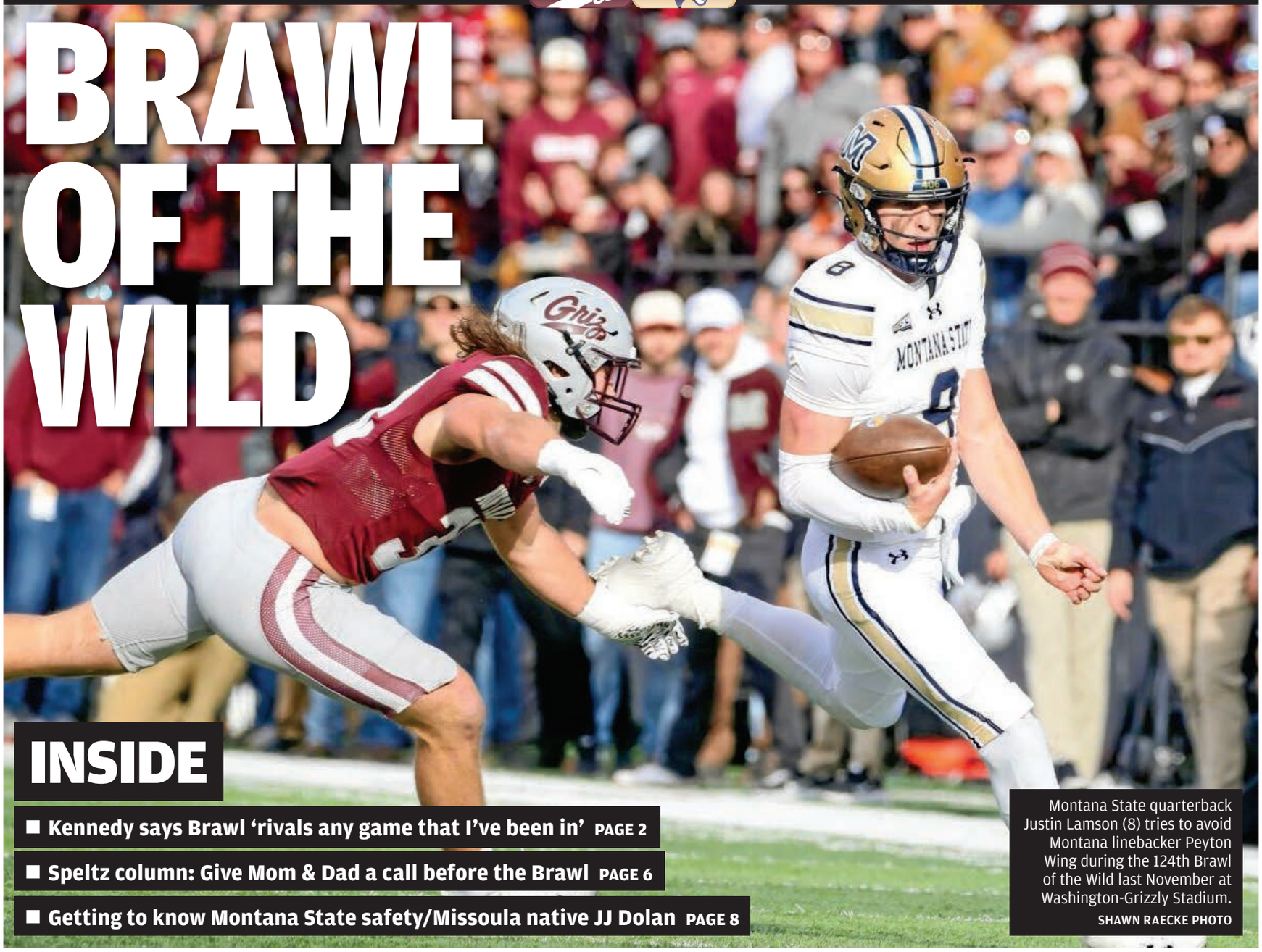
BRAWL OF THE WILD



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Montana State quarterback Justin Lamson (8) tries to avoid Montana linebacker Peyton Wing during the 124th Brawl of the Wild last November at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.
SHAWN RAECKE PHOTO

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Kennedy: Brawl 'rivals any game that I've been in'



SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

Montana head coach Bobby Kennedy walks onto the field after a game against Southern Utah on Aug. 29 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. Kennedy won the game in his head coaching debut. Kennedy will make his Brawl debut as a head coach next Saturday when the Grizzlies play at Montana State.

Well-traveled Griz coach knows a lot about storied matchups

FRANK GOGOLA
406 MT Sports

MISSOULA — Bobby Kennedy has been a part of some of the biggest rivalries in college football since he got into coaching in 1990.

He coached seven times in the Red River Rivalry between Texas and Oklahoma as they battled for the Golden Hat trophy, a 10-gallon cowboy hat plated in gold. He was also part of the Lone Star Showdown between Texas and Texas A&M, a rivalry that was historically played on Thanksgiving Day.

In the Midwest, he was involved in the Iowa vs. Iowa State rivalry as they played for the Cy-Hawk Trophy. He was also in the Iowa vs. Minnesota rivalry as they fought for the Floyd of Rosedale, a 98-pound bronze pig trophy.

Out West, he was in the Big Game between Stanford and Cal as they competed for the Stanford Axe trophy. He was also in the Rocky Mountain Showdown between Colorado and Colorado State in his home state. He later coached in the rivalry between Washington and Oregon.

He finally was introduced to the Brawl of the Wild between Montana and Montana State last season when he was the UM wide receivers coach. This season, he gets to experience a rivalry for the first time ever as a head coach when the Grizzlies and Bobcats battle for the Great Divide Trophy.

"The passion in the state and the importance that it carries, I think it rivals any game that I've been in," he said ahead of the 126th Brawl of the Wild between UM and MSU at noon Saturday at Bobcat Stadium in Bozeman.

Kennedy had quite the introduction to the Brawl last season. Montana was ranked No. 2 and Montana State was No. 3 in the Stats Perform FCS Top 25 poll. The combined ranking of five was the highest in series history.

It was also the first time they were both ranked in the top three in the country entering the game. It was just the third-ever game between teams ranked in the top three inside Wa-Griz, which celebrated its 40th anniversary this year.

The matchup last year marked the first time both teams held 7-0 conference records heading into

Please see **RIVALRIES,** Page 4

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Rivalries

From Page 2

the game. It was only the second time in series history, but also the second time in three years, that the winner of the game won the Big Sky championship outright based only on the outcome of the contest.

"Until you play in it, and it was my first time in the FCS, I didn't know what it was like," he said. "I didn't know the magnitude of it. I didn't know the importance that held in this state."

He got to experience that not just once but twice. The Griz and Cats matched up in the FCS playoff semifinals just 28 days later in Bozeman. It was their first postseason meeting in the series that dates back to 1897 and their first playoff matchup since the FCS/I-AA began the tournament in 1978.

The Griz held a 13-1 record and the Cats were 12-2 entering their first rematch in a season since 1913. The 25 combined wins were the most ever between the teams when they squared off. They had set the record at 20 total wins (Griz 11-0, Cats 9-2) when they played four weeks earlier.

The Cats used their win over the Griz in the regular season to gain homefield advantage in the playoffs. They then rode their victory over the Griz in the semifinals to win their first national title since 1984, the first by a Big Sky team since 2010 and the first by a Treasure State team since UM in 2001.

"That first game that I was involved in, in Washington-Grizzly, the atmosphere was electric," Kennedy said. "Even the one in Bozeman, I mean, their fans are super passionate."

Kennedy sensed the passion from the Griz faithful again after he was hired as the head coach in February following Bobby Hauck's departure. His travels around the state for recruiting and during the Grizzly Scholarship Association Spring Tour in May and June showed him the year-round nature of the rivalry.

He talked with fans and heard from them on a near daily basis that the Griz need to get back to beating the Cats. Montana still leads the all-time series 74-46-5 and is 32-30 in the Big Sky era since the conference began in 1963.



BEN ALLAN SMITH PHOTOS, MISSOULIAN

Montana head coach Bobby Kennedy speaks with a referee during the Grizzlies' game against Idaho on Oct. 17 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. The Griz will play at Montana State in the 126th Brawl of the Wild next weekend.



Idaho head coach Thomas Ford, left, and Montana head coach Bobby Kennedy meet at midfield after the Vandals beat the Grizzlies during the college football game on Oct. 17 at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula. The Battle for the Little Brown Stein was the Grizzlies' first trophy game of the 2026 season.

The downturn in the series has occured more recently. The Griz trail 13-11 in the Great Divide era since the trophy was first awarded in 2001. They're also 2-8 in the past 10 games, with the two losses last year being perhaps the most consequential games in the series given what was on the line each time.

"There's a bunch of games out there that people don't have those natural rivals," he said. "They might say they are, but, I mean, I remember when I was at Colorado, Bill McCartney said the University of Nebraska is our rival. Well, Nebraska didn't look at them as the rival, yet Colorado made it a big game. But there's no doubt what the people in our state think."

Kennedy has learned over the years that winning a rivalry game "can cure a lot of issues" no matter what a team's overall record is that season. He'll now try to lead the Griz to their first win in Bozeman since 2015 as they'll attempt to snap their five-game road losing streak in the series.

The Brawl isn't typically high up on national lists of the top college football rivalries. Among the top three on those countdowns are usually The Game between Ohio State and Michigan, the Iron Bowl between Alabama and Auburn, and the Red River Rivalry between Texas and Oklahoma.

Yet, the Brawl has something that Kennedy never experienced in the neutral-site Red River Rivalry at the Cotton Bowl Stadium, which he said is still "one of the coolest environments" he has ever coached in.

"Oklahoma, Texas, it's kind of a two-state bragging right, but the thing about the Brawl of the Wild that I think is really special is that everybody in the state is invested," he said. "They're either Cats or they're Griz — and I hope they're Griz."

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.



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COMMENTARY

Give Mom & Dad a call before the Brawl



BILL SPELTZ

Despite the miles between us and months we'd go without seeing one another, Dad always checked in with me in January to find out if I was coming home for the Super Bowl.

It was always a special day for us — one that seemed to dwarf even holidays. My father has been gone for five years now, but I still remember the night he stood on his head because he was overjoyed his team won.

There may have been a few Schlitz involved. That made the balancing act even more impressive.

Since moving to Montana two decades ago, a rival for the spot atop my football pedestal has emerged: The Brawl of the Wild. Even the week leading up to the game is magnificent, with strangers from every walk of life striking up conversations about the Bobcats and Grizzlies on Main Street, at local gas stations and health clubs and bars and even at church.

The anticipation many of us feel leading up to the big game is magical. A reminder we truly do have something major in common, even if we do fight like cats and dogs when it comes to stuff like politics, musical tastes and the appropriate speed to drive on my street (you're *supposed* to go 25 but you should see the looks and gestures I get when I abide).

The longer I've lived in Montana, the more friendships I've developed on both sides of the fence when it comes to the Montana State-Montana grid rivalry. Being an "outsider" from the state of Iowa, I rather enjoy sitting back and marveling at the passion on display.

My son-in-law is a proud Verlanic. If you're a longtime Treasure Stater, you may know the name from seeing it on the jerseys of linemen for both

Please see **SPELTZ**, Page 7



SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

Fans tailgate before the Brawl of the Wild football game on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2024, at Bobcat Stadium in Bozeman.



Montana State defensive end Zac Crews (36) blocks a kick from Montana kicker Ty Morrison (36) at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula last November.

JUPITER FLOROS, BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Speltz

From Page 6

the Cats and Griz over the years. Like so many other families in this state, some of the Verlanics are going to be sky-high when suppertime approaches Saturday night and others are going to be forced to partake in humble pie.

Maybe it's just me, but the Brawl seems to get bigger every season. It has everything to do with the strength of the UM and MSU football programs and maybe a little to do with the growth of Missoula and Bozeman.

Brawls that seemed so big when I first arrived in the Treasure State just don't carry the same weight as the ones we're getting now.

Why? Because the Grizzles and Bobcats are *both* consistently among the best teams in the country. As the FCS loses more and more of its heavyweights (North Dakota State bolted in 2025), the more it becomes apparent MSU and UM are among the very few heavyweights left along with South Dakota State and, well, I guess maybe any other team that finishes in the top three in the Big Sky and Missouri Valley conferences.

Like pretty much every year lately, the 2026 Brawl will have a critical bearing on playoff seeding.

If the Cats win, they will probably be enjoying home cooking for all or most of their playoff games through December. I don't need to tell you how important that is with the rabid fan base for the Bobcats.

If the Grizzlies win, maybe they will at least secure homefield advantage for their first playoff game. It's all speculation at this point, but both teams seem capable of making a deep run in the FCS playoffs.

Regardless of what happens next Saturday, the day is going to be special. Even if you're watching from home, your heart rate is going to spike sometime mid-morning and stay elevated until the sun sets.

If you can't be there with Dad and Mom in Bozeman or even make it home for the Brawl, do me a little favor and call your parents before the game. They'll appreciate it in ways that transcend football and rivalries.

Then regardless of the game outcome, they get to say they won big on Brawl Saturday.

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



SHAWN RAECKE, FOR THE CHRONICLE

Montana State's running back Julius Davis (32) hurdles Montana's TJ Rausch (10) during the 124th Brawl of the Wild last November at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

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Dolan thrives for Cats after 'weird' injury in hometown Missoula

VICTOR FLORES
406 MT Sports



SHAWN RAECKE, FOR THE BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Montana State's JJ Dolan (5) looks on during a timeout alongside Tayden Gray (7), Colter Petre (24) and other Bobcats during their game against Cal Poly on Saturday, Oct. 31 at Bobcat Stadium in Bozeman.

BOZEMAN — JJ Dolan recovered a fumble Sept. 12 at Nevada to all but secure what might be Montana State's biggest win of this football season so far. Three days later, his sights were set on another takeaway. Instead, he received a painful reminder.

Dolan and Mason Dethman were at safety during a team session at practice Sept. 15. MSU's scout team quarterback threw a deep pass over the middle, and it hung up long enough for Dolan and Dethman to intercept it. They collided as they reached for the ball, and Dethman's knee slammed into Dolan's quad.

Dolan could barely walk after the collision, and he was unable to play four days later against Central Connecticut State.

"The last thing you ever want is to be injured," Dolan said in October. "My goal is to be on the field every Saturday. So when I got hurt that Tuesday, I was pretty bummed out."

Dolan returned to action the following week and helped the shorthanded Bobcats beat ranked Northern Arizona as a versatile backup in a loaded safety/nickelback room. The Missoula native then became a starter when first-string free safety Taki Uluilakepa suffered an injury in MSU's 35-34 loss at Idaho.

Almost exactly one year ago, Dolan suffered a leg injury in his hometown, and he was forced to watch MSU's run to the FCS championship from the sideline. That experience made him thankful simply to be on the field this fall, let alone a key contributor for another championship contender.

"The dream was to be a D-I athlete. Then as soon as I did get that offer, it was to become a starter," Dolan said. "Getting that opportunity was a dream come true and a blessing."

Dolan's great-grandfather John, grandfather Pat and father Nate all played for the Montana Grizzlies. Nate played wide receiver for the 1995 Griz, who won the first Division I-AA (now FCS) title in program history.

JJ grew up in Missoula and rooted for the team his paternal figures played for. But as he reached the end of his time at Missoula Sentinel, he received significantly more interest from MSU's coaches than UM's. Nate believed the Griz took JJ for granted.

"I imagine they just assumed that JJ was going to be a fourth-generation Grizzly no matter what," Nate told 406 MT Sports last year.

JJ chose to become a Bobcat as a preferred walk-on in 2023 (the Griz extended a non-preferred walk-on opportunity).

"MSU is on the huge uprise right now," JJ told 406 MT Sports shortly after he committed in 2022. "Hopefully in the next couple of years — this year and so on — we can get a national championship."

JJ redshirted in 2023 and appeared in eight games as a reserve and special teams player the following season, which MSU finished 15-1 with a close loss to North Dakota State in the FCS title game.

JJ began the 2025 season as MSU's second-string free safety, and he rose to co-starter after Taki Uluilakepa got hurt early. JJ tallied 20 tackles (16 solo) in the first 11 games.

MSU's regular-season finale was in JJ's hometown. He felt jittery the entire morning of Nov. 22, 2025, leading up to kickoff at Washington-Grizzly Stadium for the 124th Brawl of the Wild.

"I don't think I've ever had so much adrenaline in my life," JJ said in September. "I think I had 20 family members there. I was super excited. It was one of the coolest experiences of my life."

Early in the second quarter, JJ attempted to tackle Eli Gillman but fell to the turf as Gillman cut left, and his right leg buckled. JJ got up and joined the pack of Bobcats bringing Gillman down, and he walked off the field under his own power. Then adrenaline gave way to reality, and he couldn't put any weight on his right leg. Shortly thereafter, trainers determined JJ's fibula was broken.

"It was a weird feeling to go from, 'I just slightly rolled it,' to a snapped fibula," he said.

JJ avoided an entirely dark homecoming when the Cats finished off a 31-28 Brawl win.

"I had a ton of support behind me and we got the job done there, so that helped a lot with the injury," he said.

The win secured the No. 2 seed for MSU in the FCS playoffs. That meant the Cats would play at home through the semifinals if they didn't lose before that, and top-two seeds rarely do. So JJ had to think about his team winning a title without

Please see **DOLAN**, Page 9

Dolan

From Page 8

him suited up, on top of all the other difficulties that come with recovery from a broken leg.

"That was weird. I'd never been hurt before, so it took me a little while to get the hang of not playing and practicing," JJ said. "Seeing all my brothers next to me, they helped a ton."

On Dec. 20, MSU hosted UM in the semifinals for the first-ever postseason Brawl. That happened to be JJ's birthday too. The Cats won 48-23 to reach the FCS title game for the second straight season.

"That was the best birthday of my life," JJ said. "Anytime we win over them, it's an awesome feeling, especially being from there."

JJ joined Nate as a national championship-winning Dolan about two weeks later, when MSU beat Illinois State 35-34 in overtime for its first I-AA/FCS crown since 1984.



SHAWN RAECKE, FOR THE BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Montana State's JJ Dolan (5) defends during the game against Weber State on Saturday, Oct. 24 at Bobcat Stadium in Bozeman.

As much as JJ wanted to be on the field that Jan. 5 night in Nashville, Tennessee, he and his father maintained perspective.

"It wasn't always like, 'When I grow up, I have to play for the Montana Grizzlies.' That wasn't his goal," Nate told 406 MT Sports in October. "If he was good enough to play D-I football, you figured it would probably be there, but the real goal was just to play D-I football. To see your son work hard and achieve that goal, that was pretty awesome."

By the time JJ got to 2026 fall camp, he felt physically and mentally prepared to pick up where he left off before the injury. He began this season listed as the backup to All-Big Sky Conference nickelback Tayden Gray, and he continued to get reps at free safety.

JJ didn't record any tackles in the season-opening rout at Utah Tech, but he finished with five (three solo) in the Gold Rush win over Butler one week later.

"Getting those first couple games under my feet brought my confidence back a lot," he said.

With MSU leading Jeff Choate-coached Nevada 17-7 late in the fourth quarter, JJ recorded the first fumble recovery of his college career and returned it 20 yards (fellow safety Colter Petre forced it).

"Luckily I was able to come up off the sideline and grab it, but I was so tired," JJ said. "My legs weren't working too good."

The injury to Uluilakepa and All-American strong safety Caden Dowler helped JJ become a starter, but his playing time didn't hinge on teammate absences. His fearlessness and his ability to process information have impressed MSU safeties/nickels coach Bryan Shepherd, to the point that he's played at both safety positions and at nickel this fall.

"He's really starting to see the game at a high level, being able to react quick and efficient," Shepherd told 406 MT Sports in October, adding, "That's really important when you talk about football players. They know their assignment, they have to read their keys, but how fast can they read their keys and react? I think he does a great job of that.

"He's a natural football player."

Shepherd was also struck by how locked in JJ remained in the immediate aftermath of his broken fibula.

"He was really starting to find his groove, and we had yet to see the best of JJ Dolan," Shepherd said. "He was down and out about that, but I thought he did a great job of still staying engaged. He showed a lot of maturity throughout that process, being able to stay locked in and engaged and not miss a beat when he returned."

Victor Flores is the Montana State Bobcats beat writer for 406 MT Sports. Email him at victor.flores@406mtsports.com and follow him on Twitter/X at @VictorFlores406

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‘The team we’re all chasing’

Big Sky Conference peers lauded Bobcats after FCS title

VICTOR FLORES
406 MT Sports

BOZEMAN — DeLane Fitzgerald was searching for answers.

Southern Virginia promoted Fitzgerald from offensive coordinator to head football coach in 2009, and the Knights finished below .500 in his first four seasons at the helm. As they prepared to jump from NAIA to Division III, Fitzgerald went looking for a program that recently moved up a level and enjoyed the success he hoped to obtain.

He found an ideal model: North Dakota State.

The Bison moved up from Division II to Division I FCS in 2004 and finished above .500 in their first five seasons at their new level. They reached the quarterfinals of the 2010 FCS playoffs (winning at No. 6-ranked Montana State to get there), and they won their first of five straight national titles the following year.

Around that time, Fitzgerald got connected with then-NDSU offensive coordinator Brent Vigen. The two talked on the phone about once every couple months, Fitzgerald said, mainly about how the Bison became a juggernaut (NDSU moved up to the FBS last year).



SHAWN RAECKE, FOR THE BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Montana running back Eli Gillman (10) shares a laugh with Montana State head coach Brent Vigen during the 124th Brawl of the Wild on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula.

“We at Southern Virginia copied everything North Dakota State did,” Fitzgerald told 406 MT Sports at the Big Sky Football Kickoff in Spokane, Washington, in July.

The Knights went 8-2 in 2013, one of three winning seasons and the only time they’ve finished a year with more than six wins in their 23-year history.

Fitzgerald became Southern Utah’s head coach in 2022, a year after Montana State hired Vigen to fill its head coaching vacancy. Vigen’s NDSU-inspired philosophies helped the Bobcats become a perennial FCS title contender and earn their first national title in 41 years.

“Our entire program is based on the same structure and the same morals,” Fitzgerald said, shouting out MSU’s strength and conditioning prowess and double-repping practice system.

Southern Utah is back in the Big Sky Conference after five years elsewhere, and Fitzgerald is happy about the move. He believes he’s competing in the FCS’s best conference, as do the other 12 Big Sky head coaches. That claim became much

Please see **BOBCATS**, Page 13

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Bobcats

From Page 12

easier to make after MSU beat Illinois State of the Missouri Valley Football Conference (the other contender for FCS's best) in the national title game Jan. 5 in Nashville, Tennessee.

"It was a really special night," said Big Sky commissioner Tom Wistrcill. "What it does for the conference is verify what I've been saying for eight years. You can talk about being the best conference, but at some point you have to win the big game."

MSU didn't look like a lock to win the big game in September of 2025, after starting 0-2 and earning a weird 17-0 win over a Mercyhurst team it was favored to beat by nearly twice as many points. A solid-looking Eastern Washington squad rolled into Bobcat Stadium for the Big Sky opener.



VICTOR FLORES, 406 MT SPORTS

Big Sky Conference commissioner Tom Wistrcill talks to reporters during the Big Sky Football Kickoff on July 27 at the Northern Quest Casino & Resort in Spokane, Washington.

The Bobcats outscored the Eagles 24-0 in the first quarter en route to a 57-3 rout.

"Awesome for them if we jump-started them," said EWU head coach Aaron Best. "But let's not do that in the future."

All of the Big Sky coaches expressed pride in seeing MSU become the first Big Sky team since the 2010 Eagles (for whom Best was the offensive coordinator) to win an FCS title.

"Tom's been talking about, since he came in as commissioner, that this conference needs to bring back the national championship," Best said. "There's only been one since 2010 — fortunately, that was us — so now that that's come to fruition, it's awesome to see."

