



www.bigskyconf.com

BIG SKY ANNOUNCES 2009 ALL-CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM

OGDEN, Utah (Nov. 24, 2009) - Six players were unanimous selections to the 2009 All-Big Sky Conference Football team, which was selected by the league coaches on Monday and released on Tuesday.

Weber State senior wide receiver Tim Toone, Montana senior wide receiver Mark Mariani, Montana State guard senior Jeff Hansen, and Montana tackle Levi Horn were unanimous selections on the offense.

Montana State senior defensive end Dane Fletcher and Eastern Washington junior linebacker J.C. Sherritt were unanimous defensive selections. For the second time in three seasons, Eastern Washington quarterback Matt Nichols was voted the Offensive Player of the Year.

The 6-foot-3, 220 senior from Cottonwood, Calif., rolled up a league-high 3,454 yards of total offense during the regular season. He completed 67 percent of his passes for 3,369 yards with 30 touchdowns and just five interceptions. His efficiency rating of 164.1 ranks fourth in the nation, and he's fifth in the nation in total offense. Nichols holds the Big Sky's all-time record in total offense and is just 53 yards away from becoming the league's all-time leading passer.

Fletcher, a candidate for the Buck Buchanan Award, was named the Defensive Player of the Year. The 6-2, 245-pound senior from Bozeman, Mont., leads the league with 17 tackles for loss. His average of 1.89 ranks second in the nation. Fletcher tallied 6.5 sacks and 66 total tackles. He anchored a defense which ranks first in the league and seventh nationally against the rush.

Sacramento State junior safety Zach Schrader, who transferred to the Hornets after his previous school Division II Western Washington dropped its football program, was tabbed the Newcomer of the Year. The 6-1, 195-pounder from Issaquah, Wash., recorded 102 tackles, which ranks fourth in the league. He also forced a league-high four fumbles and intercepted four passes.

Weber State senior running back Trevyn Smith made history, becoming just the third player in the 47-year history of the league to earn First Team honors four straight seasons. Smith joins Nevada running back Charvez Foger and Weber State's Scott Shields as the only players in league history to earn the four-peat.

Smith, a 5-10, 210-pound senior from Springville, Utah, needs 21 rushing yards in Weber State's first-round playoff game to reach 1,000 yards for the fourth straight season. Smith ranks third on the Big Sky's all-time rushing list with 5,007 yards and ranks fourth place in all-purpose yards with 6,376. He's a candidate for the Walter Payton Award.

Five players were repeat selections from the 2008 First Team, including Mariani and Toone. Mariani, a senior from Havre, Mont., has caught 50 passes for 980 yards with nine touchdowns. Toone, a senior from Peoria, Ariz., caught a league-high 77 passes for 1,058 yards and 10 touchdowns during the regular season. Toone was also named to the First Team as a return specialist. He leads the nation with a punt return average of 21.2 per game and had two 90-plus returns for touchdowns this season, including a Big Sky-record 95-yarder.

INDIVIDUAL AWARD WINNERS

MVP OFFENSE

Matt Nichols, Sr., QB, Eastern Washington

MVP DEFENSE

Dane Fletcher, Sr., DE, Montana State

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

Zach Schrader, Jr., S, Sacramento State

OF NOTE

Unanimous Selections

Marc Mariani, WR, Montana

Tim Toone, WR, Weber State

Levi Horn, OT, Montana

Jeff Hansen, OG, Montana State

Dane Fletcher, DE, Montana State

J.C. Sherritt, LB, Eastern Washington

Four-Time Selections

Trevyn Smith, Jr., RB, Weber State

Two-Time Selections

WR – Tim Toone, WSU (2008, 2009)

WR – Marc Mariani, UM (2008, 2009)

C – Kyle Mutcher, WSU (2008, 2009)

DE – Kevin Linehan, WSU (2008, 2009)

CB – Josh Morris, WSU (2008, 2009)

QB – Matt Nichols, EWU (2007, 2009)

FB – Bobby McClintock, PSU (2006, 2009)

Also tabbed to the top team for a second straight season were Weber State center Kyle Mutcher, Wildcat defensive back Josh Morris, and teammate Kevin Linehan, a defensive end. Morris is a candidate for the Buck Buchanan Award.

Nichols was a first-team pick in 2007. Portland State fullback senior Bobby McClintock returned to the First Team after last making it in 2006 as a freshman.

