

MEDIA GUIDE INDEX

- 1— Regular Season Schedule
- 1— Media Contact Information
- 2— Team Roster
- 3— Semi-pro Statistics
- 4-5— Season Outlook
- 6— Key Players
- 7-10— Coaching Staff
- 11— Medical Staff
- 12-13— Administrative Staff
- 13— Player Representatives
- 14— Cheer/Dance Team
- 15— Game and Practice Facilities
- 15— Rocky Mountain Football League

REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

Helena TitansApril 14, 1:05

At Great Falls April 21 7:00

Glacier KnightsAril 28, 1:05

May 5 Bye

At Helena May12, 3:00

At Bitterroot May 19, 7:00

Great Falls GladiatorsMay 26, 12:05

Bitterroot BlazeJune 2, 1:05

At Glacier June 9, 3:00

**All HOME games are played at UM's Washington-Grizzly Stadium.
Kickoff times are subject to change and are published at
www.missoulaphoenix.com.*

MEDIA ACCESS GUIDELINES

Requests for media credentials to be displayed for Phoenix football home games should be made at least 48 hours prior to the event. Media inquiries should be directed to Amy Joyner, director of media and communications. Phone: 406-251-0011, Mobile: 406-531-5252 or email communications@MissoulaPhoenix.com.

Credentials will be mailed if requests are received a week or more in advance. Otherwise, credentials may be picked up at the ticket office. All credentials are non-transferable. Single Game Press Pass Credentials must be returned to the Ticket Office after each game.

Only working media will be allowed access to the playing field stadium press box. Access to phone lines and Internet for photo or story transmission is not available for Phoenix games. Media should procure their own wireless systems in advance of game day.



Photographers

Video sites are located at the pressbox on the stadium's west side. At field level, photographers must remain outside the sidelines and behind the end zones.

Internet sites

- No more than two employees of an official Web site will be issued press credentials.
- Web sites whose content centers around message boards and chat rooms where users can post anonymous information and/or rumors are NOT eligible for credentials or access.
- Credentials will not be granted to an agency operating sites that are in any way affiliated with gambling, or to freelance or fan-based sites that are not affiliated with a legitimate news-gathering organization.

The final decision for credentials remains at the sole discretion of the Phoenix Board of Directors. Failure to abide by the guidelines outlined on this page may result in revocation of credentials.

Statistics

The Phoenix statistician will keep official Phoenix statistics and will distribute final team statistics to other teams and members of the media within 60 minutes after the conclusion of the game.

Post-Game Press Interviews

Post-game interviews will be organized based on press requests. Contact Amy Joyner, 531-5252, to request interviews with specific players/coaches. Within 2 hours post-game, news and updates can be viewed at www.missoulaphoenix.com. Box scores, updated Phoenix statistics and game recap will be posted within one day.

Interview Policy

The Missoula Phoenix will strive to timely comply with all legitimate interview requests with coaches, athletes and administrators. Interview times can be arranged through Amy Joyner 24 hours in advance (406-531-5252).

Media members should not contact athletes or coaches directly without prior approval — player phone numbers will not be released.

2007 PHOENIX ROSTER

Alpha Roster

No.	Last	First	Pos	Ht	Wt	Age
56	Alaniz	Steve	LB	5'11	235	30
31	Allard	Mike	RB	5'9	185	39
44	Ayers	Adrian	DB	5'8	159	32
67	Bahnmaier	Luke	WR	5'6	163	20
67	Bereta	Kevin	LB	6'0	205	23
13	Biggs	Derek	QB	6'2	186	23
1	Boaz	Tyler	WR	6'3	195	25
70	Boehm	Chris	OL	6'0	215	39
2	Brady	Shawn	RB	5'10	245	28
36	Brown	Scott	DB	5'10	150	27
80	Byers	Shane	WR	5'11	160	23
47	Cassan	Josh	LB	5'11	258	27
23	Colwell	Clint	WR	5'11	183	20
17	Crouch	Taylor	DB	6'1	180	22
20	Curran	Robert	DB	5'9	164	25
62	Dana	Dave	OL	6'1	250	28
26	DeColte	Dave	DB	6'0	205	26
91	DeCoteau	James	DL	6'4	240	24
35	Dlate	Ryan	RB	5'11	280	25
19	Evison	Jeff	TE	6'0	205	31
22	Garza	Dave	WR	5'11	185	41
59	Graham	Greg	DL	6'1	257	38
24	Hardenburgh	Mike	DB	5'11	150	24
60	Hecht	Jeff	DL	6'2	285	28
75	Homer	David	OL	6'4	235	22
14	Hughes	Brian	DB	5'9	180	24
98	Jacobson	James	DL	6'0	252	37
5	Johnson	Gavin	RB	6'0	230	25
51	Johnson	Leron	LB	5'8	238	29
65	Johnson	Nate	LB	6'2	210	30
37	Jordan	Francis	DB	6'0	180	25
8	Jurasek	Shane	QB	6'2	215	27
95	Kambou	Habib	DL	6'3	235	29
30	Knapp	Marshall	DB	5'7	155	23
29	Laggett	Xavier	RB	5'6	180	37
63	Learned	Kurtis	LB	5'10	215	31
88	Lumpkin	Nick	WR	5'9	190	27
50	Maynard	Bud	LB	6'2	235	28
0	Maynard	Jeff	DB	6'3	186	29
33	McCollom	Robert	DB	5'11	149	18
9	McCool	Sheldon	RB	6'1	251	26
21	McRae	Rynaldo	RB	5'7	175	21
41	Menke	Matt	LB	5'11	170	21
32	Mihlander	Duane	RB	6'0	215	19
69	Nielsen	Bryce	OL	6'1	325	23
7	Pedersen	Brian	WR	5'8	130	28
92	Peters	Brian	DL	6'3	260	26
55	Renner	Zach	LB	5'11	220	32
96	Rogers	Gary	OL	6'1	221	24
25	Russo	Fred	DB	5'10	175	30
64	Sanders	Josh	OL	6'0	250	27
4	Sanderson	Tony	DB	6'2	200	26
10	Schrelbels	Stephen	DB	6'2	195	27
49	Schulz	Jessie	LB	5'11	210	31
53	Scott	Dan	LB	5'11	191	22
89	Simpson	Ja'Ton	TE	6'5	255	24
78	Sleeping Bear	Scott	DL	5'11	275	23
39	Smith	Chad	RB	5'8	165	19
82	Spencer	Mark	P	6'5	200	28
93	Stone	Jordan	OL	6'2	245	24
48	Wagner	Mike	DB	5'11	180	29
54	Watson	Jorge	LB	6'2	225	19
94	Whitney	Shawn	OL	5'10	196	26

Numerical Roster

No.	Last	First	Pos	Ht	Wt	Age
0	Maynard	Jeff	DB	6'3	186	29
1	Boaz	Tyler	WR	6'3	195	25
2	Brady	Shawn	RB	5'10	245	28
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96	Rogers	Gary	OL	6'1	221	24
98	Jacobson	James	DL	6'0	252	37