MSU traveled to high-elevation Flagstaff, Arizona, a week after the 2025 EWU win to face then-No. 13 Northern Arizona in the tricky Walkup Skydome. After falling behind 7-0, the Cats scored 34 straight points and beat the Lumberjacks by 24.

"We aspire to be national champions," said NAU coach Brian Wright. "When you have the opportunity to play those guys, it's a great opportunity to find out who your team is."

Wright, who was MSU's offensive coordinator from 2010-11, hired MSU cornerbacks coach Trenton Greene to be NAU's defensive coordinator less than a week after Greene was celebrating in Nashville. It's one of multiple ways the Lumberjacks have tried to emulate the Cats.

"They recruit really quality individuals into their program," Wright said. "They've had the backing and the support you need to help players reach their full potential. They've been working towards that for quite some time. That's where our program is right now, and needs to continue to get better at."

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Bobcats

From Page 13

MSU returned to Bozeman the week after beating NAU last year and beat a feisty Idaho State 48-14.

"Coach Vigen's an incredible coach, and he'll have them at the top because schematically they're always really sound," said Idaho State head coach Cody Hawkins. "So they create schematic problems, and they still have a talent disparity because of the guys they're able to get."

Like Wright, Hawkins has been impressed by the Cats' recruiting and the support they receive, as well as their ability to retain many players, something Hawkins attributed in part to compensation. Bozeman's growth in recent years has produced more money and excitement around the football team, he added.

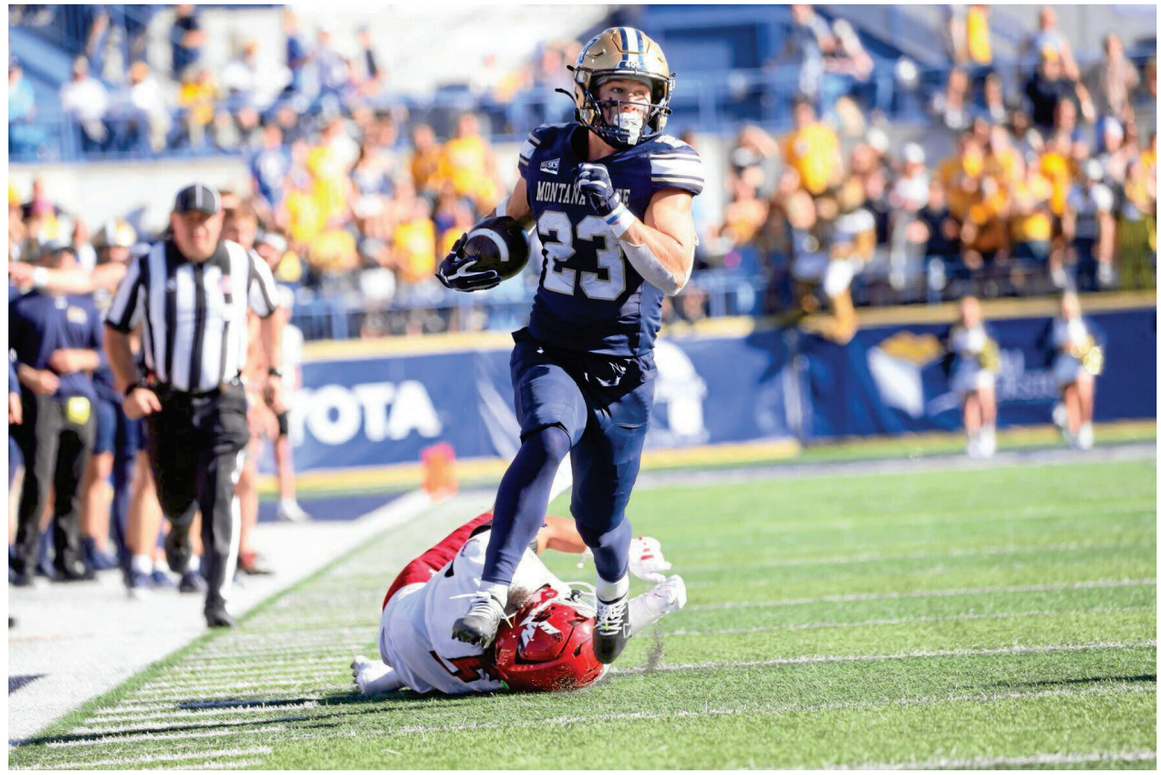
"It's a positive feedback loop where the Cats make Bozeman and the state of Montana better, and the state of Montana and Bozeman have made the Cats better," he said.

After a bye, the Cats built a 27-3 lead at Cal Poly and answered a late rally to prevail 34-17 in 2025.

The leading tackler in that game was Cal Poly linebacker Mikey D'Amato, who signed with MSU during the 2023 recruiting cycle but ended up at a junior college and joined the Mustangs in 2024. If he was chewing on any sour grapes during the Big Sky Football Kickoff, it was hard to tell.

"In-season, you're rivals with the guys in your conference. But in the playoffs, you always want the guys in your conference to end up winning the thing," D'Amato said. "They've got a great program over there, great players, so it was cool for them."

MSU followed up the 2025 Cal Poly win with a trip to Northern Colorado, a team that nearly beat FBS Colorado State and ranked South Dakota earlier that season. The Cats turned a 10-0 lead late in the first half into a 55-0 advantage midway through the fourth quarter, handing the Bears their first double-digit loss of 2025.



SHAWN RAECKE, FOR THE BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Montana State running back Adam Jones carries the football on his way to a touchdown in the third quarter against Eastern Washington on Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025, at Bobcat Stadium in Bozeman.

"They showed a tremendous amount of toughness in our game," said UNC head coach Ed Lamb. "I really felt like they had what it took to go a long way after we faced them."

MSU's point differential increased the following week, when it blasted Weber State 66-14. Weber fired head coach Mickey Mental two days later and hired high school coach Eric Kjar the following month.

Kjar echoed Lamb about MSU's toughness.

"Everybody's chasing them now and trying to put their program on a similar level," Kjar said. "The Big Sky's got great football, and they're definitely the standard."



MONTANA STATE ATHLETICS

Montana State's Taco Dowler (14) avoids a Northern Arizona defender on his 90-yard punt return for a touchdown Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025, at the Walkup Skydome in Flagstaff, Ariz.

The 2025 Cats remained in Bozeman for a top-10 home game against UC Davis, and it lived up to its billing for the first 2 1/2 quarters. Then safety Caden Dowler returned an interception for a touchdown to give MSU a 24-7 lead, and the final margin was 21 points.

"Coach Vigen does a great job. That program's in a great spot," said UC Davis head coach Tim Plough. "They're definitely the team we're all chasing."

Plough, who's entering his third year at the Aggies' helm, has been impressed by Vigen's ability to create confidence in his players.

"They have belief and they have that toughness that they are going to win the game, and that comes through experience," Plough said. "They have that in spades over the other teams in the league. They believe they're going to win every game they play. For you to beat them, you have to believe you can beat them."

MSU's 2025 regular season ended with the Brawl of the Wild in Missoula. Another Dowler pick-six and a blocked field goal from Missoula native Zac Crews highlighted the Cats' 31-28 victory, which gave them homefield advantage in the FCS playoffs.

"Anytime you play against your rival, there are things maybe you could've done different that would've changed the game — a tipped pass here or there, a third down conversion," said Bobby Kennedy, who replaced Bobby Hauck as UM head coach in the offseason. "Credit to them, they made those plays."

The homefield advantage proved important a month later, when MSU hosted Montana in the semifinals. A long TD pass from Justin Lamson to Taco Dowler helped the Cats pull away from the Griz and win the first-ever postseason Brawl.

"This rivalry is special," Kennedy said. "It's crushing when you don't win it, but also maybe it adds a little motivation for the next year to either hold that team off or get over the hump.

"I love that we have another team in our state — whether it be in recruiting, whether it be on the field, whether it be throwing dice — that is important to a lot of people."

Griz linebacker Peyton Wing, a former Portland State Viking, said it was "cool to see" another Big Sky team win the FCS title even though it was a rival. MSU's 2025 success didn't add much extra motivation entering this season, he added.

"It ignites a fire, for sure, but it's not a fire we didn't have already," said UM running back Eli Gillman. "Being that close with them, we were (already) aware of how good we were. We knew we could do it. We have the same confidence. We're not going to lose confidence. We're a competitive group of guys."

Victor Flores is the Montana State Bobcats beat writer for 406 MT Sports. Email him at victor.flores@406mtsports.com and follow him on Twitter/X at @VictorFlores406



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Big Sky football coaches, players praise five-for-five rule

VICTOR FLORES
406 MT Sports

BOZEMAN — The Montana State football team opened its Sept. 26 game against Northern Arizona with a kickoff. One of the 11 Bobcats who ran down the field on Colby Frokjer's touchback was defensive back Kayden Steptoe.

It was MSU's fifth game of the 2026 season, and Steptoe appeared in all of them, almost exclusively on the kickoff and kick return teams. Before this season, it would've been unheard of for a true freshman who wasn't a major contributor on offense or defense to appear in five regular-season games.

Prior to 2026, the NCAA allowed Division I and Division II athletes to play four full seasons. Freshmen could appear in no more than four regular-season football games (plus the playoffs) and still be eligible for the next four years. Players who suffered season-ending injuries got extra chances to play via medical hardships, which Montana linebacker Solomon Tuliaupupu received multiple times to keep his career going nine years after it began.

The NCAA changed its eligibility rules in June to an age-based model. Now, the vast majority of D-I and D-II athletes will get five years to play their respective sport in college (with exceptions for military service, religious missions and pregnancy). Redshirts no longer exist under this so-called "five-for-five" rule.

Steptoe can play as many snaps as his coaches want this season, and he'll still be eligible for the next four seasons. That's also the case with Carter Dahlke, a key wide receiver and special teams player for MSU this season, and with Brian Harris, who's played several important snaps at cornerback for the Cats. Most of MSU's freshmen have been relegated to the sideline, redshirting in spirit.

"It's a really good rule change," MSU head coach Brent Vigen said July 30, adding, "Having a beginning and end piece I think is a good thing. Getting away from the waivers ultimately is a good thing. And then opening up opportunities for freshmen to be looked at a little differently is good."

The other 12 Big Sky Conference head football coaches echoed Vigen. The five-for-five rule contains some imperfections, they noted, but those are minor problems in what they believe is a much easier world to live in.

"I just want some consistency," Idaho State head coach Cody Hawkins told 406 MT Sports on July 27 at the Big Sky Football Kickoff in Spokane, Washington.



SHAWN RAECKE, FOR THE BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE

Montana State's Jabez Woods (10) returns a kickoff for a touchdown ahead of Jared White (3), Kayden Steptoe (11) and other Bobcats during the Gold Rush game against Butler on Saturday, Sept. 5 at Bobcat Stadium in Bozeman.

"I don't care if they play five years. I don't care if they play three years. I don't care if they play 10. Just tell us what it is, stay there for a couple years and see how it goes so we can build a philosophy and a strategy around it."

Five-for-five upside

Steptoe exemplifies one of the biggest five-for-five benefits Big Sky coaches see: the unlimited ability to play freshmen on special teams.

Coaches don't want to populate every kick and punt team solely with offensive/defensive starters or backups, but they don't want to put undeserving players out there either. Freshmen often strike a balance.

"A lot of those guys maybe aren't experienced enough or comfortable enough with a playbook to help you on O or D, but they're athletic enough to help you on special teams, where the schemes are a little bit more simple," said Idaho coach Thomas Ford Jr.

Most players want their careers to last as long as possible, and their contributions as fifth-year seniors are generally greater than as freshmen, so redshirting made sense for every member of a team. The four-game redshirt maximum allowed freshmen to gain valuable game experience without shortening their eligibility clock.

It also created a complicated puzzle for coaching staffs.

"It's a really good rule change. Having a beginning and end piece I think is a good thing. Getting away from the waivers ultimately is a good thing. And then opening up opportunities for freshmen to be looked at a little differently is good."

MSU head coach Brent Vigen

"Do you play guys early? Do you play them late? There's no right or wrong answer," said Eastern Washington coach Aaron Best. "Now, you don't have to worry about keeping a game cap on a guy."

Steptoe is one of six or seven freshmen who've been regulars on special teams for MSU this season, according to Vigen.

"It's more of a luxury for me to understand that we have options to get guys into the game and get them some playing experience," MSU special teams coordinator Marcus Monaco said in August. "Any time we can get some of those younger guys on the field, that's a huge moment for them to understand where they're at, understand the speed of the game."

Big Sky coaches feel relieved that they "don't have to worry about the math and the accounting" that came with the four-game redshirt limit, said Northern Arizona coach Brian Wright. They believe more available freshmen will create a positive ripple effect down their rosters too.

"You want to be able to use all 105 guys on your roster without feeling like you can't," said UC Davis coach Tim Plough. "That's going to allow guys to keep teams healthy for longer."

In the redshirt era, some high school players made their college decisions based largely on which program promised to play them more as freshmen, Best said. Coaches didn't always know if they wanted to redshirt a freshman or not until a season began. On occasion, injuries or other factors made them consider burning a redshirt.

"Sometimes the coaching staff may not be in agreement with the student-athlete," said Utah Tech coach Lance Anderson. "You're kind of torn there. 'What do we do?'"

MSU's coaches determined early last season that then-true freshman Xavier Ahrens would be a key part of their linebacker rotation. The Tacoma, Washington, native embraced the opportunity even though, at the time, it eliminated the option to play past 2028 (barring a medical redshirt).

The five-for-five rule gives Ahrens, as well as classmates Frokjer and long snapper Brody Johnson, a chance to play five full seasons. Ahrens appreciates the opportunity but hasn't looked ahead to 2029 too much. His career could take many twists and turns between now and then.

"Nothing really changed," Ahrens said. "Just continue to work every day, knowing my time's limited still."

Playing Ahrens for more than four games last fall was a calculated risk from MSU's coaching staff.

Now, coaches can simply look at their rosters and determine who's best.

"Every player is eligible every week, so we need to create a realistic and meaningful role for every guy on the team," said Northern Colorado coach Ed Lamb. "That might look like extending some of our practices so that young guys are getting actual reps in the things we do, not just scout work.

"It might look like rotating some of those freshmen through for three or four games and seeing if we can get them on the field for something that they can build toward year two."

At the end of fall camp, MSU's coaches determined Harris was "an obvious candidate to not redshirt" if that option still existed, Vigen said Sept. 28.

MSU's staff was less certain about Dahlke, who graduated early from Bozeman Gallatin and joined the Cats during the 2026 spring semester.

An injury to Parker Mady helped Dahlke rise to second string on the "H" receiver depth chart, and Dahlke has started in place of the injured Taco Dowler at both WR and punt returner. Dahlke combined to catch 17 passes for 243 yards in his first two starts.

Dahlke and Harris "have shown that we needed them," Vigen said, and he's glad the five-for-five rule removed any redshirt consternation.

"It's a blessing that it came. I think it's helped me a lot to get some more opportunities early, which I think helped put me in a good spot for when Taco went down," Dahlke said Sept. 28. "Then it's just making the most of it. How can I make the most of this extra year?"

Idaho State LB Nathan Reynolds appeared in nine games as a true freshman in 2023 and didn't medically redshirt in 2024 or 2025, so he left 2026 spring camp assuming it was his last. That changed when the five-for-five rule went into effect.

"I was pretty excited because you don't ever really want football to end," Reynolds said. "To know I'm getting another year is nice to have in the back of my head."

Football careers have to end eventually. Big Sky coaches believe the five-for-five rule strikes a balance.

Please see **RULE**, Page 18





Rule

From 17

"It sounds good in theory, going, 'I'll play nine years in college football,'" Best said. "You just graduated high school. Talk to me in three or four years and tell me how your body feels, where your mind's at.

"Everything's got an expiration date. Like let's put five on it."

Five-for-five downside

The five-for-five rule makes things simpler and cleaner for programs, Big Sky coaches said. That could come at a cost for players.

For every Dahlke and Harris, there are more freshmen who will only step their toes onto the field occasionally during their first college season. Players who spend their entire freshman years on the sideline will feel like all the previous freshmen who redshirted, so they won't enjoy any of the five-for-five rule's benefits. Unlike their predecessors, current and future players won't get a chance to extend their careers if they get hurt.

Julius Davis wouldn't have been able to help MSU win the 2025 FCS title without a medical redshirt he received before the season. While Tuliaupupu is in his ninth season, he's only played about three seasons' worth of games. He didn't see the field once at USC during his first four seasons, and another injury forced him to miss the entire 2023 campaign (an illness limited to seven games in 2024, and he was on on personal leave from the second game of this season up until UM's Halloween game).

"When someone gets injured and they don't get to play at all, I don't think that's necessarily fair," Ford said. "That's something that I think definitely needs to be examined."

An NFL player who suffers a season-ending injury in a contract year isn't guaranteed to get a new deal, Lamb pointed out, so why should college football players get treated differently in this money-filled name, image and likeness era? On the other hand, many NFL players stay in the league after sustaining serious injuries. NFL careers often last longer than five seasons too, and pro players generally get paid more than college athletes.

This decade has been filled with examples of college athletes suing their way into extra eligibility. It remains to be seen how they'll act when injuries arise.

"They may end up playing two, three years," Anderson said.

"What I've been told is, 'It's just a lawsuit away from that being changed.'"



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

Montana linebacker Solomon Tuliaupupu (58) rushes as South Dakota quarterback Aidan Bouman (2) throws the ball during the FCS quarterfinal football game between Montana and South Dakota at Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025.

Injuries are part of football, Big Sky coaches emphasized, and some players won't get four healthy seasons no matter how many waivers they get. But in the five-for-five era, there will almost certainly be more players who miss multiple seasons with injuries than players who enjoy five full seasons, considering the violence of the sport and the relative rarity of freshman phenoms.

"There might need to be (injury exceptions)," Best said.

Rosters will be messy for the next couple of years, said Big Sky commissioner Tom Wistrcill, due to the combination of players like Reynolds who get a fifth season and the athletes whose redshirts have been grandfathered in.

Southern Utah coach DeLane Fitzgerald pointed to another unintended consequence of the five-for-five rule: a player like Dahlke who contributes heavily during his freshman season will have a better chance of breaking program records than any of his predecessors.

Most records will probably remain safe because of the transfer portal, which could hurt programs in the five-for-five era. Redshirts allowed teams to keep most of their players for at least two seasons because freshmen didn't play enough to garner serious interest from other schools. Now, coaches have to consider a question they rarely pondered in previous years: is playing a freshman worth the risk of him transferring after one or two seasons?

Coaches might overlook a freshman's flaws because of his talent, and they might face the uncomfortable reality that a more experienced player would've prevented a loss. Now that redshirts don't exist, more freshmen will want to play right away, potentially creating more locker room tension than in the pre-five-for-five days.

To Big Sky coaches, those potential issues are worth the risk.

"We might go through this deal and be like, 'Gosh, was this the right move?'" said Montana coach Bobby Kennedy. "Well, let's see if it is or not."

Victor Flores is the Montana State Bobcats beat writer for 406 MT Sports. Email him at victor.flores@406mtsports.com and follow him on Twitter/X at @VictorFlores406



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Montana State's Brian Harris celebrates during the game against Idaho on Friday, Oct. 2 at the Kibbie Dome in Moscow, Idaho.

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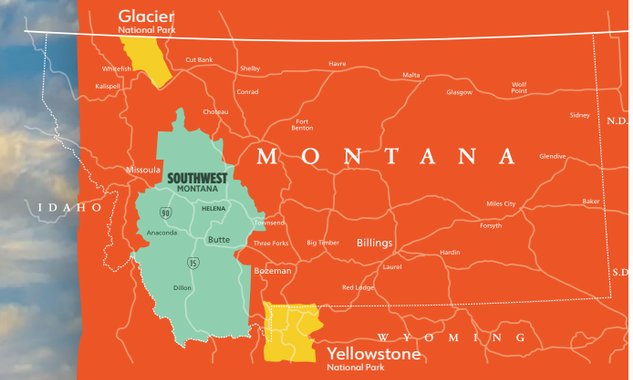

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BEST OF THE BRAWLS

The top 10 barnburners in the long history of the rivalry

406 MT SPORTS

These aren't necessarily the closest or best-played of the 125 Brawls of the Wild, although this list features some barnburners and includes games that featured incredible performances.

But this list also includes games that changed the course of the series — even if those changes weren't apparent or evident at the time.

And, of course, like all of these lists, it's subjective. This list was compiled by the sports staff of the Missoulian originally for a section to commemorate the 100th Brawl; it's been updated and revised for this section.



MISSOULIAN FILE

Travis Lulay won three games over Montana as Montana State's quarterback, including a memorable nail-biter in 2002.

1 2018: Bobcats win 29-25 in Missoula: The Cats appeared destined for defeat after an apparent Adam Eastwood go-ahead rushing touchdown for the Griz with seconds left. But wait! Montana State coach Jeff Choate called timeout before the play started. Montana was forced to try again and opted for the same play with a disastrous result. Tucker Yates knocked the ball out of Eastwood's hands and the Griz turned the ball over near the goal line in front of 26,508 fans. It wasn't just that play that made the game hard for Montana to swallow. And Eastwood most certainly was not the only reason the Grizzlies lost. Montana led 22-0 in the first half and 25-15 with under 8 minutes left before the Cats made an epic comeback fueled by Troy Andersen's offensive heroics.

2 1997: Grizzlies win 27-25 in Bozeman: A few Brawls of the Wild had go-ahead touchdowns in the last moments, and one other had a late field goal to win it. This had both. At a time during The Streak when the Bobcats finally seemed on equal footing, Eric Kinnaman scores with 22 seconds left to put the Cats up 25-24. Kinnaman's conversion run is stopped inches short.

MSU's Geoff Groshelle kicks off out of bounds and on the second play from the 35, Grizzly quarterback Brian Ah Yat fakes a handoff and throws deep to Justin Olsen for 46 yards to the Montana State 19. After one more play, the Grizzlies call time out with four seconds left to set up a field goal attempt by Kris Heppner. Heppner, iced for several minutes by a series of timeouts, kicks a 37-yard field goal as time expires for the win.

3 2002: Bobcats win 10-7 in Missoula: By no stretch the best-played or most exciting game of the series, this is nevertheless the victory with the most recent resonance for Bobcat Nation: On a snowy, bitter afternoon in Missoula, The Streak ends — and it's all the sweeter for the Cats because it ends in the Grizzlies' house. Bobcat freshman QB Travis Lulay connects on a 53-yard TD pass to Junior Adams in the third quarter to pad the lead to 10-0, and the Cat defense makes the lead stand up, despite a Griz TD early in the fourth quarter. The Streak ends at 16 straight wins for the Grizzlies.

4 1968: Bobcats win 29-24 in Missoula: Some students of the series consider this to be the best game in the series: Montana State scores 20 points in the last nine minutes and wins when Paul Schafer leaps into the end zone with 12 seconds left. After Schafer's touchdown, the Grizzlies launch a hasty answer from the 20 with speedy receiver Ron Baines at quarterback. He gains 15 and another 15 are tacked on by an unnecessary roughness penalty. Baines then races 37 yards from midfield before he's dragged down after time expires. Quarterback Dennis Erickson, flanker Ron Bain and Schafer lead the comeback as the Bobcats clinch a tie for the Big Sky championship. In all, 34 points are scored in the final quarter. Bain's touchdown catch with five minutes left brings the Bobcats within 24-22. His brother, Doug, gave the Grizzlies a 17-9 lead early in the quarter on a pass from Ray Brum.

5 1986: Grizzlies win 59-28 in Missoula: The game that started The Streak; arguably, no Griz-Cat game did as much to turn the series or a program around. In their second game in Washington-Grizzly Stadium, the Grizzlies lead 31-0 at halftime and 45-7 after three quarters. They roll up 506 yards, roughly 50 percent of it passing, and even their season record at 3-3 under new head coach Don Read. Senior quarterback Brent Pease runs for the first touchdown and passes for two more. The Bobcats make an aerial assault behind reserve quarterback Shaun Shahan in the final period to make it closer. But it's all but curtains for MSU head coach Dave Arnold, whose Bobcats won the national title two years earlier.

