 55, Utah Tech 10. **Gogola:** Montana State 45, Utah Tech 14.

Northern Colorado (0-0) at No. 15 Incarnate Word (0-0), 5 p.m., ESPN+: Incarnate Word went 9-2 last season,

with one of its wins coming via forfeit over Northwestern State. Northern Colorado went 0-11, although the team did almost beat Portland State in its season finale. Ed Lamb will do better in his second season as UNC head coach, but his team will not win its road opener. **Speltz:** Incarnate Word 30, Northern Colorado 14. **Flores:** UIW 49, UNC 6. **Gogola:** Incarnate Word 31, Northern Colorado 13.

Portland State (0-0) at Washington State (0-0), 1 p.m., The CW: When I think of Wazzu, I think of the Pac-12 and that Rose Bowl appearance in 2003. The Cougs have entered a scheduling deal with the Mountain West for this year. Beyond that, who knows? Even without a league to call home, Wazzu is still way better than Portland State, who finished 5-6 last year and went 2-4 away from home. **Speltz:** Wazzu 56, Viks 13. **Flores:** Wazzu 48, PSU 17. **Gogola:** Washington State 49, Portland State 14.

Lincoln (Calif.) University (0-1) at Northern Arizona (0-0), 1 p.m.: Lincoln lost in blowout fashion at College of Idaho last week, so that tells you something right there. The Jacks are picked to place seventh in the Big Sky and that may be generous, but they're not going to lose to a non-Division I team at home on opening week. **Speltz:** Jacks 66, Lincoln 13. **Flores:** NAU 62, Lincoln 0. **Gogola:** Northern Arizona 59, Lincoln 10.

No. 17 UC Davis (0-0) at Cal (0-0), 3 p.m., ACCNX: Cal is one of those former Pac-12 teams that make you scratch your head and ask: Now what conference did they land in for 2024? The answer is the ACC, which is kooky. The Golden Bears are picked to finish 10th in their 17-team conference and the Aggies are picked to finish fourth in the Big Sky. This one should be fun to watch and I look for the FBS Bears to outlast FCS Davis. **Speltz:** Cal 30, Davis 28. **Flores:** Cal 38, Davis 24. **Gogola:** Cal 35, UC Davis 31.

Idaho State (0-0) at Oregon State (0-0), 4:30 p.m., The CW: Like Washington State, Oregon State has entered into a scheduling agreement with the Mountain West for this year, but neither team is actually fighting for a Mountain West title. Both may make a full commitment in the future. For now, the fact is the Beavers were strong last year (8-5) and they'll be too much for the Bengals

Saturday. **Speltz:** Beavers 40, Bengals 21. **Flores:** OSU 33, ISU 13. **Gogola:** Oregon State 34, Idaho State 17.

No. 7 Idaho (0-0) at No. 3 Oregon (0-0), 5:30 p.m., Big Ten Network: I wonder what last season might have been like for the Vandals had they not lost that home stunner to Montana on Oct. 14, 23-21. Would they have made it all the way to Frisco instead of UM? We'll never know. Regardless, they're not on the same level as the Ducks. **Speltz:** Oregon 48, Idaho 17. **Flores:** Oregon 56, Idaho 3. **Gogola:** Oregon 56, Idaho 14.

Cal Poly (0-0) at San Diego (0-0), 6 p.m., ESPN+: This game shapes up as a toss-up. I'll disagree with my colleagues here and go with the home team. **Speltz:** Toreros 30, Mustangs 27. **Flores:** Cal Poly 35, San Diego 10. **Gogola:** Cal Poly 28, San Diego 27.

Weber State (0-0) at Washington (0-0), 9 p.m., Big Ten Network: The Huskies are going to take some lumps in the Big Ten this season, but they're not going to lose their home opener to an FCS team picked to finish sixth in the Big Sky. **Speltz:** Huskies 38, Wildcats 10. **Flores:** Washington 45, Weber State 20. **Gogola:** Washington 42, Weber State 7.

Thursday, Aug. 29 games
Monmouth (0-0) at Eastern Washington (0-0), 7 p.m., ESPN+: In case you're interested, Monmouth University is located in West Long Branch, New Jersey. That's a long way from Cheney, Washington. Monmouth lost four of its last five games in 2023 and I don't see the team starting with a win on the red turf. **Speltz:** Eastern Washington 27, Monmouth 17. **Flores:** EWU 49, Monmouth 14. **Gogola:** Eastern Washington 31, Monmouth 27.

