MONTANA

QUARTERBACKS - The Grizzlies lost their starting QB from 2019 (11 starts, 3436, 66%) with a 25-14 ratio. He was expected to return in 2020 but with the uncertainties from covid he left for the CFL in 2020. In the fall of '21 Cam Humphrey returned. He started 3 gms in 2019 and threw for 761 (61%, 6-2, 60 rush). Humphrey started both games in the spring & threw for for 472 (67%, 5-1). RFr QB Kris Brown threw for 112 (66.7%, 1-0) in the spring of '21. Humphrey started the F/4 games but then suffered an ankle injury that sidelined him for the next 4 games. Humphrey threw for 200+ in each of the final 3 regular season games but in 2 playoff games threw for 248 yards (51%, 3-0). Overall Humphrey led with 1,789 pass yards (60.9%, 16-7) and ran for 105 (1.6). Brown started the 4 games Humphrey missed and threw for 1,029 yards (65.1%, 3-4) and also had 36 rush yards (5 td). Humphrey departs this season along with Robbie Patterson (84, 48%, 0-2). Brown returns and they also add former San Diego St QB Lucas Johnson who started 10 games the L2Y and threw for 1,608 yards (62%) with a 13-4 ratio and ran for 261 yards (4.4). The Grizzlies have 2 exp'd QB's on the roster the fall and whoever wins the job should have a productive season.

RUNNING BACKS - Montana looked to return 2019 Big Sky Freshman of the Year Marcus Knight, who was ran for 1,030 yards (12 st, 4.5, 23 td) but he tore his ACL in the spring of '21. Nick Ostmo started both games in the spring of '21 and was the #2 rusher (130, 3.9, 4 td). True frosh Xavier Harris led in the spring of '21 with 148 (6.4, 3 td). Harris took over as the starter last fall and led with 666 yards (8 st, 4.4) and was 4th Tm Big Sky. Junior Bergen was #2 (3 st, 498, 4.2) and Isiah Childs finished as the #3 rusher (2 st, 207, 3.8). This fall the top 3 rushers all return & they get back Knight who is healthy once again. This RB room is chalk full of talent and should have an even better season.

RECEIVERS - Montana lost 5 of their top 7 receivers from '19 including three 14-game starters. Last fall WR's Samuel Akem (848, 14.4 in '19) & Mitch Roberts (420, 11.4 in '19) both returned along with Gabe Susler, who was the only player to top 100 yards in the 2-game spring season (145, 18.1). Akem led Montana last fall with 689 yards (13 st, 14.1, 7 td) while Roberts was #2 with 683 yards (13 st, 12.4). TE Cole Grossman also had a productive season with 463 yards (13 st, 12.9, 5 td) and was 3rd Tm Big Sky. While Akem departs this season, Montana gets back 5 of their top 6 receivers in '22. Alongside Roberts and TE Grossman we expect Ryan Simpson (247, 13.0) and Malik Flowers (210, 15.0) to step up this season & overall the Grizzlies look to have a productive receiving corps for 2022.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The OLine paved the way for 139 ypg rush & 3.9 ypc in '19 while allowing 38 sacks (5.4%). The unit lost two OL that started 11+ games in '19 but returned 6 OL who combined for 44 starts in '19. In the 2-game spring season Montana ran for 224 ypg (5.3) and the OLine did not allow a sack. Last fall the rushing numbers were almost identical

to 2019 as the Grizzlies ran for 139 ypg (3.6) and they gave up 33 sacks (8.0%). This season Montana loses a trio of starters including 2nd Tm Big Sky LT Conlan Beaver and 4th Tm Big Sky RT Dylan Cook. The two starters returning are 4th Tm Big Sky LG Hunter Mayginnes and C AJ Forbes. With just two starters back this OLine may struggle early on while the three news starters gain experience.

DEFENSIVE LINE - Montana allowed 120 rush ypg (3.4) and collected 32 sacks (6.2%) in 2019. The DLine lost three of their top six from 2019 and last fall they returned DE Alex Gubner (#10 tkl'r, 2.5 sk, 4 int),who moved to NT in the spring, DT Eli Alford (#14, 3.5 tfl) & Joe Babros (#15, 1 int) were also back. The Grizzlies last fall were superb against the run as they held 10 foes to under 100 rush yds and overall on the season they allowed 84 rush ypg (2.4) which #3 overall in the FCS! Montana also collected 44 sacks (8.6%). This fall the Grizzlies DLine loses Justin Belknap (12 st, 38 tkl, 7 tfl, 4 pbu) along with Joe Babros (10 st, 16 tkl, 3.5 sk). However, the DLine gets back 2nd Tm Big Sky NT Alex Gubner (11 st, 43 tkl, 9 tfl) along with DE Jacob McGourin (1 st, 30 tkl, 7 tfl) and DT Eli Alford (2 st, 14 tkl, 3 tfl). With 5 of the top 7 DL's back this season, they should still have a productive season despite the loss of two starters.