Regular-season champion Montana led the First Team with nine overall selections. Guard Terran Hillesland, running back Chase Reynolds and fullback Kevin Klaboe were named on offense, along with Mariani and Horn. Inside linebacker Shawn Lebsack, cornerback Trumaine Johnson, and safety Shann Schillinger made the defensive squad. Sophomore Cole Lockwood was the First Team Special Teams player. Reynolds, a junior from Drummond, Mont., has rushed for 1,159 yards and 15 touchdowns. He's a candidate for the Walter Payton Award.

Weber State landed seven on the first team. Toone was joined by Mutcher, Smith, Linehan, Morris, linebacker Taylor Sedillo and punter Mike Snoy.

Nichols, tight end Nathan Overbay and sophomore running back Taiwan Jones were EWU players named to the first team. Tackle Renard Williams and Sherritt were the Eagles' defensive picks.

Overbay caught a league-high 12 touchdown passes. Jones, a defensive player last season, averaged an amazing 7.4 yards per carry and ranks second in the nation in all-purpose yards at 195 per game. Sherritt, a Buck Buchanan Award Candidate leads the nation in tackles, with 154. He has 11.5 tackles for loss

MSU's Hansen, a 6-4, 297-pounder from Great Falls, Mont., anchored the Montana State offensive line, which helped the Bobcats rank second in the league in total offense. Teammate Mike Person, a junior tackle, also made the first team from the Bobcats' offensive line. Defensive tackle Dan Ogden joined Fletcher on the first team from the Bobcats' defense.

Northern Arizona placed three players on the First Team: Senior running back Alex Henderson, who finished the regular season with a league-high 1,166 rushing yards, senior wide receiver Ed Berry (75 catches, 1,075 yards), and junior safety Matt Estrada.

Idaho State sophomore linebacker A.J. Storms (120 tackles) and Bengal punter Jon Vanderwielen were also named to the first team. Vanderwielen leads the Big Sky and ranks second in the nation with an average of 44.7 yards per punt.

Portland State sophomore Zach Brown, who also doubles as a receiver, was selected as the First Team kicker. Brown made 18-of-25 field goals this season.

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE

Wide Receivers	*#Tim Toone, Sr., Weber State *#Marc Mariani, Sr., Montana Ed Berry, Sr., Northern Arizona
Tackles	#Levi Horn, Sr., Montana Mike Person, Jr., Montana State
Guards	Terran Hillesland, Sr., Montana #Jeff Hansen, Sr., Montana State
Center	*Kyle Mutcher, Sr., Weber State
Tight end	Nathan Overbay, Sr., Eastern Washington
Quarterback	*Matt Nichols, Sr., Eastern Washington
Running backs	Chase Reynolds, Jr. Montana ^Trevyn Smith, Sr., Weber State Taiwan Jones, So., Eastern Washington Alex Henderson, Sr., Northern Arizona
Fullback	Kevin Klaboe, Sr., Montana *Bobby McClintock, Sr., Portland State
Placekicker	Zach Brown, Fr., Portland State
Return Specialist	Tim Toone, Sr., Weber State

*Two-Time Selection
^Three-Time Selection
#Unanimous Selection

FIRST TEAM DEFENSE

Tackles	Renard Williams, So., Eastern Washington Dan Ogden, Jr., Montana State
Ends	#Dane Fletcher, Sr., Montana State *Kevin Linehan, Sr., Weber State
Outside linebackers	J.C. Sherritt, Jr., Eastern Washington A.J. Storms, So., Idaho State
Inside linebackers	Shawn Lebsock, Sr., Montana Taylor Sedillo, Jr., Weber State
Cornerbacks	Trumaine Johnson, So., Montana *Josh Morris, Sr., Weber State
Safeties	Shann Schillinger, Sr., Montana Matt Estrada, Jr., Northern Arizona
Punter	Mike Snoy, Sr., Weber State Jon Vanderweilen, Sr., Idaho State
Special Teams	Cole Lockwood, So., Montana

*Two-Time Selection
#Unanimous Selection

SECOND TEAM OFFENSE

Wide Receivers	Aaron Boyce, Sr., Eastern Washington Tony Davis, Sr., Eastern Washington Brandyn Reed, Jr., Sacramento State.
Tackles	Ryne Holstrom, Sr., Northern Arizona Nestor Cruz, Sr., Weber State
Guards	Matt Lemley, Sr., Sacramento State J.C. Oram, So., Weber State
Center	Alex Verlanic, Jr., Montana
Tight end	Steve Pfahler, Sr., Montana
Quarterback	Michael Herrick, Jr., Northern Arizona
Running backs	Aaron Mason, Sr., Montana State
Fullback	Bo Bolen, Fr., Weber State
Placekicker	Matt Myers, So., Northern Arizona
Return Specialist	Marc Mariani, Sr., Montana

