The fall sports season is now in full swing. But locally, it really kicks into high gear this coming weekend.

First though, it’s time to take a quick look back at the first major weekend of the fall sports season, and view some things that might not have made it into Monday’s Weekend Sports Roundup.

The big talk of course was Friday night’s Havre High football game against the Miles City Cowboys. Once upon a time, there was a game between Miles City and Havre which will forever be remembered as the snow game at Blue Pony Stadium.

Well, Friday night’s game will be remembered as the lightning game, and a game without a winner, which almost never happens in Montana high school football. UM-Western’s Sam Rutherford was named Frontier Football Offensive Player of the Week. Rutherford is a 6-1, 215-pound, freshman running back from Great Falls.

And though the Cowboys and Ponies ended in a 6-6 tie, there are some interesting things to take away from the night. First, Havre High Activities Director Dennis Murphy deserves some big kudos. His situation couldn’t have been an easy one because not only was his first priority the safety of everyone involved in the game Friday night, but he was also still entrusted to ensure that the visiting Cowboys, who traveled a long way to play, got a football game in.

And Murphy did everything he could do to wait out the storm, while ensuring everyone was also placed in the safest environment possible. I know, at the end of the day, the decision to call off the game wasn’t an easy one, but Murphy made the right call in that circumstance.

His leadership Friday night was, as it always is, outstanding, and Havre High is very lucky to have such an experienced and knowledgeable leader in its activities department.

Second, give the Blue Pony defense some major credit, too. It might not show up in an abbreviated box score, but the Ponies sure came out hot Friday night. With the stats pretty unofficial Friday night, it is impossible to say just how many yards the Cowboys gained by halftime, but it couldn’t have been many. Linebackers Jordan Schroeder and Jake Williams seemed to be everywhere, I don't know how many times junior Tyrell Pierce got pressure on Cowboy quarterback Ben Herzog, and Havre’s secondary made passing almost impossible. And all that came against what is considered one of the biggest offensive lines in Class A football. Yes, Havre’s defensive performance was mighty impressive in the first half, especially coming off a tough season-opening outing at Whitefish.

A few more notes from Saturday’s MSU-Northern-Carroll College game, too.

In my column, and in the game story Monday, I mentioned some nearly-intercepted passes by the Lights. Both Josh and Trevor Baum came within inches of picking off Carroll quarterback Dakota Stonehouse.
Saturday, and though Stonehouse threw for a pair of TDs, the Lights’ secondary did a great job disrupting things all day.

Northern’s offensive linemen also deserve some love. Carroll is continuously churning out great defensive linemen and the Saints don’t seem to be short on them this season. Still, Travis Dean was sacked just twice Saturday, and while he did feel some pressure, the MSU-N offensive line kept him clean for most of the game, and that was big, not just in helping the Lights move the ball, but also because Dean is MSU-N’s backup QB, and Derek Lear was sidelined with a knee injury. Honestly, I can’t remember a Northern/Carroll matchup where the Lights’ QB has only been sacked twice, and that’s a credit to just how good MSU-N’s line is this season.

Now on to the new week. And it’s a big one.

The Hi-Line will be abuzz with sports this weekend, especially at MSU-Northern.

Friday night, the MSU-N volleyball team makes its long-awaited home debut, and it won’t be just any ordinary match inside the Armory Gymnasium. No, the Skylights are playing nationally ranked Carroll College Friday night. Yes, the same Carroll squad Northern beat in its home-opener last September, and the same Saints’ team which broke Northern’s heart in last year’s Frontier Conference championship match.

Both teams return the majority of their rosters from last year, so this should be about as intense a Northern/Carroll volleyball match as there has been in quite some time. And what would make it even better is, if the Northern fans turned out in record numbers to watch. The Skylights had great crowds all last season, and this is a chance for the Northern fans to really make an impact in what has quickly become one of the most intense matchups in the Frontier Conference.

Saturday also marks the first time the Lights will enter into Blue Pony Stadium this season, and fans don’t want to miss it. Northern will be playing an Eastern Oregon squad which has beat the Lights three straight times, while the Lights are looking to make it two wins in their first three games of 2013.

The Lights will be donning their new, Nike home uniforms for the first time, and it would be great if they had a big, loud and boisterous crowd to welcome them home.

The Northern rodeo team is also home for the first and only time this season. The MSU-N Rodeo will take place Friday through Sunday at the Great Northern Fairgrounds, and it rounds out a huge weekend of MSU-N sports.

Meanwhile, on the high school scene, the Havre High golf teams are home to play the Havre Invite at Beaver Creek Golf Course Saturday. And there’s plenty of big high school football games along the Hi-Line as well.

Friday night, the Chinook Sugarbeeters host the Sunburst Refiners in a Northern C clash, while a Northern Division Six-Man game between Big Sandy and Box Elder should be very exciting Saturday in Box Elder. The Bears scored 62 points in a win at West Yellowstone last weekend, while the Pioneers got on track with a thrilling win Alberton.