LINEBACKERS - Going into last fall, the LB unit lost two of their top four from '19 including the #1 tackler (179 tkl, 3.5 sk, 7.5 tfl). Last fall they returned Jace Lewis (131 tkl, 4.5 sk, 7.5 tfl) & Patrick O'Connell (#5, 6.5 sk). The same trio of LB's started all 13 games and O'Connell led the unit with 105 tackles (8 tfl) and led the team with 14 sacks & was 2nd Tm AA and 1st Tm Big Sky! This season O'Connell returns along with 3rd Tm Big Sky LB Marcus Welnel (94 tkl, 8 sk, 4.5 tfl) and Braxton Hill (27 tkl, 3.5 tfl). NB's Nash Fouch (6 st, 34 tkl, 3 pbu) and TraJon Cotton (7 st, 28 tkl). The lone starter lost was 2nd Tm Big Sky LB J.Lewis (100 tkl, 11 tfl, 4.5 sk) & with 7 of the top 8 tacklers returning this unit will be a strength for the Grizzlies in 2022.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - The secondary lost 3 of their top 5 from '19, who all started all 14 games. The Grizzlies returned two 14-game starters in #3 tackler S Robby Hauck (129 tkl, 3 sk) & #4 tackler SS Gavin Robertson (72 tkl, 2.5 tfl, 2 int). Montana's pass defense had an up & down season but overall allowed 248 pass ypg & allowed opposing QB's to hit just 56.9%. S Hauck led Montana in tackles last fall with 128 (13 st, 7 tfl, 2 pbu) and was 1st Tm Big Sky. This season the Grizzlies lose 4th Tm Big Sky CB Omar Hicks Onu (12 st, 43 tkl, 11 pbu) along with S Gavin Robertson (9 st, 31 tkl, 2 int). Montana does get back Hauck along with S Garrett Graves (4 st, 46 tkl, 3 pbu) and CB Justin Ford (10 st, 41 tkl, 11 pbu, 9 int) who was 1st Tm AA and Big Sky last fall! Despite the loss of two starters this unit remains in good shape and could improve their numbers this fall vs the pass.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Montana lost their K from 2019 (11-14 fg) and in the spring of 2021 Jack Cooper was 1-2 fg's. Last fall the new kicker was Kevin Macias and he hit 23-27 fg's (L/51) and was 2nd Tm Big Sky. Montana also lost their P from 2019 (42.5 avg, 38.8 net) and in the spring of '21 Brian Buschini had a 43.3 avg and a 42.5 net on 6 punts. Buschini was back last fall and he averaged 46.0 yards per punt with a 43.0 net and was 1st Tm Big Sky. WR Flowers led Montana LY with 488 KR yards (30.5 avg, 2 td) and was 1st Tm Big Sky. RB Bergen led with 156 PR yards (19.5). This unit loses both K Macias and P Buschini who were both all-conference players, but they return both returners. The new K and P have pretty big shoes to fill & their kicking game may take a step back this season.

COACHES - Bobby Hauck enters his 5th season of his second stint at Montana. Hauck previously was the HC at Montana from 2003-2009 and went 80-17, making it to the FCS Championship. Hauck spent 5 seasons at UNLV, going 15-49, but made a bowl game in 2014, which was UNLV's first & only bowl game since 2000. Hauck spent 2015-17 as the ST coordinator at San Diego St before coming back to his alma mater. Hauck is 28-12 in the 5 seasons since coming back and overall is 108-29 here. Timm Rosenbach enters his 5th season as the OC here. Prior to Montana Rosenbach was the HC at Adams St from 2015-17 and was the OC at UNLV in 2013-14 under Hauck. Rosenbach was also the OC here in 2012. The 5th year DC is Kent Baer. Previously Baer was at UNLV from 2015-17 as the DC and LB coach and from 2013-14 was the DC at Colorado. Montana does not list a ST coordinator.

OFFENSE - In '18 the Grizzlies had the Big Sky's #4 scoring (33.9 ppg) & #4 total offense (436 ypg). With 10 starters back in 2019 they improved to #3 in scoring (36.7 ppg) but slipped to #5 in total offense in the Big Sky despite improving to 440 ypg. In their 2 game spring "season" they averaged 53.5 ppg & 520 ypg in a pair of blow out wins. Last fall they returned just 5 starters and the offense averaged 362 ypg and 30 ppg. Montana returns their top 3 RB's and get back a 1,000-yd rusher from 2019 (OFY LY ACL). Montana also returns 5 of their top 6 receivers, and they return a QB with 4 starts LY and add a San Diego St transfer QB. With 7 starters back overall Montana's offense should make a jump this season.

DEFENSE - In '18 Montana allowed 419 ypg and 29 ppg. They returned 7 starters in '19 and finished #4 in both scoring (25 ppg) & total defense (399 ypg). In the spring the Grizzlies only gave up a combined 10 pts & 471 yds in their 2 games. Last fall they returned just 5 starters but in the regular season Montana allowed just 291 ypg and 13 ppg but in two playoff games they allowed 608 yds and 41 pts vs E.Wash and 487 yards and 28 pts at JMU. For the season Montana's defense held foes to 69 ypg under their season average. This season 11 of the top 15 tacklers return and 6 starters are back, so the Grizzlies should still have a pretty stout defense.

2022 - Bobby Hauck won at least a share of the Big Sky Conference in each season of his first stint here. But since Hauck came back Montana has not won at least a share of the Big Sky, but have made the playoffs in each of the past 2 non-covid years.This season Montana opens at home with NWSt and South Dakota before playing at Indiana St. Montana opens Big Sky play with home games vs Portland St and Idaho with a road game against Idaho St in the middle. Montana then goes to Big Sky champ Sac St and Weber St before hosting Cal Poly and Eastern Washington. Montana then closes the season with the Brawl of the Wild against Moantana St. The Grizzlies lose three starters on both the OLine and DLinebut they do get back 13 starters overall and have 2 QB's with start experience battling for the job. The defense also gets back 11 of the top 15 tacklers. Montana does face two of the top three Big Sky teams on the road along with Weber St. If Montana can get a couple of big road wins, their home portion of the Big Sky schedule is manageable & they should be in the mix for both a Big Sky championship and a berth in the playoffs.