SECOND TEAM DEFENSE

Tackles	Christian Clark, Jr., Sacramento State Austin Mullins, Sr., Montana
Ends	Jace Palmer, Sr., Montana Isaac Bond, So., Northern Arizona
Outside linebackers	Ryan Pedersen, Sr., Portland State Brandon Fisher, Sr., Montana
Inside linebackers	John Eddy, Jr., Northern Colorado Clay Bignell, So., Montana State Stevon Thomas, Sr., Northern Arizona
Cornerbacks	Korey Askew, Jr., Northern Colorado Kevin Retoriano, Sr., Montana State
Safeties	Zach Schrader, Jr., Sacramento State Beau Hadley, Sr., Weber State
Punter	Augie Heath, So., Sacramento State
Special Teams	Ryan Lutz, Sr., Northern Colorado

HONORABLE MENTION OFFENSE

Wide Receivers – Kelvin Krosch, So., Idaho State; Tyler Palmer, Sr., Montana; Everett Gilbert, Fr., Montana State; Conrad Meadows, Sr., Northern Arizona; Curt Sweeney, Sr., Northern Arizona; Alex Thompson, Sr., Northern Colorado; Dylan Lane, Jr., Sacramento State; Mike Phillips, Jr., Weber State.

Tackles – Chris Thomas, Sr., Eastern Washington; Chris Dyk, Sr., Montana; Matt Luenen, Sr., Portland State.

Guards – Ryan Forney, Sr., Eastern Washington; Jon Opperud, So., Montana; Kris Poindexter, Jr., Northern Arizona; Moses Punzal, Sr., Portland State. Peter Lenz, Sr., Sacramento State.

Center – Chris Powers, So., Eastern Washington; Ryan Henry, Sr., Idaho State; Jeff Hines, Jr., Northern Arizona; Alex Shapiro, So., Northern Colorado; Tyler Staley, Sr., Portland State.

Tight end – Dan Beaudin, Sr., Montana; Joe Schreibeis, Sr., Montana State; Shaun Fitzpatrick, Sr., Northern Arizona; Cody Nakamura, Sr., Weber State.

Quarterback – Cameron Higgins, Jr., Weber State; Bryan Waggener, Sr., Northern Colorado.

Running backs – Thomas Brooks-Fletcher, Sr., Montana

Placekicker – Jarret Huk, Idaho State; Brody McKnight, Montana; Jason Cunningham, So., Montana State; Chris Diniz, Jr., Sacramento State.

Return Specialist – Aaron Woods, Sr., Portland State

HONORABLE MENTION DEFENSE

Tackles – Tyler Hobbs, Jr., Montana; Jason Da'Alba, So., Montana State; Dwight Boyd, So., Northern Arizona; Ryan Eastman, So., Weber State; Maiah Fa'atoafe, Fr., Weber State.

Ends – Jacob Kragt, Sr., Eastern Washington; Severin Campbell, Jr., Montana; Brandon Vance, Jr., Northern Arizona; Nick Herson, So., Northern Colorado; John Laidet, So., Montana State; Kevin Moore, Sr., Sacramento State.

Outside linebackers – Makai Borden, Sr., Eastern Washington; Jody Owens, Fr., Montana State; Reid Worthington, Jr., Northern Arizona; Nick Webb, So., Weber State.

Inside linebackers – Phillip Arias, Jr., Idaho State; Matt King, Jr., Northern Colorado; Ryan Rau, So., Portland State; Erik Pedersen, Sr., Portland State.

Cornerbacks – Andrew Swink, Sr., Montana; DeShawn Shead, So., Portland State; Thyrell Lewis, Sr., Weber State.

Safeties – Matt Johnson, So., Eastern Washington; Kevin Hatch, Sr., Eastern Washington; Chris Holmesly, Jr., Idaho State; Erik Stoll, Jr., Montana; Michael Rider, Jr., Montana State; Max Hewitt, Jr., Northern Colorado; Cody Worthen, So., Portland State; Jordan Brown, Jr., Weber State

Punter – Sean Wren, So., Montana.

SPECIAL TEAMS HONORABLE MENTION

Tanner Ripley, Jr., Montana State; Taelor Worrell, Jr., Northern Arizona; Nick Kalpin, So., Portland State; John Feaster, Fr., Sacramento State; Caldwell Taylor, So., Weber State