No. 10 Sacramento State (0-0) at San Jose State (0-0), 8 p.m., TRUTV: This could be a real tight ball game and fun to watch on Thursday night if I can figure out how to find it on television. I'll go with the Spartans to win with home-field advantage. **Speltz:** Spartans 30, Hornets 24. **Flores:** Sac State 28, San Jose State 27. **Gogola:** San Jose State 34, Sacramento State 24.

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

MONTANA ROSTER 2024

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Hgt.	Wt.	Hometown	22	Retired in Honor of Terry Dillon	59	Hayden Opitz	R-Fr.	LB	6-2	224	Helena, Mont.					
0	Monte Gillman	Fr.	ATH	5-8	153	Dassel, Minn.	23	Beau Dantic	R-So.	RB	5-9	192	Laurel, Mont.	60	Dillon Botner	R-Sr.	OL	6-6	290	Whitefish, Mont.
0	Vai Kaho	R-Sr.	LB	6-1	235	Reno, Nev.	24	Cameron Gurnsey	R-Fr.	WR	6-0	181	Butte, Mont.	62	Everett Johnson	R-Jr.	OL	6-7	301	Turlock, Calif.
2	Drew Deck	R-Jr.	WR	5-9	160	Kalispell, Mont.	25	Jaxon Lee	Sr.	S	6-1	210	Missoula, Mont.	63	Dylan Cohen	R-Fr.	OL	6-1	267	Seattle, Wash.
2	Ronald Jackson Jr.	R-Jr.	CB	6-1	191	Detroit, Mich.	26	Nick Ostmo	Gr.	RB	6-0	221	Portland, Ore.	64	Matt Hilden	Fr.	OL	6-6	278	Santa Rosa, Calif.
3	Brooks Davis	Fr.	WR	6-0	168	Brentwood, Calif.	27	Jordan Dever	R-Fr.	WR	6-0	170	Spokane, Wash.	66	Brandon Casey	Sr.	OL	6-5	309	Sandpoint, Idaho
4	Dane Parker	Fr.	S	6-1	178	Puyallup, Wash.	28	Isiah Childs	Sr.	LB	6-1	209	Manhattan, Kan.	68	Torin Jeske	Fr.	OL	6-6	253	Bozeman, Mont.
4	Ryan Simpson	R-Sr.	WR	6-6	209	Bozeman, Mont.	29	Tanner Huff	R-Jr.	CB	6-0	207	Butte, Mont.	69	Noah Kaschmitter	R-Jr.	DL	6-3	253	Grangeville, Idaho
5	Junior Bergen	Sr.	WR	5-11	184	Billings, Mont.	30	Kade Cutler	R-So.	S	6-0	203	Phillipsburg, Mont.	69	Cannon Panfiloff	R-Jr.	OL	6-6	293	Roy, Utah
6	Prince Ford	R-Jr.	CB	5-11	170	Concord, N.C.	30	Tommy Running RabbitFr.	ATH	ATH	6-1	202	Browning, Mont.	70	Colin Amick	Fr.	OT	6-6	264	Sammamish, Wash.
6	Keelan White	R-Sr.	WR	6-2	184	North Vancouver, B.C.	31	Geno Leonard	R-Jr.	LB	5-11	231	Missoula, Mont.	72	Cade Klimczak	Sr.	OL	6-1	286	Rockford, Mich.
7	Malae Fonoti	Fr.	RB	5-11	200	Palolo Valley, Hawaii	32	Tyson Rostad	R-So.	S	6-1	201	Hamilton, Mont.	73	Trevor Steinbach	Fr.	OL	6-5	290	Sammamish, Wash.
7	Kash Goicoechea	Fr.	S	6-1	194	Kalispell, Mont.	33	Lekeldrick Bridges	Fr.	WR	5-11	162	Cedar Hill, Texas	74	Tate Templeton	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	298	Missoula, Mont.
8	Keali'i Ah Yat	R-Fr.	QB	6-1	192	Kaneohe, Hawaii	34	Talen Reynolds	Fr.	RB	5-11	161	Missoula, Mont.	75	Declan McCabe	R-Jr.	OL	6-4	295	Waco, Texas
8	Kenzel Lawler	R-Jr.	CB	6-0	190	Corona, Calif.	35	Grady Walker	Fr.	ATH	6-4	202	Missoula, Mont.	76	Journey Grimsrud	R-Jr.	OL	6-3	302	Huntley, Mont.
9	Chrishawn Gordon	R-Sr.	S	5-11	191	Oceanside, Calif.	36	Ty Morrison	Jr.	KP	6-3	210	Valencia, Calif.	77	Michael Ray	R-So.	OL	6-3	289	Yakima, Wash.
9	Sawyer Racanelli	R-Sr.	WR	6-3	208	Brush Prairie, Wash.	36	Garrett Speer	Fr.	DB	6-0	187	Portland, Ore.	78	Lucas Freitas	R-Fr.	OL	6-6	312	Snoqualmie, Wash.
10	Eli Gillman	R-So.	RB	6-0	208	Dassel, Minn.	37	Trevin Gradney	R-Sr.	CB	6-0	184	Billings, Mont.	79	Liam Brown	R-Jr.	OL	6-5	317	Beaverton, Ore.
