

9-4-09 **Scott Mansch**

With veteran assistants such as Nick Howlett and Jim Hogan, the coaching staff of Mike Van Diest at Carroll College has long been regarded as among the best in NAIA football. The addition of former NFL player Rocky Klever doesn't hurt, either.

"Rocky's doing a great job," said Van Diest of the former Montana Grizzly star and New York Jets tight end. "He's coaching our running backs. And he picked a good time to be doing that."

Van Diest's Carroll College Saints, see, are loaded at halfback. Veterans Gabe Le and John Camino are back after combining for nearly 2,000 yards rushing in 2008. Jeff Deal also returns after averaging better than six yards per carry last year in spot duty. And freshman Chance Demarais of Malta, said Van Diest, is going to be a "very special player." Demarais rushed for 65 yards on five carries last Saturday in Carroll's season-opening 35-13 conquest of Azusa Pacific.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN'S BEARS made new head coach Brian Armstrong a winner right out of the gate last week with a 28-7 victory over 15th-ranked Dickinson (N.D.) State.

"It was a nice start," said Armstrong, "but it's only one of 11 on our schedule. There's a long way to go."

The Bears got tremendous efforts from quarterback Kasey Peters (421 yards passing, 4 TDs, 0 INTs) and receiver Brian Guisti (163 yards receiving, 3 TD catches). Guisti is a former Centerville prep star.

Peters, a 6-3, 200-pound senior who transferred to Rocky last year from Grand Valley (Mich.) State, won Frontier offensive player-of-the-week honors for his 28-for-44 passing. The league's weekly defensive honor was won by Rocky middle linebacker Steffan Blume, a 230-pound sophomore transfer from Washington State.

"It was Blume's first game as a Rocky Bear and he was a force inside," said Armstrong. Blume recorded six solo tackles, five assisted tackles and one fumble recovery.

"He's got a little nastiness to him, which isn't a bad thing for a linebacker," said Armstrong. "He's not wired like normal guys are."

MONTANA STATE-NORTHERN had a successful season opener as the Lights went north of the border and knocked off the University of Calgary Dinos 30-19. Back in 2003, powerful Carroll College defeated

the Dinos 54-0 en route to a perfect season. But Northern coach Mark Samson said the Calgary program has improved by quite a bit.

"There were no slouches," Samson said. "They had a 6-6 quarterback who was player of the year in their league and they had two good running backs. Plus they had an offensive lineman who was 6-7 and 311. Defensively they were big and ran to the ball well."

So, of course, do the Lights.

"Landry See played well and Justin Montelius was pretty good," said Samson of his defensive leaders. "Our offensive front played pretty darn good, too."

Samson has more depth on the offensive line than has been the case in the past. He's rotating six or seven players into the mix, including Russ Penner of Seeley-Swan, Tom Kain of Helena and Zeb Olson of Malta.

Montana Tech lost four games by a touchdown or less in 2008 and, unfortunately for the Orediggers, the heartbreak continued last week with a 25-22 overtime loss at South Dakota School of Mines.

"We had a lot of good things happen," said veteran Tech coach Bob Green. "Offensively we were running the ball very effectively and our quarterback (Matt Komac) made good decisions. Our pass protection was outstanding and defensively we ran to the ball as well as we ever have for the first game."

However, the Orediggers made some errors in pass coverage that really hurt. Tech also had a mistake on a protection assignment on a field-goal attempt in overtime. The kick was blocked, and South Dakota Mines then won the game with a field goal.

Next year, Montana Tech will play host to the South Dakota team at Alumni Coliseum in Butte.

Montana Western hasn't played a game yet, but the Bulldogs' injury list is rather lengthy.

Halfback Chris Wells (broken foot) and receiver Jerry Schmitz (broken ankle) are both sidelined with injuries that happened over the summer. Starting offensive guard Will Ellis (concussion) is also out for awhile.

Western coach Rich Ferris said quarterback Michah Mamiya has recovered from a thumb injury that hampered him early in training camp. "That's a big bright spot," said Ferris. "He can grip it and rip it." Montana State transfer Michael Gallagher has looked good at receiver. Ferris said the plan this week in

the season opener against Montana Tech will be to involve star receiver Craigh Cornelius early and often. "We've got to figure out ways to get Craigh the ball," Ferris said.

Eastern Oregon's road losing streak reached 11 last week as the Mountaineers fell 32-28 at Southern Oregon.

No one in the Frontier will be overlooking the Mounties, though. Sophomore quarterback Chris Ware completed 16 of 31 passes for 315 yards and three touchdowns against Southern Oregon. The Mountaineers' Kirk Miller had five receptions for 117 yards and two touchdowns, while Jordyn Jackson had five catches for 102 yards. The run defense just wasn't there for Eastern Oregon, which yielded 221 yards on the ground to Southern Oregon.

At Montana Western, memorial scholarships have been created in honor of two former football players who died this year. Former linebacker Zac Marold took his own life in January and former wide receiver Michael Guelff died in an auto accident one day before the start of fall practice. Guelff was to have been an assistant coach for Western head man Rich Ferris this season.

"I don't know what will happen with our emotions and with my emotions on Saturday," said Ferris. "We'll just try to deal with it. We've tried not to over-emphasize this so that the guys think they have to win for Zac and Michael. I've told our guys if they want to do something to honor their memory they should play hard. Because that's what they would have wanted. It's what we all would want."