6 1956: Bobcats win 33-14 in Missoula: Before the streak of 16 started, Montana State had suffered through a half-century of football woes against the Grizzlies. But the Bobcats wash away five decades of frustration with a convincing win in Missoula – and go on to win 21 of the next 29 Brawls. This time, the Cats cap an undefeated season and secure a berth in the Aluminum Bowl in Little Rock, Arkansas, where they battle St. Joseph's to a 0-0 tie. Big Don Edwards scores two touchdowns in the second half and a freshman triad of quarterback Dave Alt, halfback Jack Rada and center Sonny Holland shine for MSU. Of the three, only Holland plays in subsequent Brawls. He'll finish his career a three-time All-American. Several hundred Bobcat rooters tear down the south goalpost at sunny Dornblaser Field. Coach Tony Storti is toted off the field on the shoulders of Bobcats celebrating their first victory in Missoula since 1902.

7 1922: Grizzlies win 7-6 in Missoula: It's dubbed "as hectic and fierce a struggle as Dornblaser Field will ever see." It's perhaps also the most controversial ending of any Brawl. UM fullback "Bullet" Joe Kershner of Billings scores the tying touchdown as time runs out in the descending darkness at Montana's Homecoming game. MSU's timekeeper insists the final play didn't start in time. UM's timekeeper says it did, and he has the last word. State College coach Ott Romney charges onto the field during the argument, is shooed off, then returns. "Other dignitaries, all the way from the president of the university to the waterboys … surged on the gridiron and harassed the officials," reports the Missoulian. Finally the extra-point is attempted and captain Harvey Elliott of Missoula kicks it through. MSU protests it shouldn't count because fans are on the field. "In the eyes of God and in 60 minutes of play, we won that game," proclaims Romney.



Legendary Montana coach Don Read talks with his players during a cold, windy day in Bozeman in the 1980s. Read led the Grizzlies to a memorable win over Montana State in 1986. The game started The Streak.

MISSOULIAN FILE

8 1954: Grizzlies win 25-21 in Missoula: The Bobcats roar into their last game of 1954 unbeaten under Tony Storti, with the Cigar Bowl in Florida and the Refrigerator Bowl in Indiana eyeing them. The Grizzlies are last in the Skyline Conference, though they've beaten the Bobcats six straight times and 16 of the last 17. UM's Murdo Campbell runs 61 yards for a TD on the first play from scrimmage. Don Edwards answers with a 43-yard jaunt to set up a Bobcat score. But Edwards is taken to the hospital with a concussion as a brutal battle develops. The Bobcats, their bowl hopes on the line, close within four on a late interception return by end Jim Posewitz. They're on the Grizzly 32 when a last-ditch pass goes awry at the gun.

9 1947: Bobcats win 13-12 in Butte: On the 50th anniversary of the first Brawl of the Wild, the Bobcats break a 10-game losing streak that dates back to the depths of the Great Depression in 1932. It's a balmy mid-October day at the all-dirt Butte High field, later named to honor Griz great Eso Naranche. All the scoring is in the second half. Barney Berger, former Grizzly halfback, kicks the winning extra point for the Bobcats following a 4-yard touchdown pass on fourth down from Gene Bourdet to Harry Perrigo in the fourth quarter. That makes it Cats 13-6. The Grizzlies score, but Buck Preuninger misses the extra-long extra point by inches after a penalty moves the ball back. "It was a game for keeps and when somebody was slammed down, it was hard," the Missoulian's Ray Rocene reports.

10 1969: Grizzlies win 7-6 in Bozeman: The third straight hair-raising Brawl finally goes the Grizzlies' way in the mud. Norwegian-born Frank Kalfoss of the Bobcats leaves a 42-yard field goal try wide left with 25 seconds left. UM hadn't won at Gatton Field since 1955. The winning touchdown is scored late in the first half when quarterback Ray Brum avoids a tackler in the backfield, nearly slips to the ground, then flings the ball downfield to halfback Arnie Blancas, who avoids his defender to consummate a 49-yard TD play. Dan Worrell kicks the vital extra point. On MSU's next series, Kalfoss has his first shot from 42 yards — and makes it.



COMMENTARY

Hate has no place in Treasure State sports

Editor's note: *The following is a column written by Missoulian sports editor Bill Speltz seven years ago. It has been updated to include thoughts on this season.*

These teams genuinely hate one another.

Sound familiar? Probably because you'll hear it at least a dozen times on television this month when college football's storied rivalries are renewed.

Alabama-Auburn, Ohio State-Michigan, Montana-Montana State … all terrific matchups but they're just games, folks. It's just sports.



BILL SPELTZ

Here's a news flash for you passionate rival haters: Guys that play for MSU are just guys that share the same state as football players at UM, dealing with the same day-to-day challenges like wintry weather and skyrocketing costs of living in Bozeman and Missoula. The only real difference is the color of the uniform and the location in western Montana.

We at the Missoulian have tried to appease Griz fans that so passionately hate Montana State by running a limited amount of Bobcat stories in the paper — and rarely running one on the front sports page. But the truth is, those fans probably need to grow up and understand we're just trying to give readers more. Heck, they may even discover they have more fun when they start pulling for two Treasure State teams.

Hatred has no place in sports. Save your hate for the Adolph Hitlers and Osama bin Ladens of the world.

Ever notice how a lot of NFL players react after battling in so-called rivalry games? They walk to the middle of the field to greet one another, regardless of jersey color, and sometimes even exchange jerseys for fun.

Growing up just 70 miles from Iowa City, this one-time-passionate Iowa fan loved to root for the Hawkeyes in their rivalry games against Iowa State. I may have hated to see Iowa lose to the Cyclones, but once the game was over, I was almost as happy to see Iowa State succeed as I was Iowa.

Is that so weird? That I would pull for two teams that made me feel good about my home state?

Competitively speaking, hating your opponent is a bad idea anyway. It can be disruptive in the heat of battle because hate and anger go hand in hand and anger can be distracting. Even in a sport as brutal as football, you must keep your wits about you, my friend.

No one hated to lose more than yours truly as a younger man. Not so much in high school or college because I was just happy to earn a starting job. My high school football team went 0-9 but I still had a good time.

In my 30s, after leaving baseball and football behind, I focused on playing tennis because it's cheap, a good workout and a wonderful game. Oddly enough, it was this gentleman's game that planted seeds of hatred in my mind for anyone who dared try to beat me.

Call it the Jimmy Connors Syndrome. I had it in my head that being ranked as the top 35-and-over singles player in Iowa — roughly the equivalent of being the best surfer in Nome, Alaska — was my destiny. A Canadian gentleman was my nemesis, leaving me with more runner-up trophies than Bobby Hauck, the Buffalo Bills and the Minnesota Vikings combined.

Oh, I was a nasty cuss. I'd roll the ball out of my pocket onto an adjacent court just to make the Canadian chase it in between points and games. I'd refuse to socialize on changeovers. I'd walk right toward the friendly chap just so he had to walk around me.

After losing to him six or seven times in a row in tournament finals, I finally beat my nemesis. It was my hometown tournament and I was so happy I gave my racket a bat flip.

As I was exiting the courts, enjoying congratulations from friends and family, my rival vanished. Minutes later, he showed up with an icy-cold beverage just for me. It was his way of saying nice match.

I became fast friends with the Canadian. It took me 42 years to get there, but never again would I harbor white-hot competitive hatred toward anyone. How liberating it was.

All season I've pulled for both the Montana and Montana State football teams to win. There, I admit it. Better start your campaign to have me impeached as Missoulian sports editor.

Watching the Cats isn't quite as thrilling as watching the Grizzlies since my children attended UM, but it's all entertainment to me. Those blue-and-gold-clad Bobcats have done the Treasure State proud in recent years and anyone that says differently needs to work on perspective.

This year's game promises to be a good one. Both teams are among the best on the FCS level and there's a lot riding on the much-awaited showdown.

It's strange the way the rivalry has played out the past five years.

Back in 2021, Montana dumped Montana State in Missoula, 29-10. A week later the Cats switched quarterbacks, going from Matthew McKay to Tommy Mellott, and the result was a thrilling run all the way to the FCS championship.

Four years ago, the Cats buried the Grizzlies, 55-21, in Bozeman. Even Cats fans would have to admit they never expected such a lopsided contest.

Three years ago, Montana whipped Montana State in Missoula, 37-7. The Grizzlies made it all way to the FCS title game before stumbling.

Two years ago, the Cats beat the Grizzlies in Bozeman. Mellott and the Blue & Gold went on to play in the FCS title game in Frisco, Texas.

Last year, Montana State beat host Montana in a nail-biter in Missoula, 31-28, then beat UM again in the playoffs in Bozeman. The Cats used the game as a springboard to the promised land with a FCS championship.

So what will it be this year? Maybe another really close game?

That's what I'm hoping for, along with the class of both programs and their fans to shine through on the field and in the parking lot after the game.

Bill Speltz is Missoulian sports editor and has served as a columnist for the newspaper for almost 20 years. If you have a question or comment, email bill.speltz@406mtsports.com

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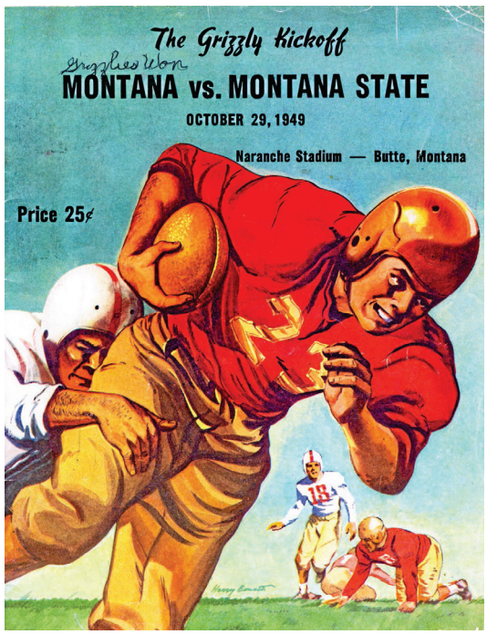

COURTESY

Featured here is a football program from 1949 Cat-Griz game at Naranche Stadium. The Brawl of the Wild was played in Butte from 1926-1950, first at Clark Park, later at Butte High School from 1939-1950 (except 1942-1945).

RIVALRY THROUGH THE YEARS

Montana 18, Montana State 6

Game No. 1 – 1897, Missoula.

The "Varsity" squad beats the visitors from Bozeman in a game that might have been more one-sided than the score suggests: A report in the next day's Missoulian suggests that the Bozeman score was the result of a "fluke" – an illegal pass. The Missoulian account noted: "The passing of the ball in defiance of rules was seen by the spectators, players, everybody except Professor Wilcox, umpire, and his word went. ... But all in all it was a good game and thoroughly appreciated."

Montana 6, Montana State 0

Game No. 2 – 1898, Bozeman.

The "Varsity" from Missoula records the first out-of-town victory in its short history and goes up 2-0 in the series. Dan Heyfron of Missoula, playing halfback on offense and defense, picks up a fumble early in the second half and returns it for a five-point touchdown. George Kennett of Missoula kicks the "goal" for the final point.

State College of Bozeman stages a goal-line stand in the first half, thwarting UM on the 4-yard line behind the heroics of the Flaherty brothers at left and right ends. It's the only sniff of the end zone either offense has all afternoon.

The game is played on Saturday, Nov. 13, and assures a rematch in Missoula on Thanksgiving Day in two weeks.

Montana 16, Montana State 0

Game No. 3 – 1898, Missoula.

Charles Allard of Ravalli didn't play in the first Griz-Cat game of 1898, but he shines in the second one on Thanksgiving Day as UM takes a 3-0 lead in the series. Allard kicks what the Montana Kaimin, the UM student newspaper, calls "the first goal from the field ever kicked in the state." The ball hits a goal post and tumbles over.

Later Allard scores a touchdown on the last of three straight line bucks near the Bobcat goal.

For the second and last time, the Brawl of the Wild is played on grounds southeast of the Higgins Avenue Bridge, about where the Missoulian stands today.

Montana State 6, Montana 0

Game No. 4 – 1899, Missoula.

The streak is over and a new one begins.

The College team from Bozeman beats Missoula for the first time in the Brawl of the Wild. It launches a six-game winning streak for Bozeman that's still tied for the longest against its arch rival.

Bozeman fullback Williams scores the game's only touchdown in the first half. Missoula punts from the Bozeman 40-yard line and Williams fields the ball almost underneath his own goal and returns it for the game's only touchdown.

Jeffers adds the extra point (touchdowns at the time are worth just five points).

Montana State 38, Montana 0

Game No. 5 – 1899, Bozeman.

In a preview of things to come, the game is a physical contest as three Missoula players are sent to the sidelines with injuries, forcing the university to use all three of its substitutes.

Williams scores three touchdowns, while Clarence Jeffers, Clifford Jeffers, Dick Flaherty and C. Parker score one apiece.

When Bozeman had the ball it "did all sorts of unmannerly tricks with their opponents," the Bozeman Avant Courier says. "They ran around, over, under and through them; kicked the ball over them, just to save carrying it, and then got it again; they took turns in making touchdowns; in fact, did about everything but give their opponents a chance."

Hamilton's Laurens Hechler is the quarterback of the Montana team and Shorty Cross of Missoula plays fullback. Claude McAllister and Sidney Walker, both of Missoula, are the halfbacks.

Montana State 12, Montana 11

Game No. 6 – 1900, Missoula.

In "by far the prettiest game of football ever played in the city," the college squad knots the series at 3-3 on Thanksgiving Day at the South Missoula grounds near the Higgins Avenue Bridge.

Montana's extra-point attempt after the final touchdown with five minutes remaining goes awry when kicker William Craig falls down.

The boys from Bozeman dominate the first half, scoring two five-point touchdowns on runs by fullback Dick Flaherty and kicking one-point "goals" after each.

Frank Bean, in his first game as both coach and fullback at the Missoula school, exhorts his Varsity at halftime and then scores its first TD nine minutes into the second half.

Montana appears to have another touchdown on its next drive when Charles Allard of Ravalli crosses the line and plants the ball for a touchdown. But the referee understood Allard to call "down" when he was entangled at the 7-yard line, so the ball is placed there. Allard lugs the ball across the goal on the next play, setting up Craig's ill-fated extra-point try.

Montana State 31, Montana 0

Game No. 7 – 1901, Bozeman.

Not much goes right for Missoula's Varsity boys as they lose their fourth straight to Bozeman.

When it was all over, "fans of the game and players were glad that the agony was over," reports the Missoulian.

Much of the credit for the one-sided decision goes to the size of the players for the Agricultural College, who "outweighed Missoula more than 10 pounds to the man." Missoula has the first opportunity to score, but a place kick is blocked. Soon afterward, Bozeman scores a five-point touchdown and adds the extra point. Two place kicks, four touchdowns and one goal account for the final score.

Once the rout is on, the "Missoula boys seem to lose heart and play a listless game," the Missoulian reports.

Montana 38, Montana 0

Game No. 8 – 1902, Missoula.

Back in Missoula for this game, a subhead in the Missoulian proclaims in part: "the Sturdy Agricultural College Football Team takes the University of Montana Eleven Into Camp – Highly Interesting With No Fatalities in the Contest."

Either the Agricultural College 11 had beefed

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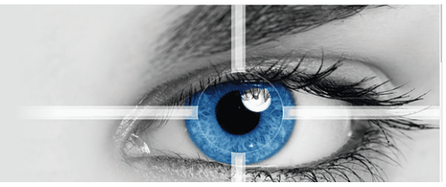


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up after the 1901 game, or the University boys had shrunk: The Missoulian reports that the Bozeman squad outweighed the Missoula boys by 15 pounds per man – up from the 10-pound advantage the previous year. The result is about the same: Bozeman holds onto the ball for some 50 minutes of the 60-minute game.
Flaherty scores five of the seven touchdowns for Bozeman. Most are set up on "clean gains" by Wright, Irvin and Codd.
Afterward, the Missoulian notes, the visitors' spoils include a "sumptuous Thanksgiving dinner at the Florence."

Montana 13, Montana 6

Game No. 9 – 1903, Bozeman.

On a sparkling Thanksgiving Day, MSU extends its win streak over UM to six games on two touchdown runs by Charles Ray and a safety late in the first half.
UM scores with two minutes left when end Eddie Corbin of Missoula returns a fumble all the way. John Curtis of Butte kicks the "goal."
"The Gallatin valley never appeared more advantageously than on this day. ... Forty years ago a paradise for the Indians; today, an excellent location for an agricultural school," writes a Kaimin reporter (probably right end Walter Hammer, athletics writer for the UM paper.)
After the game the teams share a Thanksgiving dinner at the Bozeman Hotel and attend a dance hosted by the Bouffons, a young ladies club at the college.

Montana 79, Montana State 0

Game No. 10 – 1904, Missoula.

On a day termed ideal for football, Montana breaks a six-game losing streak in the rivalry.
Hartwell Willis of Plains springs UM to a 23-0 halftime lead with a pair of touchdown runs. Robie Holmes of Billings, in his only season with the university, starts the second half with an 80-yard kickoff return. Emil Adams of Missoula enters in the second half and scores four spectacular TDs, including the last three. Roy McPhail of New Chicago and Elmer Johnson of Missoula kick seven extra points.
It's the most lopsided score in the history of the series. Touchdowns still count for just five points, but UM is bolstered by a rule requiring the team that's scored upon to kick off.
It's the last time UM faces Montana State for three years. By faculty decree, MSU abolishes football before the 1905 meeting and doesn't revive it until 1908.

Montana 0, Montana State 0

Game No. 11 – 1908, Missoula.

Nothing is settled in the first cross-state meeting since UM's 79-0 win in 1904. On the eve of the 1905 game, the MSU faculty abolished football at the state agricultural college and this is the first game since.
It's also UM's first game under coach Roy "Cupid" White, an Iowa man whose teams would post a 7-2-2 record over the next two seasons. The Bozeman team has brought in John H. McIntosh to revive the program.
For the first time, Bozeman's representation is referred to as the "Aggies."
Under a steaming sun on an early October afternoon, university captain Arthur Bishop of Missoula tries and misses three field goals. One of them, in the first half, hits the goal post and bounces wrong, the Missoulian reports.
Most of the action in the second half is in the vicinity of the MSU goal. Fransham is the Aggies' work horse but won't find the goal line until the Thanksgiving weekend rematch in Bozeman.

Montana State 5, Montana 0

Game No. 12 – 1908, Bozeman.

The first true upset of the series is secured when Fransham shakes off four tacklers on a 35-yard scoring dash for the Montana Agricultural college early in the second half.
"Everyone declared that this was as spectacular a run as was ever seen on a Montana football field," the Missoulian reports. The Aggies take control after that.
"Even the people of this city find it hard to understand," reads a dispatch filed from Bozeman to the Missoula Herald. "Nothing but the overconfidence of the Missoula team can explain it."
"Several times the Missoula men crossed the Aggies' five-yard line, but were unable to score, being penalized or held for downs," reports the Associated Press.
MSU won't win another game in the series until 1929, but Missoula partisans don't know that.

Montana 3, Montana State 0

Game No. 13 – 1909, Bozeman.

Ed Winstanley of Missoula kicks the game-winner with 90 seconds to go after missing on four other field goal attempts.
Montana launches a streak that will grow to 16-0-4 against the Aggies, finally ending with an MSU victory in 1929.
The hometown Aggies drive inside UM's 10-yard line early in the second half but fumble the ball away. Jameson, a Native American quarterback, and running backs White and Brown lead the MSU attack.
Arthur Bishop of Missoula guides the pre-Griz Grizzlies, both as quarterback and punter.
Appointed referees don't show, so the coaches were obliged to officiate.
"It is extremely unfortunate that the officials from Butte missed their train," says John McIntosh of MSU.

Montana 15, Montana State 5

Game No. 14 – 1909, Missoula.

On a snow-covered Montana field, Roy "Cupid" White's varsity completes its first undefeated season, and one of only two in UM football history.
Five minutes into the game, 220-pound fullback William Ittner of Minnesota finalizes a 13-play drive for UM's first touchdown. Captain Arthur Bishop kicks the extra point.
"Then the Aggies got away with the famous Pennsylvania double pass for a touchdown, Pool outsprinting Montana's entire eleven for a 65-yard run," the Missoulian reports.
It's the only score Montana surrenders all season. The university outscores foes 136-5 while compiling a 5-0-1 record.
Ittner tallies again on a short rush in the first half. His runs, catches by Missoula's George Little and the guidance of Bishop at quarterback establish UM's dominance.

Montana 0, Montana State 0

Game No. 15 – 1910, Bozeman.

The deadly fires of 1910 are burnt out by Oct. 21, and Bozeman is the site of its second straight scoreless Brawl of the Wild.
The Aggies knock on the door most. They miss two field goal tries, run out of downs on the 3-yard line and fumble inside the 10.
UM halfback Cecil Dobson of Dickinson, N.D., makes a "neat tackle" of Wolpert, who has broken into the clear. In the closing minutes, Montana tries a quick kick. MSU's Sheriff, the Aggies' captain, tears through the line and blocks it, but Elizierd Deschamps of Missoula recovers the ball for the varsity on the 2-yard line. UM then kicks out of danger and the game ends.
For the first time, four quarters are played instead of two halves. Total yardage is cited: 200 for the Aggies, 142 for the university.
"The score does not tell the story of the most exciting game ever played on a Bozeman field," says the Missoulian. "The general style of play was open formations, and both teams used fake kicks and tricks to good advantage."
Quarterbacks Donald Williams of MSU and Missoula junior Edward "Windy" Winstanley are key contributors. Dobson, Deschamps and fullback Clifford Day of Missoula are also commended.
Robert Cary, who played for UM five years earlier, is in his second game as coach. He will die unexpectedly before the 1912 season.

Montana 10, Montana State 0

Game No. 16 – 1910, Missoula.

Paul Dornblaser makes his debut in the Brawl of the Wild. So does the touchdown pass.
Three minutes into the game UM quarterback Edward Winstanley and end George Little, both seniors from Missoula, connect on an 8-yard scoring toss.
Montana's second touchdown comes in the second quarter. Emmett "Count" Ryan of Valier scores on a "tackle back" play.
Dornblaser, for whom two UM stadiums would be named, is sensational. The freshman from Chicago didn't play in a 0-0 tie in October, but this time he's "here, there and everywhere, always smiling but always getting his man with a bang."
Little stars too, snuffing out the Aggies' deepest threat with an interception on the 12-yard line.
It's the final Brawl for two years. The 1911 game is called off after one of the Aggies dies.

Montana 7, Montana State 0

Game No. 17 – 1912, Bozeman.

UM sophomore Merritt Owsley, a 154-pound halfback from Twin Bridges, begins a career of heroic games against the Agricultural College.
Late in the game, Owsley intercepts a pass by MSU quarterback Maddix on Montana's 40-yard line. Several plays later he scores the only touchdown on a short run. Ed Craighead of Missoula kicks the extra point. (Touchdowns now count for six points, not five any more.)
For the first time, the university team has a nickname, the Bruins, although a Salt Lake paper labels it the Grizzlies.
Upon UM's arrival in Bozeman on the eve of the game, quarterback Pat Kelly of Big Timber is captured by the Aggie faithful and forced to make a speech.
"Captain (Paul) Dornblaser, however, escaped the men who would have shanghaied him to a speaker's position," the Missoulian reports.
Both Kelly and Dornblaser, a 195-pound junior from Chicago, star the next day.

Montana 39, Montana State 3

Game No. 18 – 1912, Missoula.

Sophomore halfback Merritt Owsley of Twin Bridges runs roughshod over the Aggies.
Owsley scores five touchdowns and sets up a sixth with a 35-yard run. On that one, Missoula senior

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Burton Smead gets the call. Owsley also kicks three extra points to account for a total of 33 points.
UM captain and fullback Paul Dornblaser of Chicago is able to watch, but only from the grandstand, as he's fought an illness ever since a two-game trip to Utah.
"Using its superior weight with telling effect, the University of Montana eleven battered down the Montana Agricultural college team and won in a walk on Montana field," the Missoulian reports.
MSU's Carr kicks a field goal in the first quarter for the visitors' only points.