10	TJ Rausch	R-Jr.	S	6-3	205	Missoula, Mont.	38	Marcus Evans	R-So.	LB	6-0	221	Helena, Mont.	80	Bradly Lang	R-Jr.	WR	6-1	179	Bozeman, Mont.
11	Cole Grossman	R-Sr.	TE	6-4	220	Vancouver, Wash.	39	Jace Kluczewich	R-Jr.	S	5-10	166	Frenchtown, Mont.	81	Joseph Grezmak	R-So.	TE	6-5	241	Pilot Mountain, N.C.
11	Gabe Longin	R-Jr.	S	5-11	184	Great Falls, Mont.	40	Cooper Barnum	Sr.	LB	6-2	225	Vancouver, Wash.	82	Ian Finch	R-So.	WR	6-3	204	Missoula, Mont.
12	Elijah Brady	R-Fr.	CB	6-1	165	Seattle, Wash.	41	Brayton Boyer	R-Fr.	KP	5-11	179	Madison, N.J.	83	Drew Klumph	R-So.	WR	5-11	181	Missoula, Mont.
12	Logan Fife	R-Jr.	QB	6-0	205	Tracy, Calif.	42	Riley Wilson	R-Jr.	LB	6-2	230	Prosper, Texas	84	Evan Shafer	Sr.	TE	6-5	273	Connersville, Ind.
13	Xavier Harris	Sr.	RB	5-10	173	Oxnard, Calif.	43	Grayson Pibal	R-Jr.	LS	6-3	197	Clackamas, Ore.	85	Dayton Toney	R-Jr.	WR	6-1	191	Frisco, Texas
13	Ryder Meyer	R-Sr.	S	5-10	185	Fairfield, Mont.	44	Ryan Tirrell	R-Sr.	LB	6-2	235	Missoula, Mont.	86	Joe Weida	R-So.	TE	6-4	230	Missoula, Mont.
14	Aaron Fontes	Sr.	WR	6-1	170	Oxnard, Calif.	45	Caleb Otlewski	R-Fr.	LB	6-4	235	Melissa, Texas	87	Jake Olson	R-Jr.	TE	6-7	258	Butte, Mont.
14	Kyon Loud	Fr.	CB	6-2	172	San Mateo, Calif.	46	Jo Silver	Jr.	KP	6-0	203	Fremont, Ohio	88	Jake Barker	Sr.	TE	6-4	240	Keizer, Ore.
15	Retired in Honor of Dave Dickenson						47	Kellen Detrick	R-Jr.	DL	6-3	235	Havre, Mont.	89	Danny Sirmon	Fr.	TE	6-6	240	Missoula, Mont.
16	Kaden Huot	R-So.	QB	6-4	210	Helena, Mont.	48	Hayden Harris	R-Sr.	DE	6-5	255	Mill Creek, Wash.	90	Jareb Ramos	R-So.	DL	6-4	285	Centennial, Colo.
16	Owen Reynolds	Fr.	S	6-0	182	Red Lodge, Mont.	49	Isaac Keim	Fr.	TE	6-4	260	Kalispell, Mont.	91	Jaxon Tucker	Fr.	DL	6-3	232	Billings, Mont.
17	Kade Boyd	R-Fr.	S	6-0	193	Billings, Mont.	50	Erich Osteen	R-Sr.	LB	6-2	216	Simi Valley, Calif.	92	RB Wilson V	Jr.	DL	6-4	241	Henderson, Nev.
17	Luke Flowers	Fr.	QB	6-1	187	Rigby, Idaho	51	Austin Buehler	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	270	Helena, Mont.	93	Sloan McPherson	R-Jr.	DL	6-4	250	Savage, Mont.
18	Sam Alford	R-So.	WR	6-3	186	Park City, Utah	52	Cy Stevenson	R-Fr.	LB	6-2	222	Libby, Mont.	94	Brendan Murphy	R-Fr.	DL	6-2	228	Seattle, Wash.
18	Chase McGurran	R-So.	S	6-0	196	Helena, Mont.	53	Braunson Henriksen	R-So.	OL	6-5	280	Polson, Mont.	95	Dylan Smith	R-Jr.	DL	6-4	248	Whitehall, Mont.
18	Cody Schweikert	Fr.	ATH	6-3	208	Columbia Falls, Mont.	54	Cooper Walton	R-So.	LB	6-1	230	Johnstown, Colo.	96	Henry Nuce	R-Jr.	DL	6-4	253	Kalispell, Mont.
19	Padraig Lang	R-Jr.	S	6-1	189	Bozeman, Mont.	55	Andres Lehmann	R-Sr.	DE	6-2	246	Doral, Fla.	97	Grant Glasgow	R-So.	KP	6-1	194	Lawrence, Kan.
19	Gage Sliter	R-Fr.	QB	6-1	189	Kalispell, Mont.	56	Garrett Hustedt	R-Sr.	LB	6-2	235	Omaha, Neb.	97	Tyson Simmons	Fr.	DE	6-3	252	Chandler, Ariz.
20	BJ Phillips	R-Jr.	WR	5-9	150	San Antonio, Texas	57	Jake Mason	R-Fr.	DL	6-2	256	Ferndale, Wash.	98	Matai Mata'afa	R-Jr.	DL	6-1	231	Lahaina, Hawaii
21	Stevie Rocker Jr.	R-Jr.	RB	6-0	214	Tucson, Ariz.	58	Clay Owen	R-Fr.	LB	6-2	211	Billings, Mont.	99	Pat Hayden	R-Sr.	DT	6-2	285	Deptford, N.J.

