

Sports:

Lights looking bright after scrimmage

(Created: Wednesday, April 8, 2009 12:25 PM MDT)

George Ferguson Havre Daily News sports editor gferguson@havredailynews.com

As the weather continues to improve, the Montana State University-Northern football team is trying to do the same thing. The Lights are marching through spring practice, and they held their first scrimmage of the spring on Saturday at the MSU-Northern practice field. In the controlled scrimmage, the Lights ran 64 plays, and according to head coach Mark Samson, there was some good, and some not so good. "The first scrimmage went fairly well, although at times it really looked like we only practiced for for four to five days," Samson said. "On offense, Zeb Olson, Jordon Smith, Ty Cochrell, and Andrew Mosby were very consistent from start to finish. Defensively, Stetson Koffman, Landry See, Guy Hamm and Jhevon McMillan played very well." It was hard to gauge who won on Saturday based on the numbers. The defense usually has the advantage in scrimmages, but Northern's offense did score three times, racked up 351 yards and averaged 5.5 yards per play. However, the stingy MSU-N defense did come up with four turnovers on the day, including three fumbles. On offense, Jeff Van Nest took the majority of snaps for the Lights. Van Nest passed for 87 yards on 18 attempts and threw a pair of touchdown passes. Havre native Kyle Finneman caught an 8-yard TD pass and Van Nest hit Kyle Kercher on a 16-yard strike. Backup quarterback Chase Hillman added 71 yards on six competitions, but did throw one interception. Tight end Luke Wildung, a transfer from Montana-Western led all receivers with four catches for 40 yards. Matt Stuart added three catches for 38 yards, while Garren Hammons and BJ Palmer had two catches each. On the ground, the Lights were also effective on Saturday. Finding a replacement for the departed Justin Moe, last year's Frontier Conference Offensive MVP has been a top priority this spring, and on Saturday, Andrew Mosby stood out. Mosby carried five times for 43 yards and a score, and he also caught three passes for 31 yards. Fullback Ty Cochrell had eight carries for 38 yards and Trent Thomas added eight carries for 43 yards. As a team, the Lights rushed the ball 36 times for 185 yards, were effective on the ground, but did have the three fumbles. MSUN's offensive line also shined as no sacks were recorded in the 64 snaps the Northern offense took. The Lights are back on the practice field today and Thursday, and they will hold their second scrimmage of the spring on Friday morning. "We are still not up to full strength in regards to certain positions, but a lot of young kids are getting valuable reps," Samson said. "Enthusiasm and attitude are great — players are having fun and looking forward to next fall." The Lights' scrimmage on Friday is slated to begin at around 10:30 a.m. MSU-N wraps up spring drills on April 18 with its spring game.