Montana 7, Montana State 0

Game No. 19 – 1913, Bozeman.

"Missoula is bathed in football glory this morning," the Missoulian reports on Nov. 2, a day after the "Varsity" upends the State College of Bozeman on a fourth-quarter touchdown by Paul Kress of Michigan.
The game is almost over when the Aggies fumble at their own 28-yard line and Montana recovers. A forward pass moves the ball to the 20 and on the next play Kress sprints around left end, "shaking off tacklers until he had covered the twenty yards, and had placed the ball across the goal line."
Merritt Owsley of Twin Bridges kicks the extra point.
With time running out, Bozeman stages a valiant drive to the Montana 20. But the home team is penalized for holding and the drive stalls.
The game is played on a converted alfalfa patch at the Bozeman fairgrounds. MSU wants to be called the Mountain Lions this year, but it doesn't catch on.

Montana 20, Montana State 0

Game No. 20 – 1913, Missoula.

MSU is shut out for the sixth time in eight Brawls of the Wild since 1909, and the second time in two weeks.
The Missoulian reports: "Except during the interscholastic meets Montana field has never seen a better crowd.
There were more than a thousand people in the stands, and the gate receipts more than covered the expense of the game – a rare, rare circumstance in this flat-purse time."
Both teams have bands and UM introduces another noise-maker innovation, a small cannon.
Quarterback Pat Kelly of Big Timber scores on a short run three minutes into the game. Merritt Owsley of Twin Bridges scores up the middle in both the second and third periods and "kicks goal" after the first two touchdowns.
The "Baron," Paul Dornblaser, plays his final game against the Aggies.
"He has plastered himself with a lot of glory … but he has never played better football than he did for an hour yesterday," the paper says.
Dornblaser soon becomes a Missoula deputy county attorney, then goes off to World War I. He is killed in France in 1918 by a German sniper.
Cy Gatton and Carr distinguish themselves for MSU, but the Aggies are overmatched.

Montana 26, Montana State 9

Game No. 21 – 1914, in Missoula.

Montana's "Bruins" start slowly but then romp en route to a 6-0-1 record and the unofficial Northwest championship.
But the Aggies have something to brag about: They are the only team to score against Montana.
UM scores first when tackle Christian Bentz of Aberdeen, S.D., returns a fumbled punt to the Aggies' 2-yard line. Quarterback Alfred Robertson of Minnesota plunges over.
The visitors strike back in the second quarter when fullback Cy Gatton caps a drive engineered by quarterback Romney with a 3-yard run over tackle.
UM takes a 13-6 lead into halftime after Robertson's pass is deflected and falls into the arms of his end Earl "Click" Clark, a budding star from Everett, WA Clark is just behind the goal posts.
Cecil Vance, also of Washington, scores twice on short runs in the third quarter and stars on defense.
MSU tallies the last three points on a field goal by Robideaux.
To commemorate the rivalry, Richard Howell of the UM law school has written "Up With Montana," which remains the school's fight song.

Montana 6, Montana State 6

Game No. 22 – 1916, in Bozeman.

The score is tied 6-6 when Montana snaps the ball, and the final whistle blows almost simultaneously.
UM halfback Harry Adams of Aberdeen, WA, carries the ball all the way downfield as the pro-Aggies crowd rushes onto the field. Montana's claim of touchdown goes unheeded.
A tie is a victory for MSU, which hasn't played its counterparts from Missoula for two years but lost six straight before that.
The game is bitterly fought on a Nov. 4 afternoon in front of the largest football crowd yet in Bozeman.
Montana, now routinely nicknamed the "Grizzlies," is led by Adams and Earl "Click" Clark, both future UM coaches. The school's field house will be named for Adams when it's built in the 1950s.
Montana's score in the second quarter is set up when Clark signals for a fair catch and is tackled. The penalty gives UM a first down on Bozeman's 40. Adams gains 21 yards on two sweeps around right end. Then Grizzly quarterback Lester Jones of Everett, WA, goes left and scores from the 19.
The extra-point attempt by Claude McQuarrie of Missoula hits the crossbar and bounces back.
The State College ties the game in the third period on a drive punctuated by three long passes. Two tries from the UM 2-yard line fail, but quarterback Boberg is over by inches on the third attempt. Three Grizzlies converge to block Bryan's extra-point try.



406 MT SPORTS FILE PHOTO

Montana State players celebrate with students in the south end zone of Bobcat Stadium after beating Montana in 2017. It would prove to be the final game for Griz coach Bob Stitt, who was let go days later.

Montana 9, Montana State 7

Game No. 23 – 1917, Missoula.

With the drums of war beating overseas, the Grizzlies salvage an otherwise lost season with a touchdown two minutes from the end.
"The game moved like a tremendous drama, from hope to despair to sudden, impossible, but undeniable victory," the Missoulian says.
MSU scores its only touchdown early in the fourth quarter on a determined 11-yard rush by quarterback Ross. It gives the Aggies a 7-3 lead.
With five minutes left, UM starts from its own 35. Quarterback John Driscoll of Butte, who fumbled away a punt minutes earlier, catches a pass and zigzags 45 yards down the sideline to the Aggies 20.
From the 15, Grizzly team captain Christian Bentz, a 235-pound converted lineman from Aberdeen, S.D., carries it through the afternoon gloom five straight times.
On the fifth he bulls over center from a yard out.
It's the only win of 1917 for UM, which joined the Northwest Conference the year before.

Montana 6, Montana State 6

Game No. 24 – 1919, Bozeman.

War and an influenza outbreak led to the cancelation of the 1918 season.
As the Brawl gets set to resume, MSU is favored to beat the undermanned Grizzlies, especially since the Northwest Conference has decreed freshmen ineligible.
But in the mid-November snow and mud, halfback Harry Adams breaks a scintillating 71-yard touchdown run in the second quarter to give UM a 6-0 lead.
In the third quarter, Homer Taylor, MSU's captain and quarterback, ties the game on an end run. Neither extra-point kick works.
"Before the game was a minute old, the bright blue jerseys of the Aggies and the gray of the Grizzlies became black with the mud of roundup stadium," a Missoulian correspondent reports.
"Pools of water inches deep stood on all parts of the field and when opportunity offered the players would wash their hands and faces in these dirty puddles."

Montana 28, Montana State 0

Game No. 25 – 1920, Missoula.

Injuries have almost done in the Grizzlies after their epic 18-14 victory at Washington.
But on a November afternoon, in the first game played at Dornblaser Field, they dominate one of the top defenses in the West.
A crowd of 3,000 is on hand, and close to 800 students participate in a snake dance on the field at halftime.
Bernie Bierman's Grizzlies make 32 first downs to MSU's two and score a touchdown in each quarter.
Harry Adams of Aberdeen, WA, adds four extra points and engineers the Grizzly running game.
Steve Sullivan, a hard-running half back from Butte, scores the middle two touchdowns and sets up the fourth with an interception.
The Aggies threaten early in the fourth quarter after Bush recovers a fumble on Montana's 15. Two runs gain nothing. On third down quarterback Ray McCarren fakes a drop kick but is stopped for little gain. A fourth-down pass is intercepted by UM's Earl Barry of Missoula.

Montana 14, Montana State 7

Game No. 26 – 1921, Bozeman.

Steve Sullivan of Butte, a future NFL player, sets up or scores all 14 points for Montana in as "thrilling and viciously contested football contest as Bozeman has ever seen," reports Ray T. Rocene of the Missoulian.
MSU loses at Gatton Field for the first time in five years. Montana hasn't lost in the series since 1908, but its first visits to Gatton in 1916 and 1918 resulted in ties.
Sullivan scores from 4 yards out and kicks the extra point in the first quarter. MSU scores on a short run by quarterback Ray McCarren in the second quarter after a blocked kick and return to the UM 10 by Mashin. Scott McDonald kicks the extra point.
Late in the third quarter, Montana stages the clinching 52-yard scoring drive. Sullivan runs for 38 of the yards. Fullback Ted Plummer, first of two brothers from Stevensville to play at Montana, scores from a yard out.
Students from UM, among the 190 who traveled to Bozeman by train, snake dance on the field between halves.

Montana 7, Montana State 6

Game No. 27 – 1922, Missoula.

Controversy reigns in the descending darkness at Dornblaser Field.
UM fullback "Bullet Joe" Kershner of Billings scores the tying touchdown either as or after time runs out on Montana's Homecoming Game.
MSU timekeeper George Davenport maintains the final play didn't start in time. UM's official timekeeper, who goes unidentified, says five seconds remained when the play began. State College coach Ott Romney charges onto the field during the argument, is shooed off, then returns.
"Other dignitaries, all the way from the president of the university to the waterboys … surged on the gridiron and harassed the officials," reports the Missoulian.
Referee William Higgins rules touchdown, claiming the game isn't over until the official timer fires his gun. It went off after Kershner crossed the line.
Finally the extra-point goal is attempted and captain Harvey Elliott of Missoula kicks it through. Umpire William Lowry says fans went on the field during the kick and the goal should not count. Higgins overrules him.
"In the eyes of God and in 60 minutes of play, we won that game," proclaims Romney in an after-dinner speech.
Two of the smallest players are the biggest stars. MSU quarterback Ray McCarren's passing accounts for a touchdown in the first quarter. Tiny Grant Silvernale of Baker leads a Grizzly ground attack that rolls up 278 yards.
Unofficially, this is the first Griz-Cat game. The nickname "Grizzlies" is well-established, but for the first time the Bozeman visitors are called "Bobcats."

Montana 24, Montana State 13

Game No. 28 – 1923, Bozeman.

Sophomore Ted Illman arrives on the scene, scoring two Grizzly touchdowns in his Brawl of the Wild debut.
"Chief" Illman and "Wild" Bill Kelly starred on Missoula High's 1921 state championship team. Kelly, soon to be a Grizzly great, plays on the UM freshman team in 1923.
More than 1,000 Missoula fans and the band show up at Gallatin Field in the wake of the previous year's controversial 7-6 Grizzly win.
This is the last football visit to Bozeman for UM until 1951. The teams play 21 times in Butte in the meantime.
Two MSU scores are direct results of fumbles by Earl Johnson of Missoula, one on the first play from scrimmage. The Bobcats' Floyd Romney kicks two field goals, and Benton scores in the fourth quarter on a 16-yard return of a fumbled punt.
UM takes a 7-3 lead in the first quarter on a short run by Illman, then puts the game away with a flurry in the second quarter. Quarterback Grant Silvernale of Baker scores from 15 yards out, then intercepts a pass. He hits Illman on a pass that "Chief" turns into a 40-yard score.

Montana 29, Montana State 7

Game No. 29 – 1925, Missoula.

"Wild Bill" Kelly of Missoula, in his only Griz-Cat game in Missoula, rips off 211 yards and four touchdowns.
'The Grizzlies didn't play the Bobcats in 1924 and are coming off consecutive trips to Oregon State, ID and Southern California. They receive sweet relief against the Bobcats.
Kelly, playing quarterback, scores on a 42-yard jaunt around end, on two plunges off tackle, and on a 68-yard interception return.
MSU's one tally comes in the first quarter when Gregory intercepts a pass and rambles 62 yards. Glynn, at left end, is a standout for the Bobcats.
Oscar Dahlberg, youngest of four Butte brothers to play for UM, is one of the Grizzly leaders.
It's a sloppy game: three interceptions each, four Grizzly fumbles, and 20 penalties – including 12 for 100 yards for UM. Former Griz star Earl "Click" Clark concludes a two-year stint as head coach. Ott Romney's Bobcats finish a busy 11-game schedule by losing to Utah, BYU and UM. Montana State, winless in its last 17 games against the Grizzlies, won't score a point in the next three.

Montana 27, Montana State 0

Game No. 30 – 1926, Butte.

The Brawl of the Wild moves to Butte for the first of 21 Copper Bowls and Montana runs its series streak to 18 games without a loss.
"The kill took place Saturday afternoon (Oct. 23) at Butte before the largest crowd ever assembled for a sports event in the Treasure state," reports the Missoulian. There were, it says, "8,000 and some odd fans."
"Wild Bill" Kelly tops his four-touchdown performance of the 1925 Brawl. He runs for one Grizzly score, returns a punt for another and throws a pass nearly 50 yards for a third. Kelly also kicks three extra points and intercepts three Bobcat passes.
End Clarence Coyle of Alberton catches Kelly's long TD pass and halfback Milton Ritter of Eveleth, Minn., scores UM's other touchdown.
Montana State, behind halfback Babcock and quarterback Wellington, gains more first downs and almost equal yardage but throws six interceptions.
The Bobcats threaten in the second quarter. Glynn misses a drop-kick try from 41 yards. Grizzly sophomore Eddie Chinske of Michigan City, Ind., intercepts a pass at the Montana 20. Kelly picks one off at the 12 and another at the 5.

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Montana 6, Montana State 0

Game No. 31 – 1927, Butte.

Alberton's Clarence Coyle speeds down the east side of Clark Park, slips past Bobcat halfback Richards, and hauls in a 30-yard scoring pass from Eddie Chinske of Indiana for the only score.

It comes in the final quarter – "a spectacular play, a thrilling moment, which sent the University rooters into cataclysms of joy," the Missoulian reports.

Chinske, who had two interceptions against MSU in 1926, picks off another at the goal line to preserve the shutout.

MSU's stingy defense, led by end Cashmore, holds the Missoula boys to four first downs. The Cats outgain the Griz 221 yards to 195 behind Eikren, "a slippery line smasher," Gardner, "a hard man to stop at all times," and Babcock.

Two plays before the touchdown, Chinske connects with Sam Kain of Helena for a 28-yard pass. On the winning play, both Kain and Coyle head down the same sideline and Richards has to choose which one to cover. He picks Kain and Chinske hits Coyle just short of the end zone.

Montana 0, Montana State 0

Game No. 32 – 1928, Butte.

Montana, wearing black jerseys and white helmets, comes closest to scoring but fails on three plays from the Bobcat 5-yard line late in the first half.

Bobcat linebacker Ott Gardner drops UM quarterback Jimmy Morrow of Moore for a loss of 3; Waldo Ekegren of Harlem regains 2 of those, and a fourth-down pass is batted down by a Montana State defender.

In the third quarter, Grizzly All-America candidate Tom Davis, from Butte, picks up a Bobcat fumble and runs 44 yards across the goal line. But referee Robert Morris has blown the ball dead, nullifying the score.

The crowd numbers some 8,000.

"It was a sellout, every seat being occupied, and the athletic funds of the two colleges will net a sweet sum as a result," the Missoulian reports.

Montana 14, Montana 12

Game No. 33 – 1929, Butte.

It's over. On a sunny October day in Butte's Clark Park, the Bobcats end the longest winless streak in series history. Montana State last won in 1908, when the series matched the Aggies and the Varsity.

Max Worthington scores both Bobcat touchdowns, on a 28-yard pass reception and an end-around near the goal line. Ivar Twilde's long return of the opening kickoff sets up the first MSU score, and his two extra-point kicks are the decisive points. Jim Morrow of Moore misses both extra-point attempts for the Grizzlies.

All scoring comes in the first half as Montana quickly counters each Bobcat touchdown. Billings halfback Clyde Carpenter crashes 13 yards over right guard Clarence Muhlick of Wisconsin to cap UM's first drive.

Waldo Ekegren of Harlem, whose brother Kermit shares halfback duties, scores on a reverse from 3 yards out.

On a last-ditch drive, UM's Morrow runs for 33 yards and passes for 22 to move the ball to the Bobcat 5-yard line. But the final gun sounds before Montana gets off another play.

MSU's second touchdown is aided by a 15-yard penalty "for talking" against Jerry Ryan of Deer Lodge, who is warming up on the sideline for Montana. It gives the Cats the ball on the Grizzly 3.

Montana 13, Montana State 6

Game No. 34 – 1930, Butte.

The Grizzlies regain the winning track, dominating for three quarters and holding off a last-ditch Bobcat assault ignited by three blocked punts. Nearly 8,000 fans gather at Clark Park to see if Maj. Frank Milburn's Montana men can avenge last year's 14-12 defeat — their first to the Bobcats in more than 20 years.

Waldo Ekegren of Harlem scores twice from six inches out in the first half for the Grizzlies. The extra-point kick after the first score by Emile Perey of Philipsburg misses, but the Cats are offside so the Griz get the point. Perey's attempt after the second score is low.

UM's Clyde Carpenter of Billings has a punt partly blocked in the third quarter. Max Worthington of MSU picks it up with clear field ahead but is caught from behind.

Another Carpenter punt is stuffed and recovered on the UM 8-yard line, but the Grizzlies hold on at the 1-yard line early in the final period.

The Cats block a third punt late in the game and take over on the Grizzly 16.

Quarterback DeFrate hits McFarland for a 9-yard touchdown pass to bring Montana State within seven. UM's Gilbert Madden of Roundup helps stave off the Bobcats after that with an interception.



MISSOULIAN FILE

Running back Lex Hilliard gets a hug from former Montana coach Bobby Hauck after a three-touchdown day in a 2007 win over Montana State in Bozeman.

Montana 37, Montana State 6

Game No. 35 – 1931, Butte.

Halloween Day in Butte is mild and even "a trifle warm for those engaged in struggle on the field," a reporter says. And the Grizzlies heat it up even more.

Lowell Dailey of Scobey tallies four touchdowns.

Montana leads just 12-0 late in the third quarter. But the Grizzlies' Chalmer Lyman of Helena catches a short touchdown pass from Bill Boone of Deer Lodge, playing for injured quarterback Cale Crowley of Butte. Moments later Pat Caven of Miles City, playing with a broken nose, intercepts a Bobcat pass and returns it 35 yards for a touchdown. The romp is on.

MSU's lone score comes in the fourth quarter when quarterback Parke hurdles over from a yard out. Halfback Ed Buzzetti leads the Bobcats on defense.

As game time approaches, three Navy airplanes sweep over the city in formation.

Montana 19, Montana 7

Game No. 36 – 1932, Butte.

Two fourth-quarter touchdowns get the Bobcats back on the winning track. It spawns one of the series' memorable quotes from disgruntled Grizzly coach Bernard "Bunny" Oakes: "I think we ought to play our games from now on in Denmark, we're so rotten."

Though the Oct. 21 morning is sunny and warm, by noon the sky has clouded over. A stiff, cold wind blows from the south during the game. The U.S. is in the depths of the Great Depression and attendance dips to 5,500 at Clark Park, which holds 8,000. Election Day is a couple of weeks away, and Gov. John Erickson spends one half on the Grizzly side and one half with Bobcat fans. He poses for photographs with captains Paul McLean of Helena for MSU and the Grizzlies' Dale Hinman of Greybull, Wyo.

Sophomore Louis Edwards of Hamilton scores the go-ahead touchdown early in the fourth period from a yard out. Later, Ray Buzzetti of Hardin tallies his second TD of the day on a 21-yard jaunt.

Hinman gives the Grizzlies an early spark, intercepting a Buzzetti pass in the first quarter and returning it 93 yards for the first score.

Montana 32, Montana State 0

Game No. 37 – 1933, Butte.

The Griz explode for four touchdowns in the fourth quarter, in "merciless retribution for last year's defeat," a Missoulian reporter says. The Bobcats manage just 50 yards in total offense.

The Grizzlies begin their most dominant period in series history: The Bobcats won't score for eight straight games.

Montana coach Bernard "Bunny" Oakes opens with "shock troop" – reserve players who three times successfully execute double lateral passes.

Sophomore Edison Kent of Dillon scores nine minutes into the game on a short run. The Bobcats, led by lineman Chris Nagle, blunt Montana after that until a blocked punt in the fourth quarter opens the floodgates.

Sophomore quarterback Hank Blastic of Chicago scores on four straight runs starting at the 17, then hits Louis Hartsell of Anaconda for a 34-yard touchdown. Herb Brandenburg of Miles City makes a leaping, one-hand touchdown catch from reserve QB Bergeson, who scores the last TD from the 5.

Montana 25, Montana State 0

Game No. 38 – 1934, Butte.

The Brawl of the Wild takes a turn toward dull in front of 6,500 on a shirt-sleeve Nov. 10 at Clark Park. The Grizzlies score a touchdown in each quarter and just miss on a couple of others.

Griz coach "Bunny" Oakes, in his fifth and final season, again starts his second-string "shock troops," but the Bobcats make no headway.

Quarterback Hank Blastic of Chicago takes over and engineers the Grizzly assault. He scores twice on short runs. Leland Story of Winnett plows over left guard Leonard Kuka of Havre for the first touchdown. Don Holmquist of Whitefish tallies the final one.

The day's most spectacular play is a triple lateral pass. It goes from Blastic to Naseby Rhinehart of Milwaukee to Bill Hileman of Whitefish to Helena's Cal Emery. It works, but a penalty nullifies the TD. The Bobcats' best threat ends when the final gun sounds with the ball on the UM 19. Hard-running by Arthur Overturf and Taylor lead the MSU drive.

The Grizzlies even win the halftime cross-country race, which starts and ends in Clark Park. Jack Rose, from Kalispell, kicks at the end to outrun MSU's Bernard Myers by 15 yards. Montana leads series 24-9-5.

Montana 20, Montana State 0

Game No. 39 – 1935, Butte.

Sen. Burton K. Wheeler shows up late and sits among Grizzly fans at Clark Park. It's an early October afternoon that starts in sunshine and ends with threatening rain in the mountains.

Under first-year Griz coach Doug Fessenden of Illinois, they post their third of eight straight shutouts against the Cats.

Senior Hank Blastic of Chicago scores one touchdown and passes for another, to Anaconda's Louis Hartsell. Sophomores Paul Szakash, also of Chicago, and Butte's Milt Popovich — both destined to become among Grizzly all-time greats — make their initial marks.

Szakash scores on a 2-yard plunge in the second quarter and kicks two extra points.

The Cats never get inside the Grizzly 30-yard line.

Montana 27, Montana State 0

Game No. 40 – 1936, Butte.

In Montana's coming-of-age season under coach Doug Fessenden, Butte's own Milt Popovich hogs the spotlight for UM.

"Twice speeding down the east side of Clark field on flying feet for touchdowns, reversing from the west side to give his interference a chance to form, Milton Popovich scampered half the length of the gridiron for touchdowns in the second quarter Saturday afternoon," the Missoulian's Ray Rocene writes.

Popovich is both punter and kick returner for the Griz. He unloads a 64-yard punt in the first quarter. In the second period, he returns two punts 49 yards each for touchdowns.

Reserves take charge in the second half for UM. Phil Peterson of Kalispell recovers a blocked punt in the end zone and Joe Mariana of Miles City scores from a yard out in the fourth quarter.

For the second straight year, the Bobcats don't come close to scoring.

Montana 19, Montana State 0

Game No. 41 – 1937, Butte.

It's the Grizzlies' best team in their first 40 years, but things don't start well.

Undefeated and riding an eight-game winning streak, Montana fumbles on the opening kickoff and on the first play from scrimmage at Clark Park. The Griz recover both times, but it's only 3-0 at halftime after a Paul Szakash field goal.

UM settles matters in the second half as Milt Popovich of Butte tallies from 8 and 12 yards out and Szakash, from Chicago, adds a second field goal.

The Bobcats' deepest threat comes in the first half, when they reach the Grizzly 30 before Szakash intercepts a pass.

Montana 13, Montana State 0

Game No. 42 – 1938, Butte.

It's freezing cold in Butte on Nov. 12, barely 20 degrees, but 7,000 fans are at Clark Park.

Griz co-captain Bill Lazetich of Anaconda, who later plays for the NFL's Cleveland Rams, scores from 2 yards out early.

