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MONTANA FAVORED BY COACHES, MEDIA

OGDEN, Utah (July 22, 2008) – The University of Montana has won or shared a record 10 straight Big Sky Conference football titles. If the coaches and media are correct, it will be 11 in a row for the Grizzlies.

Bobby Hauck's club was picked first by the media and coaches in the league's preseason polls, released Tuesday at the Summer Kickoff in Park City, Utah.

Montana, which has won 16 straight conference games and went 11-0 in the 2007 regular season, earned seven first-place votes from the coaches and 63 total points. The Grizzlies garnered 23 of 43 first-place votes from the media, and 361 total points.

The Grizzlies return just 10 starters from the 2007 team, including only three on defense. Montana has advanced to the playoffs 15 straight campaigns, and compiled a 52-14 overall record the last five seasons under Hauck. Montana suffered a first-round playoff loss to Wofford in 2007.

Montana's streak of 10 straight conference titles is tied for the second-best streak in the history of Division I football. Oklahoma won 12 straight Big 7 titles from 1948-59. Brigham Young won 10 straight WAC crowns from 1976-85.

In both polls, Montana was followed closely by Eastern Washington. The Eagles are coming off a 9-4 season that saw them advance to the quarterfinals of the Football Championship Subdivision Playoffs. Eastern Washington, under the direction of first-year coach Beau Baldwin, earned one first-place vote from the coaches and 52 total points. The Eagles scored 19 first-place votes from the media and 350 total points.

Eastern Washington returns 15 starters and 47 letterwinners. Reigning Big Sky Offensive MVP Matt Nichols returns at quarterback, along All-American wide receiver Aaron Boyce and All-American defensive end Greg Peach.

Montana and Eastern Washington square off in Cheney, on Oct. 11.

Northern Arizona, which is coming off back-to-back 6-5 seasons, was picked third by the coaches and fourth by the media. The Lumberjacks earned one first-place vote from the coaches. The Lumberjacks are led by 11th-year head coach Jerome Souers.

Rob Ash's Montana State Bobcats were tabbed third by the media and fourth by the coaches. The Bobcats are led by Buck Buchanan Award candidate Bobby Daly, a senior linebacker from Helena, Mont.

Weber State was selected fifth in both polls. The Wildcats finished strong in 2007, winning five of its last seven. The Wildcats return 15 starters and 38 letterwinners.

Portland State was picked sixth in both polls. The Vikings were hit hard by injuries in 2007, struggling to a 3-8 record in coach Jerry Glanville's first season.

Sacramento State, Idaho State and Northern Colorado rounded out the polls. Sacramento State was picked seventh by the coaches and eighth by the media. Idaho State was selected seventh by the media and eighth by the coaches. Northern Colorado, entering its third season as a Big Sky member, was picked ninth in both polls.

The 2008 college football season begins Thursday, Aug. 28.

2008 COACHES POLL

Team (First-place votes).....Points

1. Montana (7)	63
2. Eastern Washington (1).....	52
3. Northern Arizona (1).....	50
4. Montana State.....	40
5. Weber State	38
6. Portland State.....	30
7. Sacramento State.....	27
8. Idaho State.....	15
9. Northern Colorado	9

2008 MEDIA POLL

Team (First-place votes)..... Points

1. Montana (23).....	361
2. Eastern Washington (19)	350
3. Montana State.....	254
4. Northern Arizona (1).....	248
5. Weber State	229
6. Portland State.....	194
7. Idaho State.....	124
8. Sacramento State.....	113
9. Northern Colorado	65