BERGEN

From 3

Bergen earned All-America honors as a punt returner that year and enters this season tied for the Big Sky career record for punt return touchdowns. He also received All-Big Sky first-team recognition as a receiver.

Seeing Bergen overcome injury and blossom into a national star has been a treat for senior cornerback Trevin Gradney, a fellow Billings native. They've known each other since around kindergarten when they played flag football together before going to rival high schools and later reuniting at UM.

"Jun's a superstar, man," Gradney said. "He deserves it all. He's worked his ass off to get where he is. He's probably been in a lot of the same situations I have — just dudes not believing in him

and kind of being overlooked as well.

"I'm super proud of him. I can't thank him enough for a lot of my success as well. Him and his dad, we've put a lot of time in together."

Bergen has tried to remain close with his family while five and a half hours away in Missoula since 2021. They have a family group chat filled with messages throughout the week, especially after Griz games, win or lose.

Bergen has been humble through the highs, regularly passing off praise to his coaches, his teammates and God after games. If he ever slips up, his siblings will be the first ones to humble him, he said.

Even with his success, the competition between them is still alive and well.

"Any time we're around each other, it's, 'Well, I can still get you in this or I'll get you in that,'" he said. "They

really enjoy me and celebrate me a lot. I thank them a lot for that because that instills a lot of confidence into me."

Bergen hasn't gone by the nickname "Cleatus" for quite a while in his family. But he said they've called him "Hollywood" ever since he started appearing in commercials as part of his Name, Image and Likeness deals.

Just as Bergen looked up to his football-playing father all those years ago, he has now become an icon among the Griz faithful. He wouldn't have become who he is without the family that he still holds near and dear.

"They're super proud of me," he said. "That's a big reason why I keep going is because of those guys."

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@406mtsports.