MISSOULA SEMI-PRO TEAM STATISTICS

	Single Game		Single Season			Career		
Rushing								
Attempts	21	Johnson	Attempts	105	Johnson	Attempts	155	Johnson
Yards	152	Johnson	Yards	554	<i>Nixon</i>	Yards	762	Johnson
TD	3	Johnson	TD's	7	<i>Nixon</i>	TD's	7	Johnson
Avg (min 8)	10	<i>Nixon</i>	Avg (min 16)	5.65	<i>Nixon</i>	Avg (min 24)	5.65	Nixon
Receiving								
Rec	5	Lumpkin/Russo/Simpson	Attempts	20	Lumpkin	Rec	32	Lumpkin
Yards	100	<i>Roman</i>	Yards	364	<i>Roman</i>	Yards	405	Lumpkin
TD	3	Johnson	TD's	6	Johnson	TD's	6	Johnson
Avg (min 4)	24.5	Johnson	Avg (min 8)	27.46	Johnson	Avg (min 12)	30.33	Boaz
Passing								
Att	27	Jurasek	Attempts	179	Jurasek	Attempts	179	Jurasek
Comp	18	Jurasek	Comp	91	Jurasek	Comp	91	Jurasek
Yards	297	Jurasek	Yds	1491	Jurasek	Yards	1491	Jurasek
Avg (min 10)	15.61	Jurasek	Avg (min 80)	8.33	Jurasek	Avg (min 120)	8.33	Jurasek
TD	6	Jurasek	TD's	19	Jurasek	TD's	19	Jurasek
Int	3	<i>Brawley</i>	Int	9	<i>Brawley</i>	Int	9	Brawley
Scoring								
TD's	5	Johnson	TD's	13	Johnson	TD's	14	Johnson
Points	30	Johnson	Points	78	Johnson	Points	84	Johnson/Roberts
FG's	2	Roberts	FG's	7	Roberts	FG's	14	Roberts
PAT's	6	Roberts	PAT's	22	<i>Roberts</i>	PAT's	42	Roberts
Defense								
Tackles	12.5	Sanderson	Tackles	53.5	<i>Sheridan</i>	Tackles	67	McCracken
Sacks	3	DeCoteau	Sacks	11.5	<i>Sheridan</i>	Sacks	11.5	Sheridan
Ints	3	<i>Stevens</i>	Int's	4	<i>by 3</i>	INT's	8	Sanderson
<i>Italics = 2005</i>								

League records and up-to-date standings can be found online at www.rockymountainfootball.com on the Internet.



PHOENIX SEASON OUTLOOK

The Missoula Phoenix enter 2007 with the core of their Northern Division Championship team intact. With their mix of returning veterans and talented newcomers, the Phoenix once again will be in a position to challenge for the league crown.

"With over 30 new guys on the roster, we are the youngest we have ever been," says third-year coach Matt Softich. "Couple that with solid returning veterans and a new, energized coaching staff and the sky is the limit in '07."

Softich's optimism can be attributed to the fact that 12 starters return from the squad that went 6-2 last season and the "rookies" on this year's team are both younger and more athletic than at any time in the past. "The franchise has grown to where, while the average guy still has a chance to make our team and see some playing time, the majority of our new guys have a lot more college experience under their belts. That, together with better coaching, can only lead to better results on the field," says Director of Football Operations Todd Mackey. "Our guys with 'heart' also have more talent than in the past."

OFFENSE

The Offense enters '07 with a new look, brought to the team by new Offensive Coordinator Mike Swann. "Mike has taken what was an explosive offense at times for us the last couple years and tweaked it to make it more balanced and consistent. He is very good at utilizing the talent we have at the skill positions and putting them in situations where they can take advantage of their skill sets. It will be a fun offense for the fans to watch," Softich notes.

Joining Swann in perfecting the attack are Running Backs Coach Caleb McCallum, Offensive Line Coach Clint Struble and offensive assistants Dean Shandy, Trevor O'Neil and Greg Evison.

Offense Line: The new look offensive line boasts a couple returning veterans in Jordan Stone, David Dana and Bryce Nielsen. Making up for the loss of guard Trevor O'Neil, now helping coach, are newcomers David Horner, Josh Sanders and Jason Howard. Deceptively strong Chris Boehm fills the big shoes at center with the retirement of All-Star Brian Smith. Gary Rogers and Shawn Whitney serve as back-ups when not needed at their primary positions.

"Our line, while very young, is very disciplined and very well coached," says Softich. "Aren't quite as big as in the past, but their quickness and strength will allow us to do what we want to up front. There will be a few surprises when all is said and done."

Running Backs: The Phoenix boast the best all-purpose back in the league in California native Gavin Johnson. Not only is Johnson a threat running the ball, but defenses must contend with him catching the ball, which he did to the tune of over 350 yards and 6 TD's in '06. Joining Gavin in the backfield is former Glacier Knight, Sheldon McCool, another all-around back. "Sheldon reminds me a bit of Tom Matte, the old Colt back who could fill in anywhere in the backfield. He works hard, has a great attitude, and is a good fit with Gavin," states Coach Softich.

Stepping up to the plate and pushing for more playing

time are veterans Xavier Laggett and Mike Allard, both of whom have made great strides during the pre-season and will be hard to keep off the field. The crop of newcomers includes Shawn Brady, Duane Mhlader, Ryan Diate, Shawn Whitney, Chad Smith and Renaldo McRae. "These young guys just need the time to get the system down before they are able to contribute. Each brings something unique to the table and Coach McCallum will surely be able to utilize that talent as the season progresses," comments Softich.

Receivers: In '07, it is pretty much a case of "pick your poison" when it comes to the receiving corps. "With the talent we have at receiver, we have the unique ability to stretch a defense vertically as well as horizontally," says Softich. This is evident when you consider veteran speedsters like Brian Pederson, Tyler Boaz and Nick Lumpkin return, and are joined by even faster newcomers Clint Colwell, Shane Byers and Luke Bahnmaier.

"Speed kills," says Coach Mike Swann, "and that is something all our wide outs have." When you couple that with the addition of wily veteran and former Grizzly Dave Garza, you have a potent combination. "Dave is an amazing player and an even better person," states Coach Softich. "What he brings to the team on and off the field is immeasurable. Our whole team has been influenced positively by his work ethic and demeanor. He also runs some of the best patterns I've seen in all my years."

Tight Ends: The Phoenix Tight Ends are ably manned by rock-hard former Grizzly Ja'Ton Simpson, and the soft-handed Jeff Evison. Softich says, "Ja'Ton, to put it simply, is a force whenever he is on the field. You have to be aware of him at all times. Jeff is probably the most underrated player. He has deceptive speed, great hands and is our team equivalent to Steve Yzerman. He is quiet and low key but will carve you up in the red zone."