Halfback Fred Jenkin, also of Anaconda, clinches the victory by executing a "sparkling cutback climax sprint for 21 yards on the second play of


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the final period," Missoulian sports editor Ray Rocene reports.
At halftime, both bands perform. UM's girls drum corps entertains with flashlights to the music of the band with the stadium lights turned out — "as attractive and original a stunt as the University musicians have ever demonstrated," one reporter says.
The Bobcats are paced by Stevensville's Max Stark, "a dynamo running with the ball, hard to stop fast, keeping his feet well," reports Rocene.

Montana 6, Montana State 0

Game No. 43 – 1939, Butte.

The game is played at Butte High's field in front of a record 8,500 fans.
Grizzly defensive dominance peaks as the Bobcats manage just one first down and 47 total yards.
The lone touchdown comes midway through the third quarter. Sophomore end Bob Ness catches a bullet pass from Jack Swarthout, described by the Missoulian's Ray T. Rocene as a "160-pound bundle of dynamite," and reaches the 1-yard line.
Another soph, Evan Roberts of Butte, bounces through a hole between left guard Bill Shegina of Anaconda and center Bob Gorton of Kalispell for the score. Swarthout, from Prosser, WA, does much of UM's passing at fullback.
The defensive star is Roger Lundberg, "brilliant ball hawk" from Northwood, Iowa, who has an interception and fumble recovery of a double lateral that sets up the winning score.
The Cats cross midfield just three times. Their deepest penetration is late in the game when Fjeld intercepts a pass and returns it to the Grizzly 21. A clipping call moves it back to the 42.

Montana 6, Montana State 0

Game No. 44 – 1940, Butte.

A crowd of 6,000 under a hot Oct. 19 sun watches the eighth straight shutout of the Bobcats. Doug Fessenden, Montana coach since 1935, is under fire as Grizzlies themselves have been shut out in five of seven previous games. But he still hasn't seen MSU score on his team.
UM's offense is hampered in the final quarter when fullback Jack Swarthout of Prosser, WA, is ejected for punching Bobcat center Lovera of Butte. Swarthout claims he was held three times. He later apologizes to Lovera.
Don Bryan of Billings sets up the winning touchdown in the second quarter with a 14-yard pass to Karl Fiske of Outlook. Fiske is run out of bounds a foot short of the goal. Two plays later, Bryan scores.
UM threatens several other times but can't finish. The Bobcats net minus 27 yards rushing and make just two first downs. Their lone foray across midfield comes early in the second half when Newell Berg intercepts and runs to the UM 25. A bad center pass loses 12 and the Cats end up punting.

Montana 23, Montana State 13

Game No. 45 – 1941, Butte.

Two Bobcat touchdowns — Montana State's first points against Montana since 1932 — shock the Grizzlies into action. Butte-grown Eso Naranche and Ben Tyvand go to work after a halftime tribute to Montanans in the armed services. Naranche scores in the third quarter and early in the fourth. He kicks both extra points, the second putting Montana up 14-13.
End Jack Swarthout of Prosser, WA, blocks a Bobcat punt for a safety. Tyvand's runs wear down a sagging MSU line. His 17-yarder to the 1 sets up a plunge by Karl Fiske of Outlook for the final TD.
MSU's "spread" offense catches Montana off-guard. Early in the game, Bobcat quarterback Jinx Anderson throws a lateral to Bill Zupan, who passes downfield to Anderson for a 40-yard touchdown. In the second quarter, Naranche drops back to pass and Bobcat end Jim Peterson snatches the ball from his hand. Peterson romps 60 yards to put MSU up 13-0. Arnold Scott of Plains rips off a 52-yard run in the first half for Montana and finishes with 108 yards on 10 carries.
The game is played on Oct. 25, six weeks before Japan bombs Pearl Harbor. There won't be another Brawl of the Wild until 1946.

Montana 20, Montana State 7

Game No. 46 – 1946, Butte.

After a four-year truce, the Grizzlies win their 10th straight Brawl of the Wild before 10,000 fans at Butte High's field on a glorious October afternoon.
Grizzly end Bill Reynolds of Indiana snares two touchdown passes despite feeling the effects of malaria. UM intercepts Montana State four times and outgains the Cats 330-177.
The Griz lead 13-7 at halftime after touchdowns by Glasgow fullback Dan Radakovich and Reynolds, on a toss from Missoula's John Helding. The Cats' Hogan Krisman scores on a 33-yard pass from future MSU athletic director Gene Bourdet late in the half. Reynolds scores in the fourth period on a 9-yard pass from halfback John Reagan of Chicago. Reynolds and Reagan intercept passes and Jerry Walterskirchen of Missoula pounces on a fumble at the Bobcat 19 to set up a touchdown.

Montana 13, Montana 12

Game No. 47 – 1947, Butte.

The Cats break a 10-game losing streak to the Grizzlies in a Brawl of the Wild laced with irony. A former Grizzly halfback, Barney Berger of Billings, kicks the decisive extra point for the Cats.
Montana's Buck Preuninger of Missoula misses his first two PAT kicks of the season, the second by mere inches. "Let it be said (the Bobcats) played better football," concedes the Missoulian's Ray Rocene.
All points come in the second half, MSU's on touchdowns by end Harry Perrigo and halfback John Heine. Jack O'Loughlin of Missoula and Dan Radakovich of Glasgow score for UM, Radakovich on a 58-yard pass from Missoula's Pierre Roberts.
A record crowd of more than 10,000 watches the Oct. 17 fray at Butte High "on a dry, dirt field with warm sunshine and only a slight wind."
It's the 50th anniversary of the first Brawl. At halftime bands portray Montana history: "Indians along the trail, honky-tonk dancers, cowboys, sheepmen, railroad men and early automobile travel," Rocene says.

Montana 14, Montana State 0

Game No. 48 – 1948, Butte.

A year after the Bobcats ended a 10-game skein in the Brawl of the Wild, Montana starts a new streak. This time it will run to eight.
Another crowd of more than 10,000 is at Butte High field on Oct. 16 as John Helding runs for one touchdown and throws to fellow Missoula High alum Don Delaney for the other. Buck Preuninger of Missoula, who missed two extra points in the 13-12 loss of 1947, kicks two this time.
Montana State threatens late when Charles Masten intercepts and returns across midfield. A 17-yard quarterback sneak by Ed Gorrilla moves it to the 17. But two runs and two incomplete passes gain just 2 yards. Griz halfback Roy Malcolm runs for a first down, then punts 58 yards to end the game.

Montana 34, Montana State 12

Game No. 49 – 1949, Butte.

A crowd of 7,000 gathers on a chilly Oct. 29 in Butte High's newly-christened Naranche Field. The Grizzlies, under new coach Ted Shipkey, start a stretch in which they'll score 30 point or more against the Bobcats for five straight years.
Adam Marshall, who played for the UM frosh, scores both Bobcat touchdowns. The first opens scoring in the second quarter. Soon after, the Grizzlies tackle punter Bill Boston in the end zone for a safety. In short order, Bob "Lefty" Byrne of Billings runs 11 yards for a touchdown; the Grizzlies recover an onside kick, and Chick Murphy of Iowa scores from 11 again. It's 15-6 Griz at halftime.
In the fourth quarter Ray Bauer of Great Falls, leading receiver in the Pacific Coast Conference, catches long TD passes from Missoula's Tom Kingsford and John Helding. Grizzly halfback Roy Malcolm of Missoula scores on a zig-zaggy jaunt of 79 yards that covers at least 120.

Montana 33, Montana State 0

Game No. 50 – 1950, Butte.

It's the last Brawl in Butte, and the Grizzlies come out snorting on Halloween Day. They score 27 points before halftime behind the passing of Missoula's Tom Kingsford. Kingford, in the process of rewriting the UM record books, throws first-half scoring strikes of 22 yards to Andy Kafentzis of Missoula; 24 yards to Bob Byrne of Billings, and 28 yards to Ed Nearing of Los Angeles. Don Campbell of Great Falls scores on a 2-yard plunge.
A cold, miserable drizzle mars the second half. A short run by UM fullback Bo Laird of Miles City in the third quarter is the only score.
MSU gets the ball inside Montana's 45 only once, on a fumble recovery at the 14 late in the game. Quarterback Bob Graham is stopped on fourth down at the 8. Graham and fullback Gene Stergar carry much of the load for the Cats.
Butte says goodbye to Griz-Cat games, played in the Mining City since 1925. The Grizzlies won 17 of 21 there, none as lopsided as the final one.

Montana 38, Montana State 0

Game No. 51 – 1951, Bozeman.

The Brawl of the Wild returns to Bozeman after 28 years, and an October storm hits at about the same time.
Minutes in, Gatton Field is hammered by rain.
The Grizzlies are already up 6-0 after tackle Earl Merrill of California blocks a Bobcat punt and Frank Nickel of Billings recovers on the 2. Up 13-0, Montana grabs a fumble on the third play of the second half. Senior Paul Wold of Laurel soon bulls over for a TD.
Dick Shadoan of Billings, one of four Griz quarterbacks, hits Nickel over the middle from 9 yards out for first of three fourth-quarter touchdowns. Team MVP Bob "Lefty" Byrne, also of Billings, scores his second TD from a foot out. Wold plunges in again after Hal Sherbeck of Big Sandy returns an interception 57 yards.
Hal Maus of Anaconda leads the Griz defense to a second straight shutout of the Cats.

Montana 35, Montana State 12

Game No. 52 – 1952, Missoula.

It's Missoula's turn to accommodate the Brawl of the Wild, for the first time since 1925. A crowd of 3,500 at Dornblaser Field is barely a third of what the series drew at times in Butte from 1926-1950.
The Griz are playing for new coach Ed Chinske. The Bobcats score "first and last on forward passes," the Missoulian's Ray Rocene reports, but the "Grizzlies collected five touchdowns in between, with a safety."
Murdo Campbell of Great Falls throws for two scores and runs around end for a 33-yard TD. Campbell set up the run with an interception. Jim Murray of Anaconda picks off two Bobcat passes, returning the second for UM's last touchdown.
Both Cat scores come on passes from Jack Moore to Joe Barnett. Montana intercepts five passes and dominates with 378 rushing yards, outgaining Montana State 475-147. But the Griz lose two fumbles in the first quarter and two more in the fourth.
Bobcat center Bill Roney recovers two and intercepts a pass.

Montana 32, Montana State 13

Game No. 53 – 1953, Bozeman.

"I told 'em between halves to block," Grizzly coach Eddie Chinske says. "They did."
Dick Imer of Highland, Ind., ignites UM in the third quarter with a 49-yard run and the Grizzlies, trailing 13-6, explode past the Bobcats. Montana gets second-half touchdowns from quarterback Dick Heath of Miles City, Imer, Murdo Campbell of Great Falls and Bill Gue of Great Falls, who catches a 25-yard toss from Heath. Heath and Campbell hook up from 41 yards out for the first-half touchdown. The Grizzlies set an NCAA record by running 112 plays.
Montana State goes up 13-0 on scores by fullback Tom Hoff and quarterback Tom Parac of Lewistown, future Bobcat coach and athletic director.

Montana 25, Montana State 21

Game No. 54 – 1954, Missoula.

A classic Brawl of the Wild draws 8,000 fans to Dornblaser Field on Nov. 13, and the Grizzlies' Murdo Campbell breaks open the first play from scrimmage for a 61-yard TD.
Bobcat star Don Edwards answers Campbell's run with a 43-yard jaunt to set up a TD. Harvey Wylie, the "Canadian Comet," throws to Frank Landon to put Montana State up 14-6 in the second quarter.
But Bobcat fortunes dip when Edwards is taken the hospital with a concussion. The Griz score two quick TDs before halftime.
Wylie scores two touchdowns for MSU; Campbell has two for UM.
Late in the game, Bobcat end Jim Posewitz intercepts Dick Heath of Miles City and returns it for a TD that cuts the Griz lead to 25-21. A last-second Cat effort, triggered by a blocked punt by Jim Argeris, the Bobcat's All-American center, falls short as the pistol sounds.

Montana 19, Montana State 0

Game No. 55 – 1955, Bozeman.

Grizzly QB Norman Kampschror of Glendive throws fourth-quarter TD passes to Terry Hurley of Chicago and Dale Shupe of Harlem.
Montana State completes just two passes and earns seven first downs.
For the Griz, Shupe's rushes and punts are highlights, and Dick Dzivi of Kalispell stars for Montana, intercepting a pass and recovering a fumble. The Grizzlies keep MSU star Don Edwards, of Rockfield, Ill., out of the end zone.
But times are about to change in the Brawl of the Wild. In the past 52 years, the Bobcats have won just five times. Over the next 30 years, they'll win 22 games.

Montana 33, Montana 14

Game No. 56 – 1956, Missoula.

For the first time since 1902, the Bobcats win in Missoula.
A capacity crowd of 8,500 watches the Grizzlies go up 7-6 when quarterback Roy Bray of Missoula dives over from a foot out.
In the second quarter, Bobcat quarterback Dave Alt avoids five Grizzlies to launch a touchdown pass to Jim Powewitz. Alt scores MSU's next TD on a run.
Montana scores before halftime on a 34-yard pass play from Bray to Pete Rhinehart of Missoula.
MSU's Don Edwards scores the only second-half TDs, on runs of 7 yards and 1 yard. Bob Black intercepts a pass and Ron Warzeka recovers a fumble for the Cats.

Montana 22, Montana 13

Game No. 57 – 1957, Bozeman.

Bob Rudio's 49-yard scamper in the first half and a plunge by Rocco Perciavalle in the third quarter help stake the Bobcats to a 19-0 lead.
Griz quarterback Earl Keeley of Vancouver, B.C. sets up Montana's first touchdown on passes to Joe Pepe of Missoula then connects with Larry Myers of Pacoma, CA, for a 51-yard score with 10:50 left.
But the Cats' George Marinkovich of Bethlehem, Penn., booms a 64-yard punt and then intercepts a fourth-down pass. Brad Lowell of Kansas kicks a 28-yard field goal for the Bobcats' final points.
The Bobcats capture the morning bowling match, paced by a 207 game from Tom DeYoung. But the rifle teams manage to salvage some pride for the Grizzlies with a pair of wins.

Montana 20, Montana 6

Game No. 58 – 1958, Missoula.

A crowd of 7,600 watches on a subfreezing November day as Bobcats cap an 8-1 season with their third straight win over the Grizzlies.
Montana finishes 0-10 under new coach Ray Jenkins.
The score stands 6-6 as the fourth quarter begins. Bobcat fullback Rocco Perciavalle of Pennsylvania bolts "like a rifle bullet" 46 yards on a belly play to put the visitors ahead. Perciavalle finishes with 130 yards and an interception that ends a Grizzly threat.
With 1:30 left, the Cats' Tom Molen breaks loose for a 62-yard touchdown to clinch the outcome.
MSU quarterback Darryl Dupuis fires a strike to Jim McLeod for a 34-yard touchdown in the second quarter. A fumble recovery by Bob Everson of Cheney, WA, leads to UM's only score, a short smash by Missoula's Joe Pepe.
UM students park a trailer filled with manure above the east stands and at the foot of Mount Sentinel "in honor of their cousins from across the mountains," the Missoulian reports. After the game, Griz fans fend off Bobcat backers with a fire hose, but the south goal posts at Dornblaser Field go down. The hose breaks and confrontations turn physical.

Montana 40, Montana 6

Game No. 59 – 1959, Bozeman.

It's all Bobcats as Jim "The Missile" McLeod scores on long plays to open scoring in each half and Montana State outrushes Montana 313 yards to 15. The Cats post their fourth straight victory in the series and most lopsided since a 38-0 shutout in 1902.
More than 8,000 are at Gatton Field for another sunny Brawl of the Wild on Nov. 7. McLeod, a senior for MSU, thwarts the Grizzlies' first scoring threat when he leaps to intercept a pass and speeds 86 yards. It's 14-0 at halftime.
Other Cat scores come from Bob Rudio, Rocco Perciavalle, Sam Moore and Tommy Molen. The first three are set up by fumble recoveries inside the Grizzly 35.
The Grizzlies score last, on a 2-yard run by Russ Grant of Spokane. Grizzly sophomore John Schulz of Missoula survives a heavy pass rush to complete 15 of 33 passes in place of injured quarterback Bob O'Billovich of Butte.

Montana 10, Montana State 6

Game No. 60 – 1960, Missoula.

The Grizzlies snap the Bobcats' four-year streak in the Brawl of the Wild. Montana scores on consecutive possessions in the first half. The Bobcat touchdown comes late in the game.
The Grizzlies are just 1-for-5 passing but sophomore Terry Dillon of Hopkins, Minn., rushes for 106 yards. Dillon's No. 22 will be the first retired at UM.
Shelby speedster Pat Dodson reaches the end zone on a 5-yard sprint around right end with 4:20 left in the first half, capping a 99-yard drive that started when Bob O'Billovich of Butte intercepted a pass on the 1-yard line.
Glenn Sorenson of Billings boots the extra point, then converts Montana's first field-goal attempt of the season from 30 yards out 30 seconds before halftime.
Cat quarterback Harry Lopsonzski hits end Bert Emery for an 18-yard touchdown with two minutes to play to make it 10-6. A bad snap ruins the PAT try. The Bobcats get the ball back on their 42 with 20 seconds left, but two passes go for naught.

Montana 10, Montana 9

Game No. 61 – 1961, Bozeman.

An aerial assault by the Cats wipes out UM's 9-0 lead in the fourth quarter.
Phil Schneider boots a short field goal early in the period to make it 9-3, then adds the conversion with 4:50 left for the winning point. The Bobcats' tying touchdown is set up by a fumble at midfield by Grizzly Terry Dillon of Minnesota. It's recovered by Bill Mulcahy, who proceeds to pass 8 yards to Bill Cords in a Butte-to-Butte connection between two defenders in the Grizzly end zone.
Montana takes the lead in the first quarter with a 2-yard plunge by Gary Smith of Whitefish. Eugene Moe of Helena had recovered a Bobcat fumble on the home team's 34. A run by Dillon and a pass by Butte's Bob O'Billovich to Mike Trotter of Longview, WA, set up Smith's plunge. Glenn Sorenson of Billings kicks a 23-yard field goal to make it 9-0 Griz in the third period.
Up by one near the end, the Bobcats get an interception by Bob Durado.

Montana 36, Montana State 19

Game No. 62 – 1962, Missoula.

The Bobcats take a 13-0 lead at Dornblaser Field before Terry Dillon strikes for three touchdowns and 115 yards rushing as UM romps in surprising fashion.
There's talk of a new conference forming that for the first time will include both the Grizzlies and the Bobcats. This is billed as a mythical league title game.
Quarterback Paul Miller of Miles City, one of four seniors in the Grizzly backfield, turns a fake field goal into a touchdown early in the fourth quarter. He takes the snap, rolls right and hits Pat Dodson of Shelby from 18 yards out to put UM up 29-19.
Dillon's 17-yard interception return adds a clinching score.
The Bobcats grab an early lead on Butte Central alum Bill Mulcahy's 5-yard pass to Gordie Schlabs of Kalispell; a fumble recovery by Schlabs, and a short plunge by Bucky May. May scores again in the second period on a 10-yard interception return to put the Cats ahead 19-14 at intermission.

Montana 18, Montana 3

Game No. 63 – 1963, Bozeman.

On a cold November afternoon, the Bobcats reign in the first Big Sky Conference meeting between the schools.
It's the eighth straight loss in '63 for the Grizzlies and the Cats' sixth victory in the last eight Brawls of the Wild. A crowd of 8,500 watches at Gatton Field.
Dan Sundling rushes for 144 yards in 20 carries to set a Bobcat season rushing mark of 672 yards.
The Bozeman boys lead 6-3 at halftime after fullback Dave Miller's 1-yard plunge. UM scores on a field goal by Ted McElhenny, the Grizzlies' left-footed kicker from Butte.
It's still 6-3 in the fourth quarter when Bobcat quarterback Ken Christison of Kalispell dives over from a yard out to cap a 68-yard drive. After a fumbled lateral by the Grizzlies, Christison clinches it with another 1-yard dive.
Lineman Tom Hauck of Butte leads Montana's defensive effort.



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Montana 30, Montana 6

Game No. 64 – 1964, Missoula.

Jim Sweeney's Bobcats are Camellia Bowl-bound and ready to wrap up their second Big Sky title after bouncing the Grizzlies for the seventh time in nine years.

Reserve quarterback Foy McClung, a senior from Oklahoma, leads the Cat attack with a touchdown, a field goal and three extra points. Starting QB Ray Foley of Butte drives the visitors to a 16-6 halftime lead, passing to halfback Dan Sundling from 18 yards out for the first touchdown. Later Dick Haden rambles 6 yards for a score on a pitch play.

The Grizzlies' lone score comes after Haden's touchdown. Former Billings West star Warren Hill breaks a 75-yard run to the Bobcat 1 before Jim Tuss of Great Falls brings him down. Quarterback Bob Benzley of Green River, Wyo., sneaks over from there. The Cats wrap it up in the fourth quarter on short runs by McClung and Butte's Dan Hodge.

The Bobcats go on to win the Camellia Bowl in Sacramento, 28-7 over Sacramento State.

Montana 24, Montana 7

Game No. 65 – 1965, Bozeman.

A crowd of 9,000 witnesses the heroics of two soon-to-be Bobcat legends. Jan Stenerud of Fetsund, Norway, kicks a 59-yard field goal 90 seconds into the game. The future NFL Hall of Famer later misses, barely, from 67 yards. Glendive sophomore Don Hass, who'll be known as the "Iron Tumbleweed," scores once and rushes 27 times for 129 yards.

The Grizzlies close a 10-0 gap late in the first half on a 25-yard pass from Missoula Loyola grad Ed Steiner to Shelby's Roger Seeley. But the Bobcats' Jim Tuss of Great Falls deflates the Griz in the third quarter. Tuss, who will coach Helena Capital to state titles in the 1987 and 1993, returns a punt 80 yards for a touchdown. The last score is a 29-yard pass from the Cats' Gary Richards of Broadus to end Ray Foley 53 seconds left.

"My ears are getting tired from smiling," MSU coach Jim Sweeney says afterward. "Wasn't it great?"

Montana 38, Montana 0

Game No. 66 – 1966, Missoula.

Six Bobcats score as Camellia Bowl-bound Montana State, ranked third in the nation, whips the Grizzlies.

Sophomore Dennis Erickson quarterbacks the Bobcats, and All-America candidate Don Hass and future NFL Hall of Famer Jan Stenerud star. Stenerud, a soccer-style kicker from Norway, hits a 38-yard field goal and five extra points. Hass, from Glendive, runs for 141 yards and surpasses the Big Sky season record.

Gary Popiel of Hamilton returns a punt 74 yards to make it 30-0 Bobcats.

Late in the game, UM's Jim Searles of Missoula hits Warren Hill of Billings for 42 yards. But two plays later, Dan Hodge of Butte intercepts for the Cats. Griz linebacker Mike Smith of Olympia, WA, recovers two fumbles and makes 10 tackles. Montana's Dewey Allen of Kalispell sets a Big Sky record with 10 punts.

Lynn Morrow, ASUM vice president and the loser of a bet, surrenders her slacks to MSU student president Rod Hoxey. "Miss Morrow was well-prepared, however, as she had a pair of striped shorts underneath," the Missoulian notes.

Montana 14, Montana 8

Game No. 67 – 1967, Bozeman.

Either team can earn at least a share of the Big Sky title on a chilly, windless day at Gatton Field.

More than 10,000 fans are screaming as the fourth quarter opens. Montana, trailing 14-8, faces fourth-and-goal on the Bobcat 1.

Griz quarterback Ed Steiner of Missoula fakes to fullback Bryan Magnuson of Minnesota and keeps it. Bobcats Earl Hanson and Wayne Pitzer pile Steiner up short of the goal and Montana State takes over.

The Cats hold on to claim their fifth straight Brawl of the Wild, all under Jim Sweeney. First-year UM coach Jack Swarthout says he called the play.

"Either it was a poor call or good defense by the Bobcats," says Swarthout.

Senior Don Hass, MSU's "Iron Tumbleweed," runs 42 times for 209 yards. Total yards are almost even: Cats 256, Griz 254.

