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BIG SKY ANNOUNCES PRESEASON ALL-CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAM

PARK CITY, Utah (July 15, 2013) - Northern Arizona placed six player on the 2013 Big Sky Conference Pre-season All-Conference Team, while three-time defending champion Montana State garnered four selections on the squad, which was released on Monday at the Big Sky Summer Kickoff in Park City, Utah.

Montana State senior quarterback DeNarius McGhee, a two-time Big Sky MVP, was selected as the Preseason Offensive Player of the Year. Montana senior linebacker Jordan Tripp was tabbed as the Preseason Defensive Player of the Year.

All 13 Big Sky Conference teams placed at least one player on the squad. Montana, Cal Poly, Eastern Washington and Southern Utah all saw three of its players selected. The 30-player team was chosen by a select group of media and sports information directors. Eleven of the student-athletes earned First Team All-Big Sky honors in 2012.

Northern Arizona's contingent was led by senior All-American running back Zach Bauman, a candidate for the Walter Payton Award. The 5-foot-10, 200-pounder enters his final campaign ranked 11th on the Big Sky's all-time rushing list with 3,676.

Junior tight end R.J. Rickert, senior defensive tackle Tim Wilkinson, senior punter Andy Wilder, senior safety Lucky Dozier, and senior cornerback Anders Battle were the other Lumberjacks named to the squad. Dozier and Battle were named First Team All-Conference in 2012.

McGhee, a 6-foot, 212-pounder from Euless, Texas, is the reigning Big Sky Offensive Player of the Year. He also earned the honor in 2010 as a freshman. The three-time Walter Payton Award finalist enters his final season with 9,116 passing yards and 71 passing touchdowns.

Senior running back Cody Kirk, senior wide receiver Tanner Bleskin, and senior defensive Brad Brad Daly were the other Bobcats named to the team. Montana State has shared the last three Big Sky Conference titles, compiled a 21-3 conference mark over that span.

Tripp, a 6-3, 237-pounder from Missoula, Mont., was a First Team All-Conference linebacker in 2012. He tallied 95 total tackles, and helped a UM defense which was tops in the league against the rush. Tripp is a preseason candidate for the Buck Buchanan Award, given annually to the top defensive player in FCS football.

Junior defensive end Zach Wagenmann, who was also a First Team All-Conference pick in 2012, was one of three juniors voted to the team. The Grizzlies' third player was senior offensive tackle Danny Kistler, who was also named First Team All-Conference in 2012.

Eastern Washington, which advanced to the 2012 national semifinals, placed three defensive players on the team: Senior linebacker Ronnie Hamlin, senior cornerback T.J. Lee III, and senior safety Allen Brown. Hamlin and Lee III were both First Team All-Conference picks in 2012. Hamlin is a candidate for the Buchanan.

Cal Poly's senior Giovanni Sani was the other offensive tackle selected. His teammates Sullivan Grosz, a senior defensive tackle, and senior special teams standout Chris Judge were tabbed.

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Southern Utah was represented by senior wide receiver Fatu Moala, All-American kicker Colton Cook, and offensive guard Gavin Farr, who was First Team All-Conference in 2012.

Sacramento State senior guard Tyler Worthley and senior wide receiver Morris Norrise were also selected to the team.

North Dakota's Greg Hardin was selected at two positions: Wide receiver and return specialist. Hardin, a senior from Bellevue, Neb., hauled in 65 catches for 1,145 yards with 14 touchdowns en route to First Team All-Conference honors last season. He also averaged 31.6 yards per kick return with a touchdown.

The squad was rounded out by Portland State senior center Mitch Gaulke, UC Davis junior fullback Dalton Turay, Idaho State senior linebacker Trevor Spence, Northern Colorado senior linebacker Clarence Bumpas, and Weber State senior linebacker Anthony Morales.

Bumpas, a Buchanan candidate, amassed a league-high 145 total tackles in 2011. He tallied 49 in five games in 2012, before missing the rest of the season with an injury.

2013 Big Sky Preseason All-Conference Team

Offensive MVP – DeNarius McGhee, Sr., QB, Montana State

Defensive MVP – Jordan Tripp, Sr., LB, Montana

OFFENSE				
Pos.	Player	Year	Hometown	School
*QB	DeNarius McGee	Sr.	Euless, Texas	Montana State
*RB	Zach Bauman	Sr.	Chandler, Ariz.	Northern Arizona
RB	Cody Kirk	Sr.	Frenchtown, Mont.	Montana State
FB	Dalton Turay	Jr.	Pleasanton, Calif.	UC Davis
OG	Tyler Worthley	Sr.	Dublin, Calif.	Sacramento State
*OG	Gavin Farr	Sr.	South Ogden, Utah	Southern Utah
C	Mitch Gaulke	Sr.	West Linn, Ore.	Portland State
*OT	Danny Kistler	Sr.	Seattle, Wash.	Montana
OT	Giovanni Sani	Sr.	Modesto, Calif.	Cal Poly
*WR	Greg Hardin	Sr.	Bellevue, Neb.	North Dakota
WR	Tanner Bleskin	Sr.	Great Falls, Mont.	Montana State
WR	Morris Norrise	Sr.	Berkeley, Calif.	Sacramento State
WR	Fatu Moala	Sr.	Kearns, Utah	Southern Utah
TE	R.J. Rickert	Jr.	Gilbert, Ariz.	Northern Arizona
K	Colton Cook	Sr.	Centerville, Utah	Southern Utah
Ret.	Greg Hardin	Sr.	Bellevue, Neb.	North Dakota

DEFENSE				
Pos.	Player	Year	Hometown	School
*DE	Zack Wagenmann	Jr.	Missoula, Mont.	Montana
DE	Brad Daly	Sr.	Helena, Mont.	Montana State
DT	Sullivan Grosz	Sr.	Fresno, Calif.	Cal Poly
DT	Tim Wilkinson	Sr.	Las Vegas, Nev.	Northern Arizona
*OLB	Jordan Tripp	Sr.	Missoula, Mont.	Montana
OLB	Trevor Spence	Sr.	Aberdeen, Idaho	Idaho State
*ILB	Ronnie Hamlin	Sr.	Lacey, Wash.	Eastern Washington
ILB	Clarence Bumpas	Sr.	Colorado Springs, Colo.	Northern Colorado
ILB	Anthony Morales	Sr.	Edmond, Okla.	Weber State
*CB	Anders Battle	Sr.	Phoenix, Ariz.	Northern Arizona
*CB	T.J. Lee III	Sr.	Seattle, Wash.	Eastern Washington
*S	Lucky Dozier	Sr.	Sacramento, Calif.	Northern Arizona
S	Allen Brown	Sr.	Tacoma, Wash.	Eastern Washington
P	Andy Wilder	Sr.	Scottsdale, Ariz.	Northern Arizona
Special Teams – Chris Judge		Sr.	Westlake Village, Calif.	Cal Poly

*First Team All-Conference in 2012.