Quarterbacks: The triggerman at the helm of the Phoenix offense will once again be record-setting Shane Jurasek, an eight-year veteran of the RMFL. Jurasek returns after a record breaking season in '06, which saw him twice throw for 5 or more TD's in a single game. Shane is the career leader in several passing categories. (Attempts 1245, Completions 622, Yards 9159 and TD's 101).

"Shane was a bit inconsistent last year, and that is one of the reasons we brought Coach Swann on board. We felt he needed a little more one on one in order to take his game to an even higher level," Softich adds. "And so far this pre-season he has been able to take advantage of the new concepts in the offense." If that continues, the record books could be rewritten again.

But to Jurasek, that isn't what is most important. "Winning. Having the team win. That is what we are about. I want the Title more than anything else," says the Great Falls native.

"Shane is a taller, slightly better looking version of Marty Mornhinweg," jokes Softich. "But seriously, he has that same sense Marty had to make the most out of a sticky situation. He always finds the open receiver, makes very few mistakes and has an understanding of offense."

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Derek Biggs provides ample back-up and has shown he has the ability to play in the RMFL. "We expect big things from Derek. He is still learning a lot, but he will get his shots this year and we feel very comfortable with him running our offense," says Coach Swann.

DEFENSE

The Phoenix Defense enters the '07 campaign with some question marks at several positions, and the competition for playing time will be interesting to watch. While seven starters return from a unit that gave up only 11.6 points a game last season, there is still room for improvement according to Softich. "Defense wins championships, and this year we are hoping to improve on the solid foundation we have laid. We are athletic, deep and aggressive."

Taking the reigns as coordinator is former Griz lineman Ciche Pitcher. "Ciche really has the ears of the players, and his ideas and experience will only make us better," Softich tells. "We have taken the best of what we have done in the past scheme-wise and essentially added some wrinkles Ciche brought with him. It gives us more versatility and the ability to take advantage of our athleticism."

Joining Pitcher is former player Scott Wik, now heading up the Inside Linebackers, and Jason Munson, adding the duties of Outside Linebacker Coach to his job as Special Teams Coordinator. Newcomer John Watkins is in charge of the Secondary. Rounding out the defensive staff is savvy veteran D-Line coach Bill Funke, who also serves as Assistant Head Coach, and defensive assistant Scott Rule.

Defensive Line: The Phoenix D-line is anchored by James Jacobson, a solid fixture who keeps getting better every practice, which is good news for the Black and Orange. Joining him up front in the middle is veteran run stopper Jeff Hecht. Former offensive lineman Habib Kambou and tough-as-nails Brian Peters man the corners. Rookies Scott Sleeping Bear and Gary Rogers add solid support. Veterans Greg Graham and James DeCoteau bring size and speed to the mix.

"Our line is very solid," says Funke. "We rotate everybody and there is not a weak link in the chain this year."

Linebackers: The Phoenix linebackers surely don't lack for size, toughness or athleticism. Nor do they lack enthusiasm. But with only two retuning veterans, to some outsiders their experience may be a concern. However, Coach Softich doesn't necessarily feel that is the case. "We have a good looking bunch who are well coached and work very hard. There is not one player who is head and shoulders above the rest, but as a group they will be hard to beat. I think by the time we start playing, this will be our strongest

group on defense."

One thing is for certain about the Phoenix linebackers is, they will hit you. Plugging up the middle are rookies Stevo Alaniz, Josh Cassan, Leron Johnson, Nick True and Jorge Watson. Veteran Kurtis Learned moves from the D line and brings his intensity to the fray. Returning players Zack Renner and Jessie Shultz lead the way on the outside for new guys Nate Johnson, Bud Maynard, Kevin Bereta and Dan Scott.

Secondary: The Phoenix secondary is arguably the best in the league. They return three starters and the depth at all the positions has improved over the group that gave up a paltry 59.6 yards per game through the air and only 2 TD passes during '06.

"Is it realistic to think the secondary will come up with the same numbers as last year? Perhaps not, but I wouldn't bet against them," says Coach Softich. One of the main reasons is Coach Watkins has instilled pride and teamwork into a group that almost solely relied on their athletic ability in the past. Returning from a group that helped the defense intercept 16 passes in 8 games last season are veteran corners Brian Hughes and Mike Hardenburgh. Scott Brown,

Marshall Knapp and converted receiver Fred Russo lead the veteran charge pushing for more playing time and working well with newcomers Adrian Ayers and Robert Curran.

The Safeties are led by two time All-Star Tony Sanderson, an athletic and cagey veteran who is the general on the field. "Tony is fun to watch and fun to be around. He has successfully mixed his great ability with the leadership qualities we always knew he had and was rewarded by being voted a Captain this year," states Softich. "He can handle whatever we throw at him and does everything we ask. He makes the other players better everyday."

Stephen Schreiber joins Sanderson at safety and gives the Phoenix even more size and speed in the middle. Combining with the "Twin Towers" of the secondary are veterans Jeff Maynard and Tayler Crouch, both of whom can play the corner in a pinch. Lightning quick rookies Francis Jordan and RJ McCollum are eager to get their chances also.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Special Teams will again be under the watchful eyes of Coach Jason Monson. "Our goal is to improve in every area, to help out both the offense and the defense with better field position. We are looking for big plays from the special teams this season," says Monson. In '07, both the punting and place kicking chores will be handled by former Grizzly Mark Spencer. He is widely regarded as the best punter in the league and plans to fill the kicking shoe of league leading scorer and recent retiree, Rafael Roberts.



KEY PLAYERS



G. Johnson

The Phoenix are elated to have Running Back Gavin Johnson back for another year of turf pounding power. Perhaps the best all-purpose back in the league comes from California in the 25-year-old Johnson.

Head Coach Matt Softich tells, “Not only is Johnson a threat running the ball, but defenses must contend with him catching the ball.” With his eyes-open, hands-on catching, he pulled it down for over 350 yards and 6 TD’s in 2006.

Running Backs Coach Caleb McCallum adds, “Gavin is the type of player who brings a certain type of fire to the running game. He has a way of finding the cracks and slipping through them without being touched.”

With Johnson set to find those voids and capitalize them, look for some high scoring numbers. “I expect him to be one of the best backs in the league,” McCallum says of the 6-foot, 230-pound back.



Jurasek

Shane Jurasek never played high school football in his native Great Falls, Mont., however his stats tell a different story of experience and talent. He holds the RMFL record for single season and career passing yards at 1,491.

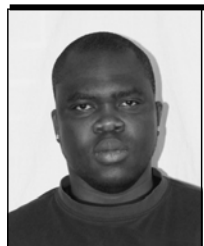
But to Jurasek, that isn’t what is most important. “Winning. Having the team win. That is what we are about. If the records come, that is nice, but I want to win the Title more than anything else,” says the 27-year-old QB.