Hass and quarterback Dennis Erickson score for the Bobcats in the first half. Steiner hooks up three straight times with halfback Rick Strauss of Polson – for 38 yards, for an 8-yard touchdown, and for a two-point conversion.

All-America linebacker Bob Beers of Oregon is in on 27 tackles for the Griz.



BEN ALLAN SMITH, MISSOULIAN

From left, Pat McAfee, Desmond Howard, Rece Davis, David Pollack, Kirk Herbstreit and Lee Corso of ESPN's College GameDay stand on Dyche Field in Bozeman before the 121st Brawl of the Wild on Nov. 19, 2022.

Montana 29, Montana 24

Game No. 68 – 1968, Missoula.

Paul Schafer leaps into the end zone from a yard out with 12 seconds left for the winning touchdown in one of the wildest Brawls of the Wild. It caps a 20-point Bobcat outburst in the final nine minutes. Schafer carries 58 times, the last six at the end of the winning 67-yard drive.

The Grizzlies appear to have the drive stopped at the MSU 32, but a facemask penalty gives the Cats new life on the 17.

Kalispell brothers Doug and Ron Bain catch touchdown passes in the fourth quarter for opposing teams. Doug's 25-yarder puts Montana up 17-9. Ron's 14-yarder for Montana State shrinks the Griz lead to 24-22 with five minutes left.

After Schafer's touchdown, the Grizzlies insert speedy Ron Baines of Tacoma at quarterback. He gains 15 and a penalty moves the Griz across midfield. As time runs out, Baines zig-zags 37 yards to the Bobcat 12 before he's dragged down.

Bobcat QB Dennis Erickson is the difference. "Erickson killed us," UM's Jack Swarthout says.

Montana 7, Montana State 6

Game No. 69 – 1969, Bozeman.

A third straight down-to-the-wire Brawl of the Wild finally ends in the Grizzlies' favor. A 42-yard field goal attempt by Bobcat sidewinder Frank Kalfoss with 25 seconds left strays to the right, spurring UM's first football league championship celebration ever. On a soggy Nov. 1, Montana claims the Big Sky title and breaks the Bobcats' six-year streak.

Kalfoss, MSU's Norwegian successor to Jan Stenerud, nails field goals of 39 and 42 yards in the first half. Montana's touchdown comes between them, ignited by quarterback Ray Brum of Honolulu.

"Brum dropped back, broke loose from one Bobcat tackler, nearly slipped to ground, then literally flung the ball downfield to (Arnie) Blancas, running step-for-step with MSU defensive back Don Duntsch," reports Missoulian sports editor Bill Schwanke. "Blancas caught the well-placed pass, outmaneuvered Duntsch at the 10 and scored the only touchdown."

Dan Worrell of Great Falls boots the winning extra point.

On third-and-goal at the 2 early in the fourth quarter, Bobcat fullback Gary Hughes fumbles out of the end zone. The ball goes to Montana.

Montana 35, Montana State 0

Game No. 70 – 1970, Missoula.

The Grizzlies win their 19th straight regular-season game under Jack Swarthout after lumbering to 7-0 halftime lead.

Tom Parac's Bobcats regularly put 11 men on the line to stop the Grizzly option, but they're outmanned and worn down in the second half. Les Kent of Honolulu, Tom McMahon of California, Steve Caputo of Seattle and reserve quarterback Elroy Chong score second-half touchdowns for the Griz. The Grizzlies lose leading rusher Arnie Blancas to injured ribs in the first quarter.

Montana is en route to a second straight 10-0 regular season under Swarthout, though it'll end with another loss in the Camellia Bowl.

MSU's biggest threat comes in the fourth quarter when Monte Boston of Missoula blocks a Grizzly punt at the Montana 19. But the Cats, who gain just four first downs all day, go nowhere from there.

Montana 30, Montana State 0

Game No. 71 – 1971, Bozeman.

The Grizzlies score 27 points in the second half and post their second straight shutout in the Brawl of the Wild.

It's a crisp 40-degree day for the last Griz-Cat game at Gatton Field, home of the Bobcats since 1930. Next year they'll move into Reno H. Sales Stadium at the south end of campus.

Senior Steve Caputo of Seattle becomes the first 1,000-yard rusher in UM history, and he's one of three Grizzlies over the 100-yard mark this afternoon. The visitors finish with 420 rushing yards. Caputo receives the game ball in a raucous locker room afterward.

In a surprise, Bobcat coach Sonny Holland starts Zoonie McLean of Plentywood at quarterback. Larry Eyer of Missoula Hellgate takes over in the second half. Grizzly cornerback Robin Peters of Ohio nabs his seventh interception as the first half ends.

Bobcat safety Monte Boston of Missoula Hellgate intercepts a Gary Berding pass in the end zone. Kalispell's Bruce Robinson recovers a Grizzly fumble for the Cats in the second half.

Montana 21, Montana 3

Game No. 72 – 1972, Missoula.

"The Cats won't be back until they whip the Grizzlies," MSU coach Sonny Holland growls before the game.

In front of 12,400 at Dornblaser Field, the Cats do just that.

Sam McCullum catches touchdown passes of 50 and 46 yards from Plentywood's Zoonie McLean. McCullum, a junior from Kalispell who'll play in the NFL for the Vikings and Seahawks, breaks an MSU record for TD receptions in a season. Denton's Wayne Edwards scores the final Bobcat touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Bob Turnquist of Billings hits a 42-yard field goal late in the first half for UM's only points.

There are turnovers a-plenty. In the first quarter alone, Grizzly linebacker Terry Pugh of Kalispell forces McLean to fumble; Bobcat cornerback Mike Davis intercepts a pass in the end zone by freshman Van Troxel of Moscow, ID, and Pugh pilfers a McLean pass.

At the end of the half, UM safety Mick Dennehy of Butte grabs his ninth interception.

It's 14-3 late in the third period when Grizzly linebacker Ron Rosenberg of Whitefish blocks a punt and chases it 15 yards before falling on it at the Bobcat 22.

But the Griz can't capitalize, and MSU dominates after that.

Montana 33, Montana 7

Game No. 73 – 1973, Bozeman.

The Bobcats score 20 points in the final quarter to salt away their second of six straight Cat-Griz victories.

Sophomore Mike Holder of Eureka replaces injured Bobcat quarterback Mike Dunbar of Bozeman in the first quarter and sets a school record for rushing by a QB with 144 yards. MSU scores on its first play when Dunbar, from Bozeman, hooks up with 204-pound Don Bagley of Illinois on a 76-yard pass play. Butte sophomore Pat Bolton kicks two field goals and three extra points to break Jan Stenerud's school record for points in season by a kicker.

The Grizzlies tie it 7-7 at halftime on a pass from Shelby's Rock Svennungsen to freshman Del Spear of Cheney, WA It's 13-7 in the third quarter when Griz linebacker Ron Rosenberg of Whitefish catches a fumble in midair and returns it to the Bobcat 44. UM's on the 15 when Swarthout inserts quarterback Van Troxel of Moscow, ID. Troxel is thrown for an 8-yard loss, and Svennungsen is intercepted on the next play.

UM gets it right back on a Holder fumble, but a 46-yard field goal attempt by Bob Turnquist of Billings misses. A 72-yard interception return by Randy Hickel of Seattle breaks the Grizzlies' backs.

Montana 43, Montana 29

Game No. 74 – 1974, Missoula.

Sonny Holland's Bobcats are relentless, scoring their most points ever in a Brawl of the Wild.

"Those mean old Bobcats blew into town and blew the Tips right out of Dornblaser (and pretty much out of the Big Sky race)," writes the Missoulian's Don Bloom.

The tone is set when Steve Kracher of Columbia Falls and Bryan Flaig of Missoula Sentinel score for the Cats in the first quarter, Flaig on a 38-yard pass from Mike Dunbar of Bozeman. Kracher has 163 of the Bobcats' 387 rushing yards. The Cats dominate the yardage battle 471-287.

More than a quarter of UM's total yardage comes in the first quarter on a 75-yard pass play from Rock Svennungsen of Shelby to Del Spear of Cheney, WA MSU junior Pat Bolton of Butte, who kicks five field goals and 12 extra points in four Cat-Griz games, has three and four this day.

Griz speedster Greg Anderson of Blue Island, Ill., returns a punt 72 yards and the second-half kickoff 95 yards for touchdowns. Svennungsen's leap from a yard out and a two-point conversion pull UM within 37-29 with more than 12 minutes left.

But Mike Holder of Eureka caps a 72-yard drive by hitting John McCaffrey for a 12-yard Bobcat touchdown. Randy Hickel of Seattle, who returned an interception 72 yards late in the 1973 Brawl, picks off Svennungsen after the Griz reach the Cat 6 with 1:40 to go.

Montana 20, Montana 3

Game No. 75 – 1975, Bozeman.

The Brawl of the Wild's 75th anniversary becomes the Steve Kracher show.

Montana State's star tailback from Columbia Falls gains 165 yards on 26 carries after puncturing the Griz for 163 yards the year before.

"It's the biggest thing in my career, beating them," Kracher says. "We've beaten them all four years I've been here and that means a lot."

With 10 minutes to go, Kracher takes a pitch from Eureka's Mike Holder, gets a block from receiver Jerry Reisig of Billings, and races untouched 30 yards down the left sideline.

Bruce Carlson of Great Falls scores UM's lone points on a 29-yard field goal in the second quarter.

Holder throws for two first-half touchdowns. Montana's Greg Harris, from Kalispell, smothers Pat Bolton's PAT kick after the second one to keep it 13-3 Cats at halftime. Three Griz passers complete just four aerials. The Bobcat defense is anchored by Brad Daws of Bozeman and Les Leininger of Westby. Bobcat coach Sonny Holland, 3-0 against the Griz as a player, is 4-1 as head coach.

Montana 21, Montana 12

Game No. 76 – 1976, Missoula.

One day before Halloween, the Bobcats get a scare but continue on their path to the Division II championship.

Grizzly mistakes in front of 12,500 at Dornblaser Field let the Cats out of the bag for their fifth straight win over UM. The Bobcats earn just two first downs before halftime, and the top rushing team in the nation is outgained 206-64. But Montana leads just 6-0.

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Montana leads just 6-0.
"We just weren't winning on the front lines in the first half," says Cat coach Sonny Holland.
Holland reinserts sophomore quarterback Paul Dennehy of Butte, who sat out most of the first half. After Tom Powell recovers a Grizzly fumble at the UM 43, Dennehy hits Bryan Flaig of Missoula Sentinel for the Bobcats' first touchdown from 18 yards out. Jeff Muri of Miles City nails his first of three extra points to give the Cats the lead.
A facemask penalty revives MSU's next drive, and Dennehy catapults over from 12 yards out. He scores the Cats' third touchdown of the third quarter after Les Leininger of Westby hits the arm of Griz quarterback Mike Roban and Tim Nixon intercepts. Dennehy leaps over a block by right guard Ken Verlanic of Anaconda to make it 21-6.
First-year Grizzly coach Gene Carlson plays four future pros: Doug Betters and Greg Anderson on defense, Terry Falcon and freshman Guy Bingham on the offensive line.

Montana 24, Montana 19

Game No. 77 – 1977, Bozeman.

All points but 10 are scored in the last quarter to give a plodding game a wild finish.
"Over 15,000 people, the most ever to witness an athletic event in the state, were awakened from a semicoma after Delmar Jones scored his second touchdown on a 21-yard run with 14:37 left to give MSU a 17-0 lead," writes the Missoulian's Vince Devlin.
But then the Grizzlies rally: Grizzly quarterback Tim Kerr of Missoula Sentinel tosses touchdowns to Vern Kelly of Los Angeles and tight end Allen Green of Anaconda in the final 13 minutes. Halfback Monty Bullerdick of California hits Randy Ogden of Michigan for another score on an option pass.
Kerr finishes 19 of 31 passing for 291 yards. Ron Muri of Miles City intercepts him to set up the Cats' clinching score, on a short run by quarterback Paul Dennehy of Butte Central.
Jones, from Helena High, gains 187 of MSU's 326 rushing yards. The Cats don't complete a pass. Bullerdick runs 31 times for 138 yards for UM.
The Bobcats win their sixth straight over Montana, but they fell out of the Big Sky race last week by losing to ID.
They have a hard time celebrating. "Did you guys hear any shouting in here?" Holland asks reporters in the locker room. "That's why I had to ask you to leave for a few minutes. I had to talk them into being happy."

Montana 24, Montana State 8

Game No. 78 – 1978, Missoula.

Montana hasn't won a home game all season and hasn't defeated the Bobcats in six years.
But before a record crowd of 13,044 at Dornblaser Field, the Grizzlies score in every quarter and upset the fourth-ranked team in the new Division I-AA.
Coach Gene Carlson turns loose converted quarterback Rocky Klever of Anchorage in the "shotgun flex." Klever rambles for 111 yards and throws a touchdown pass to Vern Kelly of Los Angeles early in the game.
Monte Bullerdick of California scores in the second quarter and Tim Kerr of Missoula Sentinel hits Jim Hard of California for six in the third. Mexican-born Raul Allegre, a freshman, boots his 10th field goal in 11 tries in the fourth quarter.
Trailing 14-0 at the end of the first half, MSU forsakes a field goal and goes for it from the 7. A run by Delmar Jones of Helena gains nothing.
"It was a bad call on my part," says coach Sonny Lubick, who loses in his first Cat-Griz game as head coach. "That's not being very smart."
Scott Hoard of Great Falls tallies the lone MSU touchdown in the third period.
Tackle Arnie Rigoni of Chicago and linebacker Kent Clausen of Aberdeen, S.D., spark the Griz defense.

Montana 38, Montana 21

Game No. 79 – 1979, Bozeman.

The Bobcats return to the Big Sky throne before yet another record crowd (15,352) at Reno H. Sales Stadium.
Mike Doerfler from, of all places, Missoula, rambles for three touchdowns and 167 yards to cap MSU's rebound from a 1-3 start.
Montana's Raul Allegre of Mexico has a chance to tie it at 17 in the third quarter, but his 31-yard field goal attempt is wide left. Two plays later Doerfler, a Missoula Sentinel graduate, sweeps 74 yards for a touchdown.
In the fourth quarter MSU's Stu Dodds of Spokane punts to the Grizzly 1, then recovers a fumble on the 10 to set up a touchdown. Next time down Dodds intercepts a pass by Bob Boyes of Sacramento and returns it to the Montana 24. The Cats go on to score their final touchdown.

Montana 24, Montana 7

Game No. 80 – 1980, Missoula.

Game 80 goes badly for new UM coach Larry Donovan's "Team of the 80s."
Twice the Bobcats go for it on fourth-and-1 from the Grizzly 30. Twice sophomore tailback Tony Boddie carries over the right side for a touchdown. Boddie, from Bremerton, WA, ends Halloween afternoon with 134 yards rushing.
Boddie's second TD puts the Cats up 17-0 in the third quarter. Griz freshman Brad Dantic of Laurel, who had his jaw re-broken earlier, takes a handoff from quarterback Bart Andrus of California on an end-around. Andrus throws a block and Dantic races to a 57-yard touchdown.
UM's comeback is stemmed when the Bobcats stop Wayne Harper of Livingston on fourth down. Two plays later, sophomore Britt Freeman snags a pass from Barry Sullivan of Butte High and goes 51 yards for the clinching Bobcat score.

Montana 27, Montana State 17

Game No. 81 – 1981, Bozeman.

Two minutes into the first Halloween Brawl of the Wild since 1913, a chorus of "Poor Grizzlies" rolls across Reno H. Sales Stadium. UM's Mickey Sutton has slipped in the mud and fumbled the opening kickoff, and the Bobcats are up 7-0 after Tony Boddie's 30-yard run.
But quarterback Alan Powell of Lewistown, replacing sore-winged Marty Mornhinweg, leads Larry Donovan's Griz back to a 20-10 halftime lead as fullback Mike Hagen of Auburn, WA, scores three times. Powell goes to tight end Brian Salonen of Great Falls High, a future Dallas Cowboy, to orchestrate one scoring drive. Rocky Klever of Anchorage, a future New York Jet, is the workhorse on another. Sutton, who'll play for the NFL Rams and Bills, makes amends with a 46-yard punt return to the Bobcat 13.
Bobcat quarterback Barry Sullivan of Butte, who joins Boddie and Klever as a 100-yard rusher, hits Ron Torchia of Great Falls High to bring the Bobcats within 20-17 in the third quarter.
Griz nose guard David Paoli of Great Falls Russell forces a crucial fumble by Boddie and UM scores 17 seconds from the end.

Montana 45, Montana State 14

Game No. 82 – 1982, Missoula.

It's supposed to be a tossup, but the Grizzlies don't care.
A record crowd of 13,598 at Dornblaser Field watches one of the more stunning routs in Brawl of the Wild history.
On the first series, Griz linebacker Curt McElroy of Butte High stuffs MSU's Junior Fulp for a loss on fourth-and-1 from UM's 6.
UM quarterback Marty Mornhinweg of San Jose completes his first seven passes and hits running back Greg Iseman of Kansas on a screen for a 24-yard touchdown.
Mornhinweg throws for three more scores before leaving with a shoulder injury in the third period. He and replacement Alan Powell of Lewistown engineer an offense that amasses 527 yards, 29 first downs and six touchdowns.
UM's Dave Glenn of Elma, WA, catches eight passes, one for a TD. Tight end Brian Salonen of Great Falls High, en route to an NFL career with the Cowboys, snags seven aerials.
Bobcat touchdowns come from Si Timberman of Butte and Dale Halgren of Charlo.

Montana 28, Montana 8

Game No. 83 – 1983, Bozeman.

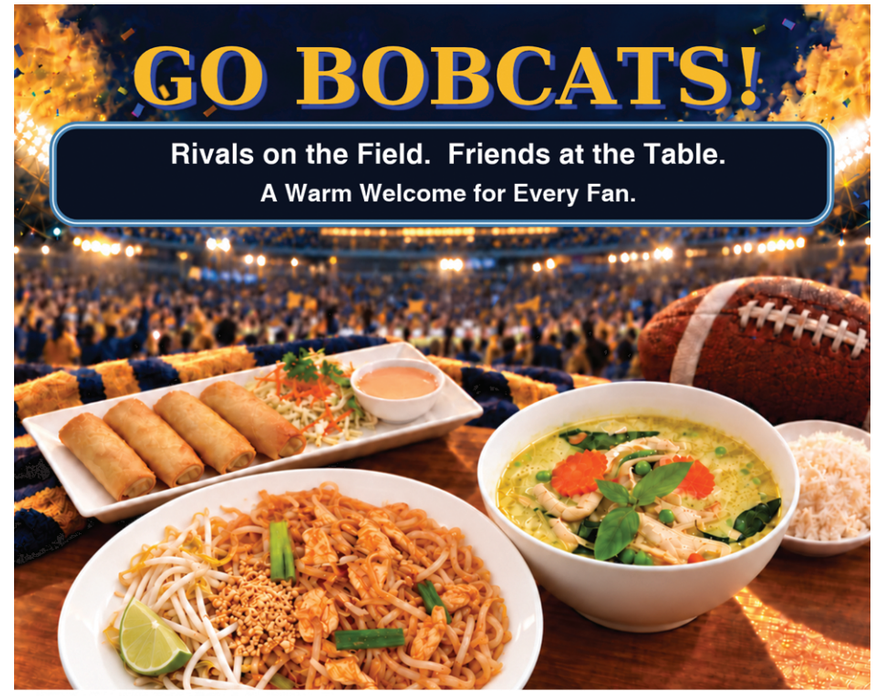
Another shocker hits the Brawl of the Wild. The Bobcats, 0-8 going in, dominate a Grizzly team with playoff aspirations.
It's a balmy Oct. 29, and another record crowd of 15,197 watches in Sales Stadium.
The Cats score once on a fake field goal and once on a blocked punt. They collect a safety forced by Mark Fellows of Choteau and three field goals by Kansas transfer Mark Carter.
The Grizzlies get some spectacular catches from Brian Salonen of Great Falls High but little else.
Bobcat cornerback Derrick Abell of California halts UM's opening drive with an interception.
In the second quarter, Tex Sikora of Billings Senior and Conrad's Clete Linebarger make a key fourth down stop on UM's Derrick Williams of Los Angeles. Later, freshman Tyler Winter of Wisconsin recovers a blocked punt in the end zone for a Bobcat TD.
Johnny Coppedge of Oregon, UM's third quarterback, hits Salonen for the lone Griz touchdown and Missoula Sentinel's Bob McCauley for the two-point conversion in the fourth quarter.
Bobcat coach Dave Arnold lights up a cigar – the first he's smoked since his daughter was born eight years before.
"I got sick then," he says. "I'll probably get sick this time too. But I don't really care."

Montana 34, Montana 24

Game No. 84 – 1984, Missoula.

The Bobcats, whose only win in 1983 was over the Grizzlies, are five weeks away from claiming the Division I-AA championship. But they're down 24-12 at halftime on muddy Dornblaser Field.
Then, a defense led by Choteau's Mark Fellows shuts out Montana while halfback David Pandt of Michigan rushes for 118 of his 140 yards. Deer Lodge tight end Joe Bignell makes seven of his school-record 13 receptions after halftime and scores from a yard out on a play the Bobcats call "Big Special."





Kelly Bradley of Minnesota flings touchdown tosses to Tom White of Riverton, Wyo., and Tom Mahlum of Missoula Sentinel.
Marty Mornhinweg, in his last home game for the Griz, passes for 353 yards and touchdowns to Bob McCauley of Missoula Sentinel and Kelly Richardson of Oregon. McCauley also tallies on a double reverse.
But Mornhinweg, playing on two sore legs, is pounded by the likes of Fellows, who has three sacks and sets up a TD with an interception.

Montana 41, Montana 18

Game No. 85 – 1985, Bozeman.

The Bobcats unleash a heretofore punchless running attack behind bruising fullback Jesse Jones of Tacoma, who gains 136 yards. Five Cats score touchdowns and Swedish-born Anders Larsson of Great Falls Russell kicks two field goals and five extra points.
Hellgate's Bob Byrne becomes the second Missoula product in two years to score a touchdown against UM. Tom Mahlum of Sentinel did it in 1984.
The Grizzlies' own option game is grounded by the likes of linebacker Kirk Timmer of Boulder and safety Clete Linebarger of Conrad. Freshman Shanon Mornhinweg of San Jose plays quarterback for UM in the second half and completes 15 passes for 211 yards. But the Griz score just once, on a short run by LeRoy Foster of Chicago. Losing a third straight Brawl is another blow to UM coach Larry Donovan, who's fired at the end of the season.
The decisive victory marks the end of MSU's golden era in the Griz-Cat series. The Bobcats have claimed 22 of the last 30, but they won't beat the Grizzlies again in the 20th century.

Montana 59, Montana State 28

Game No. 86 – 1986, Missoula.

Montana has a new coach, Don Read; a new stadium, Washington-Grizzly, and the start of a win streak over the Bobcats.
Behind record-breaking quarterback Brent Pease of Mountain Home, ID, the Grizzlies go up 17-0 after one quarter, 31-0 at the half and 45-7 after three quarters. Pease runs 1 yard for a touchdown to cap UM's first drive.
Pease later throws to Mike Rice of Twin Falls, ID, and Great Falls High product Brad Salonen for scores.
Also in on the Grizzly touchdown parade: Kraig Paulson of Plentywood, Mike Ehlers of Wilsonville, Ore.; John Huestis of Battle Ground, WA; and reserve QB Don Douglas of Butte.
Linebacker Alex Hunter of Vancouver, WA, returns a Bobcat onside kick for a score.
Among UM leaders on defense: linemen Foster, Jason Ray of Missoula Big Sky and Rick Sullivan of Whitefish, and linebacker David Reeves of Sedro Wooley, WA
MSU quarterback Shaun Shahan of Billings West replaces Kelly Bradley and launches a last-quarter bombardment that includes TD passes of 82 yards to Pat Bergman of Miles City and 38 yards to Kelly Davis of Butte.