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MISSOURI STATE ROSTER

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Hgt.	Wt.	Hometown
0	Lemondre Joe	Jr.	CB	6-0	175	Deltona, Fla.
0	Jmariyae Robinson	So.	WR	6-1	165	Cocoa, Fla.
1	P.J. Hall	Sr.	S	6-3	205	Little Rock, Ark.
1	Dash Luke	Jr.	WR	5-8	175	New Orleans, La.
2	Darion Smith	Sr.	DL	6-4	245	St. Louis, Mo.
2	Hunter Wood	Sr.	WR	6-1	205	Springdale, Ark.
3	Khalil Anderson	Jr.	S	5-11	200	Atlanta, Ga.
3	Iverson Young	R-Fr.	RB	5-9	190	Waxahachie, Texas
4	Cole Feuerbacher	R-Fr.	QB	6-3	205	Springfield, Mo.
4	Todric McGe	Jr.	S	6-1	205	Wichita, Kan.
5	Jayden Becks	So.	RB	5-11	185	Waxahachie, Texas
5	Kaleno Levine	Sr.	CB	5-11	180	Fort Worth, Texas
6	Jared Lloyd	Jr.	LB	6-3	240	Daytona Beach, Fla.
6	Antonio Robinson	So.	WR	6-3	185	Melissa, Texas
7	Elijah Leonard	Fr.	QB	6-4	220	Lee's Summit, Mo.
7	Tavier Williams	Sr.	S	6-3	200	Many, La.
8	Reggie Branch II	Jr.	RB	6-0	200	Houston, Texas
8	Brandon Vines	Jr.	CB	6-1	190	Batavia, Ill.
9	Dylan Dixon	So.	S	6-1	180	Houston, Texas
9	Jacardia Wright	Sr.	RB	6-0	220	Decatur, Ill.
10	James BlackStrain	Jr.	WR	6-2	180	Cocoa, Fla.
10	Liam Simmons	Jr.	S	6-0	180	Marrero, La.
11	Sean Reese	So.	WR	6-0	190	Atlanta, Ga.
11	Dallas Winner-Johnson	R-Fr.	LB	6-5	230	St. Louis, Mo.
12	Jacob Clark	Sr.	QB	6-5	220	Rockwall, Texas
13	Liam O'Reilly	So.	WR	6-2	185	Springfield, Mo.
13	Jamauri Sands	R-Fr.	S	6-1	160	Orlando, Fla.
14	Thomas Anderson	Sr.	CB	6-1	190	Kansas City, Kan.
14	Camron Williams	Fr.	WR	6-0	175	Blytheville, Ark.
15	Ryan Boyd	R-Fr.	WR	6-0	185	St. Louis, Mo.
15	E.J. Williams	Jr.	S	5-11	180	Fort Worth, Texas
16	J.J. O'Neal	Jr.	S	6-2	180	Rogersville, Mo.
17	Brendon McQueen	Fr.	WR	6-3	190	Tulsa, Okla.
17	Davon Townley Jr.	Jr.	DL	6-6	275	Minneapolis, Minn.
18	Brock Bagozzi	Sr.	QB	6-3	205	Syracuse, N.Y.
18	Jacob Wilburn	Fr.	LB	6-2	210	Dripping Springs, Texas
19	Floquez Smith	Jr.	WR	6-0	200	Fairburn, Ga.
20	Floyd Williams	R-Fr.	CB	6-1	175	Blytheville, Ark.
21	Jashawn Cooper	Fr.	LB	6-0	215	Montgomery, Ala.
22	Ramone Green Jr.	R-Fr.	RB	5-9	190	Nixa, Mo.
22	Rakwan Reed	Fr.	S	5-11	165	Westbury, Texas
24	Eunique Valentine	Jr.	LB	6-1	215	Knoxville, Tenn.
25	Stewart McDonald	Fr.	K	6-1	180	Rogersville, Mo.
25	Fynn Williams	Jr.	LB	6-0	215	San Mateo, Calif.
26	Tahj Chambers	Sr.	LB	6-2	215	Arlington, Texas
27	Devin Rutherford	Fr.	CB	5-11	180	Bartlett, Tenn.
28	Michael Teason	R-Fr.	LB	6-2	215	St. Louis, Mo.
29	Avery Powell	So.	CB	5-10	175	East Orange, N.J.