“I just always loved to play football,” he tells, which may seem out of the ordinary for a young man studying to become a design technician in the theatre department at the University of Montana. He’s made Peter Pan fly with intricate rigging at the Montana Theater and has been costume designer for an outlandish musical.

Jurasek has played for the former Missoula team and spent time with the Helena Titans. Now, he is true Missoula. “Shane is a taller, slightly better looking version of Marty Mornhinweg,” jokes Head Coach Matt Softich. “But seriously, he has that same sense to find the open receiver, makes very few mistakes and has a great understanding of our offense.”

The dominant offensive line is what Jurasek is most thankful for this season. “They keep me alive. Without them, we are nothing,” he notes. “This team, community-wise, is one of the best I’ve been a part of. They’re playing for the guy next to them and not themselves.”

Softich adds, “Shane’s a great leader and the team respects him. We’re expecting a great season from him.”



Kambou

Habib Kambou is the gentle giant of the Phoenix defense. At 6’3”, 245 pounds, the dominating Defensive End has the power and worldly poise to take on anything that comes at him.

Born in Senegal, West Africa, Kambou moved as an infant to Bordeaux in southwest France. He was raised there for 10 years by his father, who was in the French Navy, and his mother, an ophthalmologist. Eventually the family moved to Burkina, Africa, and the Ivory Coast.

His French and English language skills are well developed, as is his fairly new fascination with American football. “We never played football,” he explains. “My first contact was with video games and television.” Then he played flag football with American friends. He was hooked.

Kambou came to Florida in 2000 and attend college for two years. Friends convinced him to move to Missoula, where in 2005, he graduated in Computer Science from the University of Montana. He works as a programmer for Intertech U.S.A. in Missoula.

A friend in Missoula introduced him to full-contact play through a friend playing for Missoula’s previous semi-pro team. At that time, Kambou had back problems, so Coach Matt Softich had to wait until the Phoenix began to officially sign the D. End.

“My goal is to be able to stop any run,” Kambou tells.



Sanderson

A Corvallis, Mont., kid with superb athleticism is making his mark with the Phoenix players.

“Tony is fun to watch and fun to be around. He has successfully mixed his great ability with the leadership qualities we always knew he had and was rewarded by being voted a Captain this year,” Head Coach Matt Softich tells. “He can handle whatever we throw at him and does everything we ask. He makes the other players better everyday.”

Sanderson has to work on his confidence everyday, too. “There are a lot of things I want to get better at,” the 25-year-old safety tells. “One, it’s hard to know when to come up on the run. I want to work on timing.

“I feel like I’m one of the best players on the field, but at the same point, I feel I could be better.”

Assistant Coach John Watkins adds, “Tony’s a good leader. He might not want to be a leader, but he has really brought the other players to look up to him. And, he probably is one of the best.”

COACH PROFILES

Head Coach Matt Softich



Extending his long coaching career, Matt Softich has signed up for a third year coaching Semi-Pro Football in Missoula. He is an Anaconda native with over 25 years experience coaching football and working with athletes of all ages and abilities. He is entering his third year as Head Coach of the Missoula Semi-Pro Football team now known as The Missoula Phoenix. The team was formerly called the Missoula Raptors. In just two years with the Raptors, they went from expansion team of the Rocky Mountain Football League to winning two Montana Division Championships and became the first Montana Semi-Pro team to win a playoff game.

Following an injury plagued career as the worst player in the history of Anaconda High School, as he tells it, Softich began coaching under Larry Donovan at the University of Montana in 1980. His coaching odyssey also saw stops at Montana Tech, Hibbing Community College in Minnesota, Sheridan High School in Wyoming and Anaconda High School. He also spent time in Portland as Head Coach of the Portland Predators in the World League, as well as with the Oregon Thunderbolts minor league organization.

Before moving back to Missoula, Softich spent time in Indianapolis working in motor sports. His Indy Car career saw him work with Treadway Racing and Team Green as a Data Acquisition Specialist, and as Project Manager for the Team Green Academy.

The 47-year-old coach is married to the former Sheila Miller from Ronan. Together, they have a 6-year-old daughter, Emma, who is not afraid to critique her dad's play calling.

Here is a quick look at Softich's extensive sports career:

- 1980-83 University of Montana
- 1984 Hibbing (MN) Community College
- 1985 University of Montana
- 1986 Sheridan (WY) High School
- 1987-89 Montana Tech
- 1990-91 Portland Predators/ Oregon Thunderbolts
- 1992-95 Anaconda Senior High School
- 1996-00 Indianapolis/ Derek Daly Group/Team Green
- 2004-06 Missoula Semi-Pro Football
- 2007 Missoula Phoenix



Swan

Coaching quarterbacks and receivers for The Missoula Phoenix is a job that Mike Swann feels he was made for.

"I've played a lot of football — since 4th grade," Swann tells. "I know how to read defenses and how the defense is reacting to the offense, and make the proper adjustments."

Swann lived his early years in Ronan, Mont. His family relocated to the Seattle area when Swann entered the 4th grade. He played Quarterback and Defensive Back at William Franklin West High School in Chehalis, Wash. Though he did not play college ball, he played a half season for a semi-pro football team in Burien, Wash., in 1987.

After returning to the Missoula area in 2001 to work as a sales representative for Norlift, a warehouse product and forklift company from Spokane, his eyes turned to football again.

Swann has decided to coach for The Phoenix for one simple reason, he says. "Because I can relate with the players, and help them achieve their personal goals."

"Expect to see consistence," Swann emphasizes.

The 38-year-old husband and father of three spends most Sundays playing football with a group of core Phoenix players who take to the field on those Sundays when not playing full contact football. "I have a good idea of who my guys are and their talents," he explains. "I didn't know anybody before this year." Another benefit, Swann says, is that playing with area athletes is good for recruiting.



Struble

Taking the lead over the Phoenix Offensive Line is Clint Struble, a 28-year-old veteran of Powell County High School. From there, Struble played for Jamestown College in North Dakota in 1997 and 1998. Torn ligaments and a knee cap with a mind of its own took him off the field.

He is now a dedicated Missoula resident, after coming here first in 2001 and then spending a few years in Bozeman in hot tub sales and coaching their Senior Babe Ruth Baseball team.

In 2004 he returned to Missoula, where he is Loyola High School's head coach for wrestling. "I've got young teams, so it's a learning experience for sure," Struble admits. "I'm pioneering the program." Loyola had an on-again, off-again wrestling program for the past 10 years. With wrestling taking such a big part of his time, why add Semi-pro football? "Love of the game," he tells. "It's my way to be around the game and be part of a good community organization."

Having 15 screws in his heel from a construction accident has kept him on the sidelines. "That definitely made me retire."

Wrestlers and football players alike have taken to Struble's positive strategy. "I've been around kids and I'm around adults now. You have to take a little different approach. You have to be able to keep their heads down to Earth," he explains. "They need to play with pride, but be humble and carry themselves well."