Montana 55, Montana State 7

Game No. 87 – 1987, Bozeman.

Ninety years after their first win over Montana State, the Grizzlies post one of the most lopsided. Four punt blocks, a Division I-AA record, lead to three touchdowns and a field goal for UM.
"Pooor Bobcats" chants are audible with 13:05 left in the first half after the Griz go up 21-0.
A record crowd of 17,027 fills Sales Stadium. Jason Ray of Missoula Big Sky blocks two punts. Big Timber's Tim Hauck and Quinton Richardson of Oakland, CA, block one apiece. Richardson recovers his own block for the final touchdown.
Griz quarterback Scott Werbelow comes out firing, hitting Matt Clark of Missoula Hellgate for 43 yards and Brad Salonen of Great Falls High for the first touchdown. Nine other Grizzlies catch passes.
Jody Farmer of Libby scores on a pass and a run, and John Huestis of Battle Ground, WA, tallies twice on runs.
MSU, under new coach Earle Solomonson, crosses the 50 once in the first half. Dutton's Nate Odden promptly intercepts.
Quarterback John Tetrault's 41-yard scoring run in the third quarter marks the only time the Cats penetrate the UM 40.

Montana 17, Montana State 3

Game No. 88 – 1988, Missoula.

The Hellgate winds of November are howling, and the overflow crowd of 15,142 in Washington-Grizzly Stadium has little to get up about until the second half.
Griz strong safety Tim Hauck of Big Timber blocks his fourth punt of the season. Cornerback Dwayne Hans of Pasco, WA, who blocked a field goal earlier, picks it up and runs 23 yards to put Montana ahead 10-3.
Libby's Jody Farmer puts it away with a 16-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter after three big plays by John Huestis of Battle Ground, WA Griz defensive ends J.C. Campbell and Dan Edwards, both from western Washington, combine for three sacks and 20 tackles.
MSU's Houston Veer, implemented by Earle Solomonson, has topped 300 yards twice this season. Today it garners 81, and one early field goal by Anders Larsson of Great Falls Russell. UM's Kirk Duce of Missoula Hellgate answers with a three-pointer in the second period.
Bobcat noseguard Jon Wanago of Great Falls High and linebackers Jon Skelton of Minnesota and Mark D'Agostino of Bozeman match the Griz hit for hit.
Sore-thumbed quarterback Grady Bennett of Kalispell, who transferred to UM from MSU, has an off day passing but has some big runs.

Montana 17, Montana State 2

Game No. 89 – 1989, Bozeman.

Weather hasn't played much of a role in many of the first 88 Griz-Cat games, but it does today.
There's thunder and lightning before kickoff. Rain and hail mix with sunshine during the game. But most telling are 40-mph winds buffeting Sales Stadium.
Grizzly coach Don Read says it's the worst environment for a football game he's seen in 20 years of coaching.
The Bobcats enter the last period leading 2-0 after a UM punt snap gets caught in the jet stream and sails out of the Grizzly end zone.
UM's defense turns the tide. Quarterback Grady Bennett of Kalispell scores the go-ahead touchdown after a 32-yard interception return by safety Galen Lawton of California.
Linebacker Bryan Tripp of Missoula Loyola forces a fumble and end Kirk Murphy of Polson recovers to set up a 24-yard field goal by Kirk Duce of Missoula Hellgate. Linebacker Mike McGowan of Seattle returns another interception 24 yards for the final score.
Montana State, the Big Sky's top rushing team, has just a 118-104 edge on the ground. Montana gains only 88 yards through the air, least in the 10-year Read era.
"I was never comfortable," grimaces Read afterward. "I ate a box of Tums, maybe two boxes."

Montana 35, Montana State 18

Game No. 90 – 1990, Missoula.

It's back to nice weather (sunshine, low 50s) and offense after windy Griz-Cat games the past two years.
Senior quarterback Grady Bennett of Kalispell sets a UM record for total offense with 476 yards as Don Read's Griz extend their series streak to five.
Montana's Shannon Cabunoc of Honolulu and Mike Trevathan of California catch seven passes and one touchdown each.
Earle Solomonson's new passing game at MSU takes a blow when Joe Volek of California is hurt. But John Tetrault of Minnesota connects with Choteau's Rob Tesch for 49 yards to the Grizzly 1. Si Ryan of Billings West scores the first of two straight MSU touchdowns that tie it at 18 with 19 seconds left in the half.
But UM drives quickly for a 40-yard field goal by Kirk Duce of Missoula Hellgate as time expires.
The Griz take over after halftime. An interception by safety Sean Dorris of Coeur d'Alene, ID, is followed by Bennett's 20-yard scoring strike to Trevathan.
Kevin Morris of California returns an interception 44 yards for Montana's final TD.
Before kickoff, former All-Pro tight end Russ Francis of Stevensville parachutes bareheaded out of the sky. He lands out of bounds, his chute cords settling over retired UM team doctor Robert Curry.

Montana 16, Montana State 9

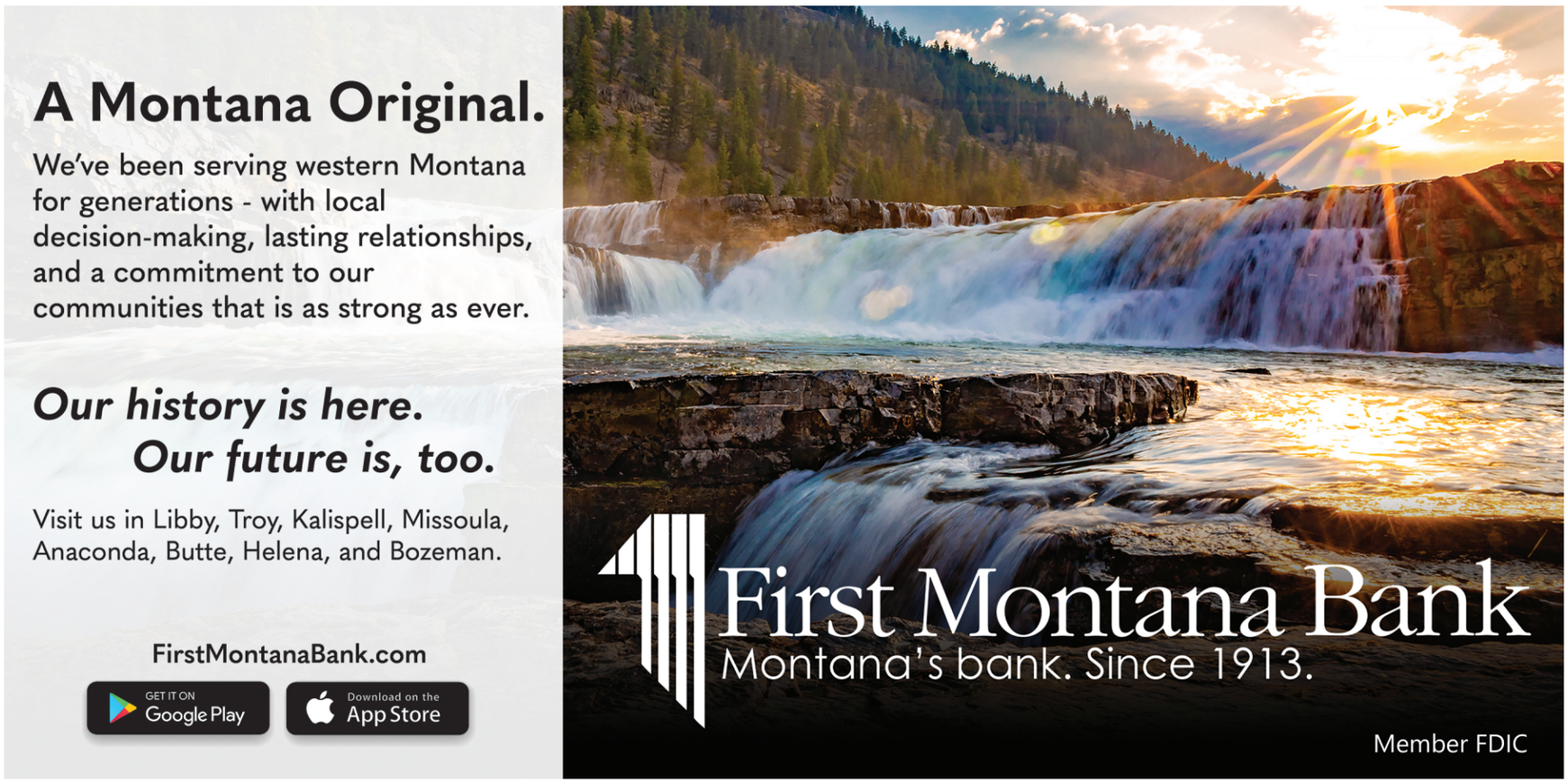
Game No. 91 – 1991, Bozeman.

Dropped passes abound as both offenses freeze up in single-digit temperatures. But at least the wind doesn't blow through Sales Stadium.
The Grizzlies win for the sixth straight time under Don Read.
The Griz take a 10-0 lead on their first two possessions. Chuck Mason of Bigfork blocks a Bobcat extra point at the end of the first half that would have tied it 10-10.
Tony Rice of North Bend, Ore., plunges for the final points in the second half to pad a 10-9 Grizzly lead.
Griz linebacker Kurt Schilling of Shelby picks off a Mark Fisher pass on the Grizzly 6 late in the third quarter.
With fourth-and-8 from their own 38 and five minutes to go, the Bobcats punt. They never touch the ball again, as UM quarterback Brad Lebo completes third-down passes to Billy Cockhill of Helena Capital and to Marvin Turk of California, who took a helmet to the chin that required seven stitches in the first half.

Montana 29, Montana State 17

Game No. 92 – 1992, Missoula.

Quarterback Brad Lebo of Lewiston, Idaho, completes 13 of his first 14 passes and the Griz are up 22-0 in the first 12 minutes on another sunny Brawl afternoon.
"It made it impossible for us," says new Bobcat coach Cliff Hysell, who was 11-2 against Montana as a Bobcat player and assistant coach. "This football team is not ready to get in a scoring contest with anybody at this point."
Lebo winds up 35-of-56 passing for a season-high



410 yards. He throws touchdowns to Shannon Cabunoc of Honolulu and Scott Gurnsey of Tumwater, WA

After Tony Rice's touchdown makes it 6-0, freshman holder Dave Dickenson takes the PAT snap, sprints right and hits Brent Swenson for a two-point conversion.

Chad Mayer, MSU's freshman quarterback from Bozeman, engineers two touchdown drives in the fourth quarter. The rally fizzles when another Bobcat frosh, Dallas Williams of Missoula Hellgate, fumbles and Grizzly safety Sean Dorris of Coeur d'Alene intercepts Mayer.

Montana 42, Montana State 30

Game No. 93 – 1993, Bozeman.

Sophomore Dave Dickenson of Great Falls Russell is UM's new quarterback as the Griz finish off their first unbeaten Big Sky season since 1970.

Dickenson runs for one score and throws for three others, including plays of 64 and 40 yards to Scott Gurnsey. Gurnsey, from Tumwater, WA, has five catches for 173 yards and sets the school single-season record for receiving yards.

It's 28-3 Montana in the second quarter, but the Cats start clicking behind BYU transfer quarterback Brock Spencer. An 88-yard kickoff return by Sean Hill of Colorado makes it 35-24 in the third quarter. The Grizzlies hold on behind a fourth-down stop by Great Falls High's Yohanse Manzanarez and the last two of four interceptions. Carl Franks of California gets his second pick of the game. Linebacker Garrett Venters of Richland, WA, bats a pass by Spencer that bounces off the helmet of linebacker Kurt Schilling and into Schilling's hands.

"It reminded me of a Wild West film, shooting cans in the air," says Schilling, an ex-Shelby Coyote.

Montana 55, Montana State 20

Game No. 94 – 1994, Missoula.

Unwilling to risk quarterback Dave Dickenson's gimpy ankle, Grizzly coach Don Read turns to Bert Wilberger.

Wilberger, from Ashland, Ore., lights up a dreary day by throwing for 386 yards and three touchdowns. He runs for two more scores in front of 15,640 fans as the 11th-ranked Griz beat the Cats for the ninth straight time.

UM gains a season-high 613 yards, one more than against Carson-Newman in September.

"It was just a not-so-good team not stepping up to play one of the great teams in the nation," says Bobcat receiver Eric Hopkins of Texas.

Bobcat quarterbacks are intercepted four times for the second straight Brawl of the Wild.

UM's Mike Goicoechea of Stevensville partially blocks a punt and Josh Remington of Kalispell blocks an extra-point kick. Goicoechea also intercepts a pass.

Griz receiver Scott Gurnsey catches eight passes for 190 yards and a touchdown, and overhauls teammate Shalon Baker for the UM career receiving record. Gurnsey, from Tumwater, WA, had 173 receiving yards against the Cats in '93. He's caught at least one touchdown pass in each of the last three Brawls of the Wild.

Montana's Damon Boddie of California carries 11 times for 143 yards.

Hopkins is MSU's bright spot with seven catches for 149 yards and a touchdown.

Montana 42, Montana State 33

Game No. 95 – 1995, Bozeman.

The Grizzlies, en route to the I-AA national championship, win their 10th straight Brawl of the Wild. But they trail 25-20 in the fourth quarter on a warm and windy Nov. 18 in Bozeman.

Senior Dave Dickenson of Great Falls Russell prevails in his duel with MSU freshman quarterback Rob Compson by guiding the Griz to three late touchdowns.

He runs for one, passes 16 yards to Matt Wells of Ashland, Ore., for another, and hits Mike Erhardt of Eugene, Ore., from 27 yards out to make it 42-25.

Compson responds with a 47-yard pass to freshman Marquez Lewis. But UM safety Blaine McElmurry of Troy snuffs out the Cat candle, intercepting Compson with 3:19 left.

Montana junior Joe Douglass, an Oregon State transfer, makes 13 receptions for 208 yards, none more important than the bullet he catches while sliding through the end zone just before halftime. Andy Larson's extra point cuts the Bobcats' lead to 19-14. Wells becomes the Grizzlies' all-time leader in pass receptions in his last regular-season game.

Montana 35, Montana State 14

Game No. 96 – 1996, Missoula.

Washington-Grizzly Stadium is stuffed with 19,042 shivering fans who reach a fever pitch as they watch the Grizzlies move to 11-0 for the first time with their 11th straight win over the Bobcats.

Receiver Joe Douglass, a transfer from Oregon State, locks up the I-AA receiving title with 205 yards on 14 catches from sophomore Brian Ah Yat. Douglass caught 13 for 203 in Bozeman last year.

The Grizzlies record nine quarterback sacks – four by tackle Ryan Thompson of Missoula Big Sky.

Montana, trailing 14-7 at halftime, scores four unanswered touchdowns.

UM leads 28-14 with 90 seconds left when Ah Yat throws a 12-yard touchdown to Butte's Josh Paffhausen. Bobcat assistants refuse to shake hands afterward. Head coach Cliff Hysell, when asked about the late score, says, "No comment." Then he adds: "It didn't surprise me a bit. I'll put that in there."

Says first-year UM head coach Mick Dennehy: "I didn't feel comfortable with the lead, period, and for some of their coaches not to walk across the field is (expletive). It's (same expletive). You might say B.S. in the paper."

Montana 27, Montana State 25

Game No. 97 – 1997, Bozeman.

The be-all and end-all of endings in the Brawl of the Wild occurs in Sales Stadium.

Kris Heppner's winning 37-yard field goal as time expires is only the last heroic or notorious play in the last minutes of the Grizzlies' 12th straight victory over the Cats.

Eric Kinnaman of Nebraska scores what should be the streak-breaker with 22 seconds left on a 3-yard sweep to make it 25-24 Bobcats. But Kinnaman's two-point conversion run comes up inches short.

The Bobcats' Geoff Groshelle pulls the ensuing kickoff out of bounds, a penalty that takes up no time and sets up UM on its own 35.

Grizzly quarterback Brian Ah Yat of Honolulu fires a prayer pass that Justin Olsen of Helena catches on the Bobcat 19 on 46 yards to the Bobcat 19. After a yard loss, Heppner takes the field with four seconds left. Three timeouts are called before he gets his chance.

"I just got down on my knee for about five seconds and thanked God for putting me in this situation," says the Great Falls High graduate. "This is every kicker's dream."

Another ex-Bison, Eric Manzanarez, makes the snap, as he'd made the one for Andy Larson's game-winning field goal in the 1995 I-AA championship game. Raul Pacheco of Honolulu places it for Heppner.

"I can make it 100 out of 100 times if everything like that goes the same way," says Heppner.

Montana 28, Montana State 21

Game No. 98 – 1998, Missoula.

Brian Ah Yat fakes a handoff and throws to his left. Grizzly tight end Dallas Neil catches it on the east side of Washington-Grizzly Stadium and heads south on a tackle-shaking, tightrope-walking romp for the winning touchdown.

The 18-yard play with 5:21 left nudges the Grizzlies past the Bobcats.

Neil, a junior tight end from Great Falls, slips the grip of the Bobcats' leading tackler, Shon Flores of Hawaii.

"It all happened so fast," he says. "I saw the end zone and my eyes got huge."

The Bobcats can't answer. On their final play senior Rob Compson of Great Falls High has to field a shotgun snap off the ground. He throws incomplete to Chip Hobbs of Oklahoma.

"This is tough," says Compson. "The last four years I've seen the season end this way, and I didn't want that to happen to me."

Montana 49, Montana State 3

Game No. 99 – 1999, Bozeman.

After two nip-and-tuckers, this Brawl of the Wild isn't expected to be close – and it's not.

Grizzly quarterback Drew Miller, a BYU transfer, battles wind gusts of up to 30 mph at Sales Stadium to pass for 305 yards. Two of his four touchdowns go to Jimmy Farris of Lewiston, Idaho.

Bobcat quarterbacks Dusty Broderick of Omaha and Kasey Harte of Bozeman throw for 126 yards between them.

UM's Yohance Humphery of Anchorage sets a school record for rushing in a season (1,277). Jeremy Watkins of Missoula Big Sky goes over 1,000 yards receiving.

MSU's Matthew Peot, on track to break the league punting record, kicks five of eight into the wind and loses the record by less than a yard per punt. The Cats get no deeper than their own 40 in the second half.

It's the third most lopsided Griz win over the Cats. In 1904 they won 79-0; in 1987, 55-7.

Cliff Hysell coaches his final game for the Bobcats and Mick Dennehy his last for the Grizzlies. Within two weeks Dennehy and most of his staff will be at Utah State after a playoff loss to Youngstown State. Hysell, battling health problems all season, loses his eighth straight to Montana and retires.

"What a way to ride into the sunset," he says. "Life's not the movies, unfortunately."

Montana 28, Montana State 3

Game No. 100 – 2000, Missoula.

A 91-yard TD pass from John Edwards to Jimmy Farris – the longest touchdown pass in the history of the Brawl of the Wild – puts the final touch on a sloppily played game, the 100th edition of the Brawl. The Cats are winless going in; the Grizzlies are headed to the I-AA playoffs. The Grizzlies score two TDs, one an 11-yard TD from Edwards to Yohance Humphery, the other on a 1-yard Edwards run.

The Cats answer with a Nate Cook field goal from 32 yards out, but the Grizzlies go up 21-3 at halftime with another Humphery TD, this one from 10 yards out.

Montana 38, Montana State 27

Game No. 101 – 2001, Bozeman.

The Grizzlies take command in the second half to claim their 16th straight win over the Bobcats.

Montana running back Yohance Humphery scraps for 101 yards and scores twice from 1-yard out in the third quarter, as the Grizzlies break away from a 17-17 halftime tie.

Grizzly senior receiver/holder T.J. Oelkers runs for a 19-yard touchdown on a fake field goal in the second quarter to put Montana ahead 17-14.

"It's the Super Bowl for us in the state of Montana," said Grizzly coach Joe Glenn, who moves to 2-0 against the Cats. "We came in with that train of thought."

The Cats take the opening drive and lead 7-0 on a 3-yard TD run by Ryan Johnson. The Grizzlies answer with a 26-yard TD pass from John Edwards to Etu Molden. Johnson scores again, from 6 yards out to stake the Cats to a 14-7 lead, but then Chris Snyder connects on a 36-yard field goal and Oelkers' run gives the Griz a 17-14 lead. The Cats tie it on Nate Cook's 39-yard field goal.

After Humphery's pair of third-quarter TDs, the Cats regroup and cut the Griz lead to 31-24 when Tyler Thomas hit tight end Aaron Ware for a 3-yard score on fourth-and-goal. Nate Cook cut the gap to 31-27 on a 35-yard field goal with 14:24 to play. But then Griz QB John Edwards, who had sat out the week before with injured ribs, rolls out on a bootleg and waltzes into the end zone from a yard out to put the Griz ahead 38-27.

Montana 10, Montana 7

Game No. 102 – 2002, Missoula.

On a bitterly cold and windy day at Washington-Grizzly Stadium, the Cat defense dominates and Griz QB John Edwards suffers through perhaps his worst day in a UM uniform, completing just eight of 32 passes.

Nate Cook connects on a 27-yard field goal that is the only scoring in the first half.

In the third quarter, MSU's freshman quarterback Travis Lulay hooks up with Junior Adams on a 53-yard TD pass and the Cats lead 10-0.

In the fourth quarter, the Grizzlies come back to life as Tim Bush recovers a fumble from MSU workhorse Ryan Johnson, who leads all rushers with 132 yards. David Gober caps the ensuing Grizzly drive with a 1-yard TD which closes the lead to 10-7 with 13:51 left in the game. But the Grizzlies can't get any closer than their own 47-yard line for the rest of the game.

Says MSU safety Kane Ioane of Billings: "Words really can't describe what I'm feeling right now. Just being able to go home now and not have to listen to everybody saying, 'When are you going to beat the Griz, when are you going to beat the Griz?' It's a huge monkey off all our backs."

Meanwhile, both coaches, who have been trying to downplay The Streak, are guarded in their comments: MSU's Mike Kramer calls the streak "immaterial," and UM coach Joe Glenn says: "No archrivalry should get out of hand like that. It makes the whole thing less fun and it becomes very bitter. You can't even joke about it. You all know what I'm talking about. It's been almost sickening since I've been here."

Montana 27, Montana 20

Game No. 103 – 2003, Bozeman.

Two costly mistakes doom Montana in a game where the Griz dominate almost all of the statistics.

Montana State's Corey Smith returns the opening kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown, and safety Kenneth Qualls intercepts a Craig Ochs pass and races 54 yards for a score to give the Cats a 13-10 halftime lead.

The Cats put the game away in the second half with a pair of TD runs, each from 1 yard out: Bruce Molock scores in the third quarter, and QB Travis Lulay, who claims his second win over the Griz, cashes in from 1 yard out in the fourth.

UM closes within 27-20 with a 32-yard Chris Snyder field goal and a 6-yard TD pass from Ochs to Dane Oliver. But a potential game-tying drive ends when Adam Cordeiro and Clive Lowe sacked Ochs on a fourth down with 2:09 to play.

It is the first time the Cats have won a Brawl of the Wild in Bozeman since 1985.

Montana 38, Montana State 22

Game No. 104 – 2004, Missoula.

The Griz ride two touchdowns each from Lex Hilliard and Jefferson Heidelberger to romp to a 38-22 win, despite 386 passing yards from MSU quarterback Travis Lulay and a Brawl-record 235 receiving yards from the Cats' Rick Gatewood.

Heidelberger, who has 131 receiving yards of his own, gives the Griz the lead when he collects a 15-yard scoring strike from Craig Ochs. His second score, a 14-yarder, gives the Griz a 31-16 lead in the third quarter and essentially puts the Cats away.

Gatewood catches a 38-yard strike from Lulay off a fake punt to the tie the game at 7-7 with 6:18 left in the first, and ended the scoring with a 2-yard option run with 6:42 remaining. It wasn't enough because Montana piles up 524 yards of offense, 244 on the ground.

Montana 16, Montana 6

Game No. 105 – 2005, Bozeman.