30	Caden Wiest	R-Fr.	DL	6-4	265	Reeds Spring, Mo.
31	Grant Burkett	Sr.	P	6-1	175	Joplin, Mo.
31	Cooper Roy	So.	LB	6-3	225	Springfield, Mo.
32	Hieko Malone	Fr.	LB	6-1	210	Newton, Texas
33	Ian Maloney	Jr.	LB	6-2	220	Belle Vernon, Pa.
34	Da'Veon Ross	Fr.	LB	6-0	220	Tyler, Texas
36	Yousef Obeid	R-Fr.	K	6-0	180	Dearborn, Mich.
37	Josh Deal	R-Fr.	K	6-0	200	O'Fallon, Mo.
37	Keaton Renfro	Jr.	S	6-0	190	Joplin, Mo.
38	Chuck Arnold Jr.	Jr.	S	5-10	180	Fairburn, Ga.
39	Sage White	So.	RB	5-8	170	Hardin, Ill.
40	Connor Lair	R-So.	RB	6-1	225	West Plains, Mo.
43	Caleb Dietlin	Jr.	DL	6-3	245	Aurora, Ill.
44	Hayden Hagler	Sr.	TE	6-4	245	Sulphur, La.
44	Kanye Young	Jr.	LB	6-1	220	Menifee, Calif.
45	Caden Bolz	Sr.	LS	6-0	200	Overland Park, Kan.
47	Landon Molen	Jr.	LS	5-10	222	Great Falls, Mont.
50	Mitchell Toney	R-Fr.	DL	6-2	275	Louisville, Ky.
52	Thomas Schulte	So.	OL	6-1	285	Nixa, Mo.
55	Ryan Mitchell	Fr.	OL	6-3	285	St. Louis, Mo.
57	Gilles Tchio	So.	DL	6-3	310	Milton, Ga.
58	Hutson Lillibridge	Jr.	OL	6-3	315	St. Louis, Mo.
66	Grant Goodson	Jr.	OL	6-6	305	Norman, Okla.
67	Ben Liedtke	So.	OL	6-5	320	Norwalk, Iowa
70	Justin Curtis	Jr.	OL	6-5	325	Santa Clarita, Calif.
71	Cash Hudson	So.	OL	6-3	290	Tulsa, Okla.
72	Mark Hutchinson	Jr.	OL	6-2	300	Hayward, Calif.
73	Jax Rumsey	R-Fr.	OL	6-3	320	Moore, Okla.
74	Erick Cade	Jr.	OL	6-7	345	Denton, Texas
75	Logan Scrivner	Fr.	OL	6-4	305	St. Charles, Mo.
76	Cristian Loaiza	So.	OL	6-5	310	Wesley Chapel, Fla.
77	Noah Gardner	R-Fr.	OL	6-5	290	Kansas City, Mo.
78	Ja'Veo Toliver	Sr.	OL	6-5	295	Springfield, Mo.
80	Watson Hafer	R-Fr.	TE	6-4	230	West Plains, Mo.
81	Deamikkio Nathan	Jr.	WR	6-0	185	Grand Prairie, Texas
83	Rob Hollis	Jr.	TE	6-1	220	Joplin, Mo.
84	DVontae Key	Sr.	WR	5-10	185	Raytown, Mo.
85	Lance Mason	Jr.	TE	6-4	240	Rockwall, Texas
86	Oliver Walley	Fr.	WR	5-10	180	Willard, Mo.
87	Gary Clinton	Jr.	TE	6-4	245	Webb City, Mo.
88	Jeron Askren	Fr.	TE	6-3	230	Wichita, Kan.
89	Ethan Merrell	Jr.	TE	6-2	240	Girard, Kan.
90	Sterling Smithson	Jr.	DL	6-3	325	Overland Park, Kan.
91	Tim Brantley Jr.	So.	DL	6-1	275	Allen, Texas
93	Alama Collins	Sr.	DL	6-1	290	Long Beach, Calif.
94	Raveion Harrell	Sr.	DL	6-2	325	Springfield, Mo.
95	Jalen Williams	Sr.	DL	6-4	270	Overland Park, Kan.
96	Armon Wallace	Sr.	DL	6-0	300	St. Charles, Mo.
97	Andrew Link	So.	DL	6-4	245	Springfield, Mo.
98	Jayson Caldwell	So.	DL	6-6	255	Dickinson, Texas
99	Ryan Williams	Jr.	DL	6-4	270	Houston, Texas



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