When he is away from sports, Struble plays bass guitar in the very popular Christian alternative rock band called "Remnant." The four guys and one girl play almost all original music. They have appeared in public parks, schools and conferences in Missoula. "I might go to Nashville with the band, but not to play. Maybe just go with them and manage them," he says, looking toward the big time.



Funke

As Assistant Phoenix Head Coach and Defensive Line Coach, 46-year-old Bill Funke is basically a teacher.

A University of Montana graduate in 1985 with a degree in Health and Physical Education and a minor in History Education, Funke began his career teaching in Terry, Mont. for one year. While there, he was assistant football coach in 1998-1999 and the head track coach. From 2003 to 2005, he also coached freshman football at Missoula's Big Sky High School.

"I loved working with the kids. I absolutely loved it," he says. "We were able to mold the freshman players into the kind of players they would be at the varsity level. We got to start right at the start. I liked the teaching part of it."

Now that he is working with the men on a semi-pro team, Funke adds, "It's almost like coaching freshman football. They haven't played for several years. We are teaching the basics all over."

The advantage, he notes, is that his current players are quicker learners with life experiences.

"Still, it's basically the same as it is in any football. You repeat; teach and teach and teach and finally they will learn it and execute it correctly on the football field."

After spending the past two seasons as Defensive Coordinator for the Missoula Raptors, Funke is ready to hit the field again as an integral part of the Defensive Line.

Of Funke, Phoenix Head Coach Matt Softich says, "Bill is a real players coach and always gets the most out of his charges. His experience and enthusiasm make him a very reliable part of our program. Being able to concentrate on the D-Line exclusively this season will turn that position into a real team strength."

Being assistant head coach this year will be a bit different, he knows. "I'm going to be looking at everything, too, being assistant head coach. I won't step on any toes, but I will help out when needed.

"We have a good core of young men that I think are going to do well."

Funke played his high school football in Polson and wrestled in college at Montana State University in 1978-1979. He also spent two years at UM, 1980-1982, until injured his hamstring. He and his wife, Lisa, have been married 13 years and have an 8-year-old daughter, Bailey. He is employed as a department manager for Walmart SuperCenter in Missoula.

COACH PROFILES...continued



Watkins

From young boy to adulthood, John Watkins has been playing football all 29 years of his life. Yet even being named coach of the Phoenix Defensive Secondary doesn't mean football is his life.

The California native and his wife, Erika, have two toddlers to keep him hopping. Watkins also works as a department manager at Wal-Mart.

During the four years of his high school football career in California and Oklahoma, Watkins was named Defensive MVP. In 1996, he played junior college football at Delta College in Stockton, Calif.

After spending time with his Phoenix players on the Secondary, he says, "I see a lot of talent in a lot of the guys, actually. ... These guys know what they're doing. I am just there to help them along the way."

Watkins also sees great things from his cohort of Phoenix coaches. "It's nice being able to bounce ideas off people and have them know what you are talking about, and [having] them to listen to what you

are talking about.

"The rest of the coaches have a really open mind about everything. I think that is great."

Head Coach Matt Softich agrees about the importance of good communication, saying, "John is very intelligent and understands what we are trying to do defensively. He is a great addition to our staff and will help keep our remarkable secondary at the top of their game."

In addition to good coaching communication, Watkins is inspired by the way the coaches interact with the team. "We let the players decide a lot of things, too," he explains. "Like when do you want to practice? Coach and the whole team is very adaptable. We have a very good blend of personalities."



McCallum

Caleb McCallum grew up in Drummond, Mont., where he excelled at small-town Montana football. There, he played eight-man, Class C football. From there, he went on to play football for Montana Tech.

After spending five years in the Mining City, he moved to Missoula to finish up his education. While in Missoula, he joined what was then the Missoula Raptors and played a year with them. Because of an injury from playing college football he was only able to play one year.

That is when he decided to make a logical switch and take up coaching. He coached the following year, 2005-2006, with the Raptors. This season, he will be coaching Running Backs.

"My coaching experience has been fantastic. I am really looking forward to a great season with the new semi-pro team — the Missoula Phoenix," McCallum says. He has played and coached with the Raptors.

Phoenix Head Coach Matt Softich adds, "A former player for us who always gave his best, Caleb is very respected by the players. Coaching the backs is really more his natural position and will help us gain more consistency in the running game in '07." McCallum currently works for Zip Beverage and attends the University of Montana.



Munson

Although he has no formal experience in football past eighth grade, Jason Munson has become a valuable member of the Phoenix coaching staff.

Head Coach Matt Softich says, "Jason is probably the hardest worker we have on the staff. His organization skills serve the team well in his capacity as special teams coach. We can look forward to being solid in the kicking game again this season."

At 24 years of age, Munson will not only be the special teams coach, but will also work with the group of young, talented outside linebackers. Munson notes, "I see the attitude we need. It's refreshing that there are people coming in and leaving their expectations at the door. They are a little more trusting of the coaching staff."

He knows that success will only come when players and coaches use their merits and are not distracted by worrying about the people around them. That is one of the basics that Munson has learned as a "student of the game." He explains, "I've been watching football as long as I can remember. The more I watch, the more I learn."

He adds that learning to his innate personal qualities. "Whatever human abilities I possess, I've transferred into football. I have a good attention to detail and am a problem solver.

"Turning all that into a desire of mine [football] will make me capable of handling it."

When not focusing on Phoenix football, Munson is a master control operator for Max Media, which owns Missoula's ABC and FOX affiliate stations.



Wik

Assistant Inside Linebackers Coach Scott Wik has made a seemingly seamless transfer to becoming a promising leader in 2007, coming from the ranks of a semi-pro Missoula player in 2004.

Head Coach Matt Softich says, "Scott is a walking inspiration to everyone involved with the Phoenix organization. He brings with him an amazing attitude."

This is Wik's first year coaching. He is a former semi-pro player for a Missoula team. During that team's 2004 preseason game in Washington state, an injury led to hemorrhaging on the right side of his brain. "I was warned by family and doctors not to play again."

Today, that is the choice he has made. Luckily, the Phoenix were still looking for a few good coaching candidates.

Now, instead of playing on the O-line, he coaches. The Missoula native and Sentinel High graduate was a first-team all-state defensive tackle in 1989. When not coaching, he works at Smurfit-Stone Container and is a high school football referee.

COACH PROFILES...continued



Pitcher

Defensive Coach Ciche Pitcher is no stranger to the trenches while playing in Washington-Grizzly Stadium. An Anaconda boy since age three, Pitcher, now 25, was a standout athlete as AHS, and a four-year letterman playing football for the UM Grizzlies.

Pitcher began his first year at UM in 2000 as a “true” freshman linebacker and defensive end, and finished his Griz years solely as a defensive end. During his playing time, he wore the much sought-after “Number 37.”

He played well enough to earn numerous awards, though he was plagued with injuries, especially to his left shoulder. He dislocated it and tore its cartilage during fall camp his sophomore year, 2001.