On a muddy track in Bobcat Stadium, MSU freshman Evin Groves ran for 143 yards and a touchdown, and teammate Travis Lulay engineered his third win over the Griz in his four seasons as starting quarterback. Montana State also got three Jeff Hastings field goals while earning a share of the Big Sky title, alongside Montana and Eastern.

Lulay had pedestrian passing statistics: 15-for-31, 171 yards with one interception. But he engineered a 90-yard, first-quarter touchdown drive that was all the 22nd-ranked Bobcats needed. They outgained the No. 3 Grizzlies 370-220.

Montana had its opportunities. In the third quarter, the Griz had first-and-goal at the 3 after a 33-yard run by Lex Hilliard, only to come up empty. With 10:27 left, freshman QB Cole Bergquist completed a fourth-down strike to Mike Ferriter for UM's points. Hilliard, hampered by a migraine headache, managed 75 yards on 19 carries.

"It's been a long time in the shadow of a great Grizzly program that they've been held to six points," Bobcat coach Mike Kramer said.

Montana 13, Montana State 7

Game No. 106 – 2006, Missoula.

Montana quarterback Josh Swogger threw for 231 yards, including a 54-yard touchdown pass to Eric Allen, but the Grizzly defense and two Dan Carpenter field goals were the difference on a cold, sunny afternoon.

What turned out to be MSU coach Mike Kramer's last "Brawl" was a defensive battle that saw the teams combine for just five third-down conversions.

The Bobcats' only score came on Aaron Mason's 5-yard TD run at 5:07 of the second quarter, set up by a 43-yard pass from Jack Rolovich to Josh Lewis. But the visitors were never out of it.

After Allen's touchdown gave UM a 10-7 lead midway through the third quarter, the Griz twice traded interceptions with the Bobcats. The last pick came from Andre Fuller and gave MSU the ball at Montana's 40-yard line with 4:40 remaining, but the Bobcats' last gasp edned on downs at UM's 25.

"With a couple minutes left to go in the game, we're standing on the doorstep," said Mike Kramer, who went 3-4 against the Griz. "It's us against them. And it was them. Congratulations."

Montana 41, Montana State 20

Game No. 107 – 2007, Bozeman.

Montana's 67th win in the Griz-Cat series was the first for UM coach Bobby Hauck in Bozeman, and was a landmark day as well for seniors Lex Hilliard, Dan Carpenter and Eric Allen in front of 14,877 fans.

Allen caught the go-ahead touchdown pass against the Cats for a second straight year, a 29-yard reception shortly after UM's Colt Anderson intercepted a Jack Rolovich pass near midfield. That put the Griz ahead 20-14 at 12:08 of the third quarter.

Allen, who had five catches for 89 yards, caught another TD pass early in the fourth as Montana went up 27-14. Hilliard scored his second and third touchdowns, from 2 and 31 yards, in the final 3:38 to put the game away. Montana withstood 115 rushing yards by MSU's Demetrius Crawford, who had two TDs, to go 8-0 in Big Sky play for the second straight year and 11-0 in the regular season for the second time in school history.

Carpenter hit two first-quarter field goals to give him a career total of 72; that and his 403 career points set the FCS standard (he still holds the career kicking records at 75 field goals and 407 points).

But the biggest day belonged to Hilliard, who finished with 181 yards and three TDs on a muddy track. That gave the Kalispell product a school-record 49 career rushing touchdowns and his first win at Bobcat Stadium.

"I think he probably had a little extra spring in his step today, being a Montana guy and playing in this game," noted first-year MSU coach Rob Ash. "He's a senior, too, I hope. Isn't he?"

Montana 35, Montana State 3

Game No. 108 – 2008, Missoula.

The Griz go "old school," donning copper jerseys and yellow helmets for the first time since 1995, and use five MSU turnovers and big plays to beat the undermanned Bobcats.

A record crowd of 25,629 sees Drummond product Chase Reynolds run for 115 yards and two touchdowns for the Griz, though the fans go silent when MSU's Demetrius Crawford tears off an 84-yard run on the Cats' second snap.

The game turns UM's way after Crawford is pushed out of bounds at UM's 3. The Griz mount a goal-line stand, ending with a fourth-down fumble.

The Griz go up 7-0 on Havre flash Marc Mariani's 75-yard punt return in the first quarter, and lead 14-3 at halftime on a 6-yard run by Reynolds.

Crawford runs for 203 yards for MSU, but it isn't enough. Cole Bergquist hits Mariani with a 37-yard TD pass ahead of a Reynolds 15-yard run to cap a 98-yard fourth-quarter drive. Libby's George Mercer delivers the final blow for UM, tumbling into the end zone with a 73-yard interception return in the final minute.

"Everyone just piled up on each other," UM safety Shann Schillinger, who has eight tackles and an interception, said of the final TD. "It kind of set in then that we won, and it was an unbelievable feeling; something I'll never forget."

Montana 33, Montana State 19

Game No. 109 – 2009, Bozeman.

In a game in which each team scored a safety, Dan Beaudin and Marc Mariani caught two touchdown passes apiece for the Grizzlies, who extended their "Brawl" streak to four and improved to 11-0 for the second time in three seasons.

Beaudin, a senior from Noxon, made nifty catches on a 1-yard pass from Justin Roper and a 14-yard strike from Andrew Selle, who threw for three TDs. The latter made it 33-12. MSU's Cody Kempt, who also threw for a score, had a 1-yard TD run to cap the scoring with a minute left. Shann Schillinger had six tackles, two passes defended and interception to lead the Griz D.

Mariani's second TD began a nightmarish third quarter for the Bobcats, who had the wind in their faces and saw UM use short fields to pad a 9-5 halftime lead out to 26-5.

Yet the key play came after Billings West product Joe Schreibeis scored his first collegiate TD, drawing the Bobcats to 26-12 with 12:40 left. The Griz drove 80 yards into the wind to Beadin's second TD, but needed a fourth-and-4 pass from Selle to Mariani to keep the drive alive.

Mariani made a dynamite catch; he also had 120 yards on three punt returns, including a 33-yarder that set up Beaudin's first TD.

"The individual stuff is one thing," said Mariani. "But this senior class is 4-0 now, and it's a great feeling. It feels awesome."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Montana 21, Montana 16

Game No. 110 – 2010, Missoula.

The Griz ran into Washington-Grizzly Stadium in new all-black uniforms but couldn't catch the Bobcats, who scored on their first three possessions and never trailed.

DeNarius McGhee, MSU's freshman quarterback, threw touchdown passes to Great Falls' Tanner Bleskin and C.J. Palmer, and Orenzo Davis provided the winning points with a 17-yard TD run.

The Grizzlies stayed in range, answering the Cats' first two drives with a 59-yard TD burst from Chase Reynolds and a 6-yard scoring run from QB Justin Roper.

But UM was turnover-plagued: Both Reynolds and Gerald Kemp fumbled inside the MSU 5-yard line in the second half. Reynolds' turnover came after a bad punt snap resulted in an MSU safety. The Griz also turned the ball over on downs at MSU's 15 with 1:23 left.

That cinched the Cats' first win over the Griz and first Big Sky title since 2005. Davis ran for 140 yards for MSU.

Reynolds ran for 180 yards for the Griz, who ended up 7-4 and out of the postseason for the first time since 1992.

Montana 36, Montana State 10

Game No. 111 – 2011, Bozeman.

It was set up as a coronation for the newly top-ranked Bobcats, but the No. 7 Griz took command in the second half behind Dan Moore and Peter Nguyen.

Moore rushed for 116 yards, including a 37-yard touchdown to put UM up 29-7 at 5:37 of the third quarter. Nguyen ran for 123, including a 21-yard run to cap the scoring with 9:28 left, and send many of the record crowd of 20,247 at an expanded Bobcat Stadium for the exits.

Griz quarterback Jordan Johnson threw for two touchdowns, one a 2-yard strike to Kavario Middleton on fourth-and-goal with 2:15 left in the first half. That put Montana up 12-0.

MSU drove to a touchdown to start the second half, DeNarius McGee hitting Elvis Akpla from 7 yards. But the Griz answered on their next offensive snap: Johnson found Jabin Sambrano for 79 yards and a TD to make it 19-7.

Montana gained 316 yards of offense in the second half, and rushed for 309 yards against the Big Sky's top run defense.

"I'm very proud and honored to be involved in a game like this, when it comes down to the great state of Montana for the championship," second-year Griz coach Robin Pflugrad said. "It's nice to get on that bus with a win."

Both teams lost at Sam Houston State in the FCS playoffs; the Griz fell 31-28 in the semifinals.

Montana 16, Montana 7

Game No. 112 – 2012, Missoula.

The second-ranked Bobcats relied on defense, kicker Rory Perez and quarterback DeNarius McGhee to subdue the Griz.

Montana led 7-3 after Peter Nguyen's 47-yard scoring run in the first quarter but didn't score again. Bobcat defensive ends Caleb Schreibeis (16 tackles and a sack) and Brad Daly shut down the Griz running game; Montana punted eight times after Nguyen's TD.

A record Washington-Grizzly Stadium of 26,210 saw MSU go in front on McGhee's 15-yard scoring pass to Saco product Kruiz Siewing at 7:54 of the second quarter.

McGhee threw for 246 yards and ran four times on a clock-killing drive that ended in Perez's third field goal with 2:23 left.

That made it a two-score game and clinched the Grizzlies' first losing season since 1985. The Griz, who missed two field goals, finished 5-6.

"We knew they were big up front and knew they would be a physical team," said Schreibeis, who in January became the first Bobcat to win the Buck Buchanan Award for the top defensive player in the FCS. "We just had to weather the storm for a little bit and then let our speed kind of take control."

The Cats improved to 10-1 and finished 11-2 with a loss in the FCS quarterfinals.

Montana 28, Montana State 14

Game No. 113 – 2013, Bozeman.

Once again the Montana football team leaves its opponent feeling blue at Bobcat Stadium.

Spurred by a determined veteran defense and quarterback Jordan Johnson's dynamic second half, the fifth-ranked Grizzlies double up 13th-ranked Montana State in front of 21,527 fans. In his illustrious seven-year career with the Bobcats, coach Rob Ash has come up empty in all four home games against the Grizzlies.

"I've never lost in Bozeman," said Montana senior linebacker and future Seattle Seahawk Brock Coyle, a Bozeman native who enjoys a stellar day with a game-high 14 tackles and a critical forced fumble.

The Griz defense turns in perhaps its finest performance of the season. Montana State converts on just 4 of 13 third-down attempts and manages just 277 yards with two costly fumbles. Cats Qb DeNarius McGhee, the preseason player of the year in the Big Sky, struggles in completing 17 of 33 passes for 160 yards.

Johnson starts slowly but comes on like gangbusters. After throwing for minus-3 yards in the first quarter, he completes 20 of 32 passes for 253 yards and a TD in the final three periods.

Montana 34, Montana State 7

Game No. 114 – 2014, Missoula.

The pressure cooker of a week begins with Griz coach Mick Delaney announcing he will retire at the end of the season.

On top of that, the 13th-ranked Griz need a victory over their arch-rivals to gain a berth in the FCS playoffs. It was never a contest.

Montana storms to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter and goes into halftime with a 27-0 advantage.

Griz senior quarterback Jordan Johnson completes 22 of 36 passes for 313 yards and three touchdowns to three different receivers. Classmate Jordan Canada adds 119 yards on 27 carries.

"This is unreal — just so many emotions right now running through me," says Delaney. "... Today was probably the most special day of my coaching career because of what these young men and our coaches did. Just total domination from beginning to end."

Montana 54, Montana State 35

Game No. 115 – 2015, Bozeman.

The Grizzlies storm out to a 37-14 halftime lead in the final game of Rob Ash's tenure coaching the Bobcats. The winningest football coach in Montana State history is fired two days later after nine years leading the school.

Montana State hits the scoreboard first on a 46-yard touchdown pass from Dakota Prukop to Beau Sandland, but the Griz then reel off 31 unanswered points. UM quarterback Brady Gustafson has three of his four touchdowns in that stretch.

Gustafson finishes with 353 yards passing and three TD tosses to Jamaal Jones, who becomes UM's career leader in receiving yards (3,021) by the end of the season. Gustafson's fourth goes to Ellis Henderson as the Griz win their third straight game to end the season and earn a playoff berth. The rivalry brawl features 1,040 yards of offense with both teams reaching the 500-yard plateau.

Prukop finishes with four scores as well, three through the air and one on the ground, in his final game in a Bobcat uniform before announcing his intentions to transfer to FBS Oregon a month later.

Montana 24, Montana 17

Game No. 116 – 2016, Missoula.

Montana has designs on a playoff berth, and the only thing standing in its way are the three-win Bobcats. But the Grizzlies can't account for freshman quarterback Chris Murray, who rushes for 142 yards and two touchdowns to lead Montana State to an upset victory in front of 26,182 fans at Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

Murray flips into the end zone head over feet on an 8-yard scoring run to tie the game 7-7 with 4:13 remaining in the first quarter, and MSU reels off 24 consecutive points until a Brandon Purdy field goal closes the gap for UM late in the third quarter.

Murray completes just two passes, but the Bobcats rush for 368 yards and 62 attempts. Murray's 26-yard throw to tight end Connor Sullivan on fourth-and-1 with 1:19 left ices the game. It's the first time neither the Bobcats nor the Grizzlies make the FCS playoffs since 1992.

"You don't ever come into Washington-Grizzly and expect to blow guys off the ball," says MSU All-American lineman J.P. Flynn. "That's not how it goes."

Montana 31, Montana 23

Game No. 117 – 2017, Bozeman.

Montana enters 7-3, has won five of its past six games and is one win away from a potential playoff berth. Montana State comes in at 4-6 on a two-game losing streak and looks to play spoiler. The Cats erase a 3-0 deficit after one quarter, rush for 322 yards and get a late defensive stop to earn the win in front of 19,907 fans at Bobcat Stadium.

The Cats scored three of their four rushing touchdowns in the second quarter, including a 71-yard score by Nick LaSane, to take a 21-10 lead. They built their biggest lead, 31-16, on Chris Murray's rushing touchdown with 6:20 to play. Montana answers 55 seconds later on Gresch Jensen's 32-yard touchdown pass to Keenan Curran.

The Griz forced a three-and-out, lost a fumble, then forced another three-and-out. They started at their own 12-yard line with 2:08 left, advanced to the Montana State 28-yard line before throwing four incomplete passes to turn the ball over with 4 seconds left. It's Bob Stitt's last game coaching Montana.

Montana 29, Montana 25

Game No. 118 – 2018, Missoula.

The game marked the greatest comeback and most inexplicable finish in the history of the series. Both teams entered at 6-4 with postseason aspirations and both were riding a two-game winning streak. The Cats appeared to lose on an Adam Eastwood rushing touchdown with time running out. But Montana State called timeout before the play started. Montana then tried the same play with a disastrous result. Colstrip's Tucker Yates knocked the ball out of Eastwood's hands and Belgrade's Derek Marks recovered as the Cats held on the goal line.

The Pride of Dillon, Troy Andersen, was the offensive MVP for the Bobcats. He rushed for 107 yards and three touchdowns as his team overcame a 22-0 deficit. Andersen's passing wasn't too shabby either as he completed 15 of 24 attempts for 158 yards.

Montana 48, Montana 14

Game No. 119 – 2019, Bozeman.

Montana's first offensive play resulted in the same as its last snap from scrimmage the previous season — a lost fumble recovered coincidentally by the same player that recovered it in 2018, Marks.

This time Montana State used it to fuel a blowout win. MSU came into the game with Andersen sidelined, but it didn't matter as the Cats scored the first 24 points. The Grizzlies cut their deficit to 17 at halftime but couldn't muster any offense in the second half.

The Bobcats, who claimed their fourth straight win in the series, advanced to the national semifinals whole the Grizzlies lost out in the quarterfinals.

Montana 29, Montana State 10

Game No. 120 – 2021, Missoula.

The seventh-ranked Griz snapped a four-game losing streak to the Cats behind strong defense and special teams. Montana's swarming, sure-tackling defense beat blocks on its way to gobbling up nine tackles for loss and four sacks. The Griz forced the Cats to punt nine times in 14 drives, including six three-and-outs. Their streak of consecutive quarters without allowing a touchdown reached 13 before being snapped.

Griz linebacker Pat O'Connell, a Kalispell native, had a game-high 11 tackles. Teammate Jace Lewis tabbed eight tackles and a forced fumble while playing with an effort level UM coach Bobby Hauck called "terrific."

UM true freshman Junior Bergen had a big day against the team he signed with before flipping to UM when MSU coach Choate left for Texas in the spring. Bergen got his first action at punt returner in 2021 and ran back punts for 21, 22 and 31 yards, leading to two field goals. The Billings Senior grad also had UM's lone offensive TD on a 74-yard catch-and-run masterpiece — a scripted play on the second snap of the game against the Cats.

Montana 55, Montana 21

Game No. 121 – 2022, Bozeman.

Montana State could've let "ESPN College GameDay" rivalry pressure or a host of other factors derail its focus. Instead, the Bobcats put together their most complete game of the season.

MSU quarterback Tommy Mellott, his offensive line and the team's ensemble cast of running backs powered an unstoppable ground attack in a blowout win for the No. 3-ranked Bobcats over No. 13 Montana in front of a stadium-record 22,037 fans. The win gave MSU a share of the Big Sky Conference title, something the Cats hadn't accomplished since 2012.

Mellott made his mark right away, rushing four times for 46 yards on the opening drive, which ended with a 1-yard touchdown run from the sophomore from Butte. That put the electric home crowd and the momentum on MSU's side.

The Griz answered four minutes later with a 30-yard TD pass from Lucas Johnson to Malik Flowers, but the Cats marched right back down the field, once again without attempting a pass. Mellott made it 14-7 on a 12-yard run.

The tide truly turned on the following drive. Less than a month after Weber State committed four safeties on high snaps at Bobcat Stadium, UM long snapper Grayson Pibal did the same, and it wasn't a two-point play this time. Senior linebacker Jory Choate, a Bozeman High graduate and son of previous MSU head coach Jeff "Griz Slayer" Choate, recovered the fumble at the 3:13 mark of the first quarter to put the Cats up 21-7.

The Cats finished with 439 rushing yards, their most ever against UM and sixth-most in program history. They rushed 65 times, attempted 10 passes, tallied 561 total yards and didn't punt.

A day that began with ESPN broadcasting GameDay across the street from Bobcat Stadium ended with one of the biggest Brawl beatdowns in MSU history (55 are the most points MSU has scored in a Brawl).

Montana 37, Montana State 7

Game No. 122 – 2023, Missoula.

The third-ranked Griz dominated fourth-ranked Montana State from start to finish. They led wire-to-wire in a 37-7 victory that netted them their first Big Sky championship since 2009, doing so in front of an announced stadium-record crowd of 27,178 fans.

UM completed the regular season with a 10-1 record overall and a 7-1 mark in Big Sky play. Hauck improved to 7-5 in the rivalry game and 2-3 in his second stint. Vigen dropped to 1-2 in the series and is 0-2 playing in the Garden City.

UM scored on seven of 12 drives while it rolled up 430 yards of offense, picked up 21 first downs and converted seven of 14 third downs. The Griz forced MSU into four turnovers on downs and an interception in 11 drives, limited the Cats to 280 yards and held them to 1 of 14 on third and fourth downs.

Griz quarterback Clifton McDowell finished 17 of 22 passing for 200 yards and one touchdown, a 20-yard strike to wide receiver Junior Bergen, who had a game-high 91 yards on six catches. Nick Ostmo ran for 85 yards and McDowell added 69 to lead the Griz ground game that racked up 202 yards on 40 totes. UM held MSU's vaunted rushing attack to 213 yards on 35 carries, well below the Cats' average of 301.4 yards per game, second in the FCS. Mellott piled up 108 yards on 10 carries and running back Julius Davis totaled 107 yards on 14 rushes. MSU was 4-of-16 passing for 67 yards.

Montana 34, Montana 11

Game No. 123 – 2024, Bozeman.

MSU improved to 12-0 in front of a Bobcat Stadium-record 22,057 fans. It marked Montana State's first undefeated regular season since 1956, when it finished 9-0-1 and won the NAIA title.

It also marked the Cats' first outright conference championship since 1984. They're credited with a solo Big Sky title in 2011, but they initially shared it with UM before the NCAA vacated several UM wins due to extra benefits.

MSU opened Saturday's game with a 14-play, 75-yard drive that quarterback Tommy Mellott capped with a 5-yard touchdown run. UM's Ty Morrison made a 47-yard field goal with 13 minutes, 8 seconds left in the first half to cut the deficit to 7-3 — the first time since 2017 that the winning team has held a lead of less than seven points in the second quarter. That was, however, as close as it would get.

About three minutes after the field goal, Mellott completed a 35-yard TD pass to Rohan Jones on third-and-8 to put MSU ahead 14-3. It was one of six third downs the Cats converted in the game on 12 attempts. They also scored on all four red-zone trips. UM, meanwhile, went 2 for 12 on third downs and 1 for 1 in the red zone.

Mellott, a senior from Butte, completed 6 of 12 passes for 94 yards and rushed for 50 yards on 10 attempts. The Grizzlies finished with 234 total yards (exactly 117 passing and rushing), more than 200 fewer than they averaged entering the game. They punted on their first three drives of the second half.

Adam Jones, a Missoula Sentinel graduate, finished with a career-best 197 rushing yards on a career-high 25 carries for the hosts. Saturday was MSU's fourth straight Brawl victory at Bobcat Stadium.

Montana 31, Montana 28

Game No. 124 – 2025, Missoula.

The Brawl for it all certainly lived up to the hype as it delivered drama from start to finish.

Third-ranked Montana State won the back-and-forth affair against second-ranked Montana, 31-28, on a sunny Saturday afternoon at Washington-Grizzly Stadium. The Cats secured the Big Sky Conference outright title and year-long bragging rights.

Montana State became the first road team to win in the series since it left Missoula victorious in 2018. MSU also won its third Big Sky championship in four years and its 18th overall with an 8-0 league record. The Griz finished 7-1 and second in the conference standings.

The teams traded punches in the heavyweight bout in front of a stadium-record announced crowd of 27,340. The Cats jumped up 17-7 in the first half before Montana put together a 14-0 run over 10 minutes of action across the second and third quarters to take a 21-17 lead.

Then it was the Cats making game-changing plays on 14-0 run to go ahead 31-21 in the fourth quarter. The Griz answered to make it a three-point game with seven minutes to play, but MSU kept the chains moving and salted away the final 6:59 of the game clock without giving the Griz a chance to score.

MSU quarterback Justin Lamson completed 18 of his 20 pass attempts for 175 yards and one touchdown. His top target was Dane Steel, who caught four passes for 54 yards and a touchdown. Lamson also ran for 80 yards and one score on 15 carries. Julius Davis led the Cats with 106 yards on 15 carries.

Montana 48, Montana 23

Game No. 125 – 2025, Bozeman.

With his twin brother standing injured on the sideline, Taco Dowler made one of the biggest plays in Montana State football history in the first playoff Brawl.

The second-seeded Bobcats were faced with a third down and 20 deep in their own territory, clinging to a 27-23 lead early in the fourth quarter in Bozeman. Justin Lamson stepped up in the pocket, scrambled to the right and fired a pass almost 40 yards down the field on the run. It hit Dowler in stride on the midfield Bobcat logo, and the Billings native avoided a few tacklers on his way to an 87-yard touchdown.

"If that's not the best play ever in the history of our program, I don't know," MSU head coach Brent Vigen said after the game. "It certainly was the biggest play today."

MSU (13-2) scored two more TDs in the quarter en route to a 48-23 win over No. 3 Montana (13-2) in the semifinals of the FCS playoffs. The win, less than a month after a 31-28 win in Missoula, sent the Cats to the national title game for the second straight season and the third time in five years.

The 125th Brawl marked the first time since 1913 the rivals faced off twice in the same season.

The Griz series lead dropped to 74-46-5. Hauck was 7-8 in the rivalry game while Vigen is 4-2.

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