That was the same year that Pitcher helped the Griz bring home their second National Championship title, giving each player and coach a 2001 Championship Ring. His mom, Beatriz, is holding onto it for him until he is more comfortable showing it off.

During that championship year, he led the Griz Defense with 17 tackles for a loss of 65 yards, and he achieved 11 sacks taking 56 yards away. Because he started as a “true” freshman in 2000, he was able to take red shirt status due to his injuries in 2002. Back on the field as a junior in 2003, he missed the first game of the year. He played three games, then re-injured the same shoulder and missed the remaining season.

Even during what became his final year of playing, 2003, Pitcher missed some playing time from an ankle injury and recurrent shoulder problems. Those injuries kept him from playing in 2004, what would have been his senior year.

Yet, his career stats for the Griz are impressive. The record books tell that while at UM, Pitcher had 24.5 Tackles for a Loss and 15.5 Sacks.

His accolades followed him off the field as well. In 2000 and 2001, he was an All-Big Sky academic team selection. He graduated with a degree in business with emphasis finance. He works as a commercial loan officer for First Security Bank in Missoula.

“[Phoenix coaching] does fit within my schedule and I still get to be into football,” he explains. “I am disappointed that I don’t get to do anything competitive. It’s the sacrifices you make to have kids and have a job.”

Pitcher is married to Jennifer (Verlanic) Pitcher. Together, they have one daughter, Reece, born in 2004. Their son, Erik, came two years later in 2006.

Phoenix Head Coach Matt Softich knows what he is getting from Pitcher’s talents. “With Ciche, we not only get someone with a great deal of experience, but also a quality individual. To have someone who played at the high level as he did for the Grizzlies’ is hard to come by at this level,” Softich tells. “We are lucky to have him.”

Pitcher feels just as lucky to be back in the game. “I’ve always enjoyed football. I’ve always enjoyed coaching,” he reflects. “This is a great opportunity for me to coach football without having the time commitment of high school or college coaching.”

“The biggest thing that you see is that these people are really excited about playing football,” Pitcher notes. “They have a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of energy. They are also willing to learn.”



Shandy

Dean Shandy wants to be a medical doctor, and he’s only footsteps away from reaching his dream. One day soon, he will walk to the mailbox and hopefully have an acceptance letter from one of many medical schools to which he has applied.

At age 24, the University of Montana pre-med student has hung up his playing cleats and is assisting the Phoenix as their assistant running backs coach. It is time consuming, but not as much as being a player, he tells.

He has a wife, Sarah, and many other players have families, too. “It’s a volunteer-based team. People have jobs and families. Family has to come first,” he adds.

“The only thing I can do is coach,” explains the former semi-pro player. “You have to look at the game in a whole new light — not do what you are told — but do the telling.”



O’Neill

Trevor O’Neill didn’t start his football career as a coach. It was the farthest thing from his mind until the former right guard tore his ACL at practice early this season and has been sporting a knee brace ever since.

Today, the 23-year-old O’Neill serves as an assistant coach for the Offensive Line. But, he could play again, maybe, perhaps.

“Right now it is just a possibility,” he explains “[The doctors] haven’t ruled anything out.” He is getting comfortable in his coaching role, how ever. “It’s pretty easy to adjust from playing to coaching,” he says. “I think I’ve earned their respect because I was regarded as one of the better linemen out there when playing last year.”

As for his fellow coaches, they are learning from each other. “I am real excited about our new coaching staff and what they are bringing to the table.”

O’Neill came to Missoula and worked for Zip Beverage for a year to gain his in-state residency requirement to attend the University of Montana. O’Neill studies accounting and expects to graduate in 2008.

MEDICAL STAFF



Dr. Mike Johnson

Michael G. Johnson, D.C., has returned to The Missoula Phoenix for his second year as Medical Director for the Semi Pro team.

The Minnesota native graduated in 2004 with a Doctorate of Chiropractic Sciences from Logan College of Chiropractic in Chesterfield, MO. He has worked as a licensed Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine in Missoula since 2005. Johnson is owner of Absolute Health Family Chiropractic, Inc., at 913 S.W. Higgins, Suite 101.

Some of his achievements and awards include:

- Distinguished Service Medal, United States Air Force Survival School, Class 3602
- Airborne Medal, United States Army, Fort Benning, GA
- Meritorious Achievement Award, United States Air Force Survival School, Class 3602
- Field Academic Award, United States Air Force Survival School, Class 3602
- Distinguished Teaching Award, United States Air Force Survival School, Class 3602
- Honor Graduate, States Air Force Survival School, Class 3602

Johnson, or Doc Mike, as the team's players call him, offers a complete range of Chiropractic care for the Phoenix team. "Keeping these players in the best health possible is integral to having them play well and remain healthy on and off the field," he explains.

During games and practices, Johnson is on the sidelines to assist immediately if a player is injured. Follow-up care is also provided at Absolute Health.



Duffy

Chris R. Duffy, D.C., hails from Kearney, Neb., and has spent most of his life in the Heartland. This winter, he relocated to Missoula, where he works at Choice Chiropractic, alongside Dr. Michael Johnson at Absolute Health Family Chiropractic

At 26, Duffy has found his future in Chiropractic medicine, earning his Part I-IV Chiropractic Certification from the National Board of Chiropractic Certification in 2006.

Duffy received his Doctorate of Chiropractic Sciences that same year from the Cleveland Chiropractic College in Kansas City, Missouri. His Bachelors of Human Biology came from the same college one year earlier. The Greely, Colo., National Board of Chiropractic Examiners awarded him certification in Physiotherapy in 2005.

His experience lends itself well to treating the Missoula Phoenix players, helping prevent possible injuries and lessening their effects when an injury happens.

Duffy is no stranger to the football field, either. He played Gibbon High School football from 199 to 1997 as a tight end and defensive end. In 1997, Duffy was named to the Nebraska All-Conference Defense.

Missoula Phoenix Fitness Trainer Sarah C. Allen is a 23-year-old native of Hungry Horse, Mont., near Glacier Park. Allen received an Associate of Science degree from Flathead Valley Community College and will be graduating from UM in May with a Bachelor of Arts in Human Biology and a minor in Psychology. This September, she will be attending Parker College of Chiropractic in Dallas to become a Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine.

Allen enjoys outdoor activities, from simply lying in the sun, to camping, rafting, hiking and swimming. In the winter, she takes on jogging, snowboarding, shooting and playing foosball at her home.

Virginia Morrison, CMT, sports massage

ADMINISTRATION... Board of Directors



Velk

John Velk graduated in 1983 from Havre High School along Montana's highline and played football as a linebacker. The 1987 University of Montana High Honors graduate holds a degree in Political Science, with minors in History and Economics.

Velk graduated UM Law School with honors in 1990. He owns his own law practice: The Law Offices of John Rayburn and Velk, PC.

He married Rene Enebo in 1993. She is a pharmacist and owns Garden City Pharmacy, Inc. Velk has raised three step-children of Rene's: Jordan Stone, Meghan Stone, and Rachelle Stone.

Velk's community involvement is wide-ranging. He holds the position of Board Chairman for The Missoula Phoenix, and was instrumental in helping the team's leadership effectively organize and operate successfully. He was the president of Missoula Country Club in 2004, President of Missoula Exchange Club in 2000, and active in many Missoula charities.

He also coached basketball at Meadow Hill Middle School for several years, was an assistant coach for Little Grizzly Football, and is currently an assistant tennis coach at Sentinel High School.

Chip Bush is a "die-hard" football fan, and that is what has gotten him where he is today as general manager of the Missoula Phoenix.

Sure, he played a bit as a young kid, but it's his business skills that are so valuable to the Board of Directors, of which he is a part.

"My wife calls it a hobby. But, it's a major time commitment," he admits. "It's like running a small company."

Bush has gained his business expertise as regional sales manager for Proctor and Gamble. His job takes him on the road a lot, but he remains in constant touch with the team.

"By the end of the season, I expect to be in the playoffs," he insists. Others ask, "Why?"

"First, because of the quality of the talent we have on the team. These are professional guys who have a passion to play football on the weekend. That gives me my passion."

When fellow Phoenix board member **Todd Mackey** sits in the announcer's booth at Washington-Grizzly Stadium for Phoenix games, it will feel very familiar. Though he will be working a different position as the PA announcer for Missoula's semi-pro football games, Mackey knows which buttons to push and when.

Since he fulfilled his first 3 month contract back in 1998 to be a sound technician during home Griz football games, Mackey has been responsible for selecting and playing the stadium's motivational music.

"You have to feel it. You have to know music well enough to play the right music at the right time," he explains. "If you don't motivate people in the stands, you don't motivate the players. I like to think I can affect the outcome of a game."

Since July 1, when he was named to the Phoenix Board of Directors, the 38-year-old Anaconda native has been instrumental in affecting the overall success of the new semi-pro team

"It's experience," he knows. "Big time experience. ...If you are in charge, you have to be able to walk up to someone, know names, and talk to all people on a personal level."

As director of football operations for the Phoenix, Mackey has done just that. He has been instrumental in gaining team sponsorship and helping secure the stadium for game day.

In addition to being the Phoenix's Medical Director, **Dr. Mike Johnson** is also a founding member of the Board of Directors. For more information on Johnson, see Page 9.



Bush



Mackey



Dr. Mike Johnson

ADMINISTRATION... Team Staff



Coyle

Craig Coyle is the Phoenix director of equipment operations who oversees purchasing, maintaining and distributing team equipment. Coyle has a degree in business administration from UM, and was head equipment manager for three years for the athletic department of the University of Idaho. Coyle also worked for many years in the same capacity for Hellgate High School.

At that time he was part of the American Athletic Equipment Manager Association.

"I've been doing this off an on forever it seems," Coyle notes. "It's a challenge making sure everybody is fitted and taken care of in a timely manner."



Rule

Scott Rule is director of player personnel. He is in charge of collecting player fees, insurance certification and emotional fitness. That translates to helping players not neglect other parts of their lives while playing. He works with the medical staff on player physical health. Rule was formerly quarterbacks coach and receivers coach.

He is employed as assistant manager at Dollar Plus in Missoula. The 43-year-old Great Falls native has two daughters living in Great Falls, and he expects to be married within a year.

ADMINISTRATION...continued



Joyner

Amy Joyner serves as media and communications director for the Missoula Phoenix. She is responsible for producing all print and broadcast promotional materials, assisting with public relations events and working with local media as they cover the Phoenix in the news.

Joyner has 15 years experience in journalism. She worked for eight years as an editorial coordinator and news reporter for The Billings Gazette.

After she and her family returned to Missoula in 2000, she has been a freelance journalist and contract marketing planner. Joyner and her husband, Jim, have a 12-year-old son, Jackson. She has volunteered for the past six years as the site coordinator for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's annual springtime MS WALK.



Greg Evison

When Greg Evison is not crunching out numbers as the team statistician, he is combing through plays as the wide receivers coach for the Phoenix.

Semi-pro football and a mind for stats aren't new to Evison, but coaching for the Phoenix is. "I see a different team character in their commitment and discipline, explains Evison, who is in his late 30s.

When he was playing Missoula semi-pro, he admits he did not see much action. "I had my first catch in a playoff game," he laughs. Still, he has returned to football.

"I love football. I've played semi-pro wide receiver," he tells. "If I was younger, I'd rather play."

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- Jim Baker; MT Media Plus: Official Team Photographer
 - Deb Evison: Official Game Videographer
 - Liz Johnson, MBA: Financial Officer
 - Chris Shoen: Sports Performance Consultant
-

PLAYER REPRESENTATIVES



Garza

Age is experience and vice versa for Wide Receiver Dave Garza.

At 41, Garza's football resume includes playing in 1984-1985 as wide receiver, punter and kick returner for Wenatchee Community College in Washington, and then the native of Moses Lake, Wash., came to the place he now calls home — Missoula.

In 1986 to 1987 he was a highly successful playmaker in Washington-Grizzly Stadium as Wide Receiver. Since his days under Griz Coach Don Read, he has led many football camps in Washington, played flag football in Montana and California, coached freshman football in Glendive, played three years and coached one year for the Helena Titans, and became a skilled building contractor.

Oh, he also had time to marry and have two sons with his wife, Lezni. He works as a self-employed contractor/investor who buys property to rehabilitate and resell.

For the Phoenix, Garza is the Offensive Player Representative, who facilitates communication and concerns between players, coaches and team administration.

"Dave is an amazing player and an even better person. What he brings to the team on and off the field is immeasurable," Coach Softich notes. "Our whole team has been influenced positively by his work ethic and demeanor. He also runs some of the best patterns I've seen in all my years of coaching."

As a Titan, Garza became the RMFL record holder for 230 yards in a single game; tied for single-game touchdowns at four; tied the single-season receiving record with 12 TDs; was named 3-time All-RMFL; 2 time RMFL All Star; and, 2 time RMFL Semi-Pro All American.

James Jacobson is in his third year of Missoula semi-pro football — playing and working as hard as possible. The 36-year-old Defensive Tackle is one of the most consistent players on the roster, Coach Softich says.

Jacobson is busy as a player who is very active in the community and a team Player Representative. That is in addition to his work as assistant general manager, human resources director and loss-prevention manager for Missoula's Double Tree Hotel. His staunch fitness routine in a public gym is squeezed into his lunch hour each day.

After work, he can focus on his wife and three young sons.

Two nights each week, he attends an Organized Team Activity, which is generally a full-blown workout session for the entire team. Nearly all coaches and players attend, to communicate, as well.

"It's run more like an organization with business goals in mind, not a hobby," Jacobson says of the Phoenix team and its leadership.

LADY PHOENIX DANCE TEAM



*L– R Back: Rainey Moy, Lily Niday, Whitney Jarosch, Desi Becker (half standing), Jennie Hepner, Kayla Hayden, Kelli Grenfell, Jinann Bitar.
Front: Erin Cooley, Stephanie Gibbs, Rachel VanderVeen, Drew Hopfauf.*

Auditions for the Lady Phoenix Dance Team were held Jan. 19 through 21 at the DoubleTree Edgewater Hotel, to select a team of 12 women to represent the semi-pro football team. A talented pool of women age 18 and older auditioned for a position, says Dance Team Director Jennifer Brenner.

After three rigorous days of training and auditions held at the DoubleTree Hotel, judges chose the 12 from a final pool of 18. Judges included Phoenix representatives and a panel of award-winning dancers and instructors from across Montana.

“It was fantastic and as a result, we have a fantastic group of women to represent the Phoenix organization and support the team,” notes Brenner. “We kept the bar high and selected a wonderfully diverse, talented and well-rounded group of women to the team.”

Participants will take part in public appearances and performances, experience well-balanced fitness training and volunteer for charity events. Practices began immediately following auditions and the women will perform together as a team at any playoff and championship games, through mid-July.

The 12 women will suit up in a much different fashion than the football players on game day, yet they are essential team members.

The team will continue their training throughout the season at Gold's Gym. Members of the Phoenix Cheer and Dance Team, and their ages, are: Jinann Bitar, 21; Desi Becker, 19; Erin Cooley, 21; Stephanie Gibbs, 20; Kelli Grenfell, 20; Kayla Hayden, 18; Jennie Hepner, 21; Drew Hopfauf, 21; Whitney Jarosch, 22; Rainey Moy, 21; Lily Niday, 21; and, Rachel VanderVeen, 19.



Brenner

Without hesitation, Jennifer Brenner accepted the honor of directing the brand new Lady Phoenix Dance Team. After earning her B.A. in Education at Arizona State University and a Master's in Educational Leadership and Administration from Northern Arizona University, Brenner spent 10 years in Arizona teaching in public schools and coaching cheer and dance teams of all levels. Her Arizona teams competed at local, regional and national events, earning several championship titles.

However, her real passion is mentoring young women to achieve their dreams and to become healthy, positive role models. Upon her move to Missoula in 2000, while working as Greek Life Advisor at UM, she coached the Varsity cheer team at Big Sky High School. She has also been the founder, head coach and team director for Missoula Mismo Heat All-Star competitive cheer teams for the past three years.

GAME/PRACTICE FACILITIES

The Missoula Phoenix are elated to be playing their home games this year in Washington-Grizzly Stadium at the University of Montana. Use of the stadium brings a whole new level of excitement to spring football for the Rocky Mountain Football League.

Plans for the stadium began in August of 1985, when Missoula businessman Dennis R. Washington and the employees of Washington Corporations gifted \$1 million for the project. This laid the foundation for the name of "Washington-Grizzly Stadium."

There are 49 private boxes located on the east and west sides of the stadium. They are individually decorated and furnished.

UM first expanded the stadium in the spring of 1995, providing end-zone seating on both the north and south sides. Prior to the 1995 expansion there were 12,500 permanent seats, with grass end zone seating making the capacity around 15,000.

In the spring and summer of 2003, Washington-Grizzly Stadium underwent a second expansion

bringing approximately 4,000 seats to the north end zone. This increased the stadium capacity to its current 23,183.

At the stadium, Montana led the nation in attendance for the first time in history in 2005 among Division I-AA schools, averaging 22,537 fans in seven home games. The 23,867 fans at the 2004 Griz-Cat game set an all-time stadium attendance record.

The Missoula Phoenix will be using the 26-foot by 36-foot GrizVision screen, which was brought in from Times Square in New York City. The screen was added in 2002 as a state-of-the-art message center which features game statistics, player profiles, digital replays, and shots of the crowd.

Another notable stadium improvement came for the 2001 season when the natural-grass stadium gave way to SprinTurf. An anonymous donor provided \$1 million for the new playing surface. The field was also named "John Hoyt Field" in 2001 at the request of the anonymous donor, in honor of Hoyt, a long-time Grizzly booster.

PRACTICE...The Missoula Phoenix use several practice facilities to develop required game-day skills. Outdoor practices are held on Saturdays and Sundays at Jefferson School, Meadow Hill Middle School, the South Campus Fields near the UM golf course, and Hellgate High School's practice field on South 4th Street West.

One to two nights each week, team members meet at the gymnasium provided by SHEC (South Hills Evangelical Church) on North Avenue. Conditioning drills are set and accomplished there with the full coaching staff and medical personnel.



The Rocky Mountain Football League (RMFL) was established in Spring 1997, in Pocatello, Idaho. Now, the league operates in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada and Utah. The focus of the original Rocky Mountain Football league was simply to provide an opportunity for local area football players to continue or begin their careers in the greater Rocky Mountain area. It was established as a Fall football league so that players could be playing football.... during "Football Season". The RMFL has since become a Spring Football League.

In 1999, four new teams were added. They were the Great Falls Rangers, the Twin Falls Wildcats, the Snake River Rebels and the Treasure Valley (Boise) Cowboys.

Year 2000 was marked by significant expansion. The league added the Bozeman Kodiaks, Billings Warriors, Boise Cardinals and Wasatch Wildcats.

In 2001, the Montana teams (Bozeman and Great Falls) decided to test waters in the NAFL. Idaho Falls was convinced to prove themselves in the neighboring UFL. Treasure Valley and Billings folded up shop.

Year 2002 witnessed substantial regrowth in the RMFL. Ex-champions, Idaho Falls and Snake River, returned to the league and the new Madison Lionz from Rexburg, Idaho also emerged. Montana returned to the RMFL with the Helena Titans.

Before the 2004 season, five UFL teams came into the RMFL: Davis Vipers, Utah Blitz, Salt Lake Nemesis, Layton Longhorns and 4-time reigning champion, South Ogden Rhino-Raiders. Also four new expansion teams joined the league: Utah Wolverines, Layton Pitbulls, Mountain Home Bengals and Glacier Knights.

Eight new teams were added in 2005. A return of the 2000 champion, Wasatch Wildcats, as well as the Missoula Raptors, Idaho Matadors, Snake River Sabercats, Brigham City Devil Dogs, Morgan Marauders, Kamas Valley Muddogs and the Colorado Scorpions.

In 2006, expansion ebbed a bit with only two "additional" teams. The Utah Heat were added, effectively replacing the folded Utah Blitz. The Magic Valley Bulldawgs became a "new" team with new management.

In Hamilton, Mont., the Bitterroot Blaze were formed and made some real noise. Some of the champion Rhino-Raiders formed a new team in Logan, Utah; the Cache Valley Bears.

This year has seen the Raptors in hiatus. The Missoula players, prompted by frustrations, decided a change was in order. That change brings a new management team, a new color scheme, a new logo and a new name: The Missoula Phoenix.