Montana State University-Northern running back James Chandless (middle) runs through a tackle during MSU-N's Annual Spring Game Sunday afternoon at Blue Pony Stadium. The Northern offense looked sharp, scoring eight times on Sunday as MSU-N concluded its 2010 spring drills.

Spring football is all about improving. It's about improving your team, about improving as players, veterans and young players alike. And if the Sunday's Montana State University-Northern Spring Football Game was any indication, it looks as though the Lights certainly accomplished that this season. MSU-N wrapped up spring drills Sunday at Blue Pony Stadium with a 52-play scrimmage in which the Northern offense scored eight times on a veteran MSU-N defense. The Lights rang up 497 yards of offense on 9.6 yards per play. One of the big battles this spring has been the for the starting quarterback spot. The Lights had freshmen Derek Lear of Fairfield and Matt Reyant of Helena taking almost all of the spring snaps, and both players had their shining moments, in the spring and on Sunday. Lear went 8-for-11 for 157 yards and a touchdown, and had three big plays on Sunday. He also carried three times for 16 yards, while Reyant was 9-of-16 for 117 yards, one score and three big plays. Reyant was intercepted twice by the MSU-N defense. For the second straight scrimmage, Reyant also paced Northern ball carriers with six carries for 64 yards, and he rushed for one TD. Sunday was solid day for the MSU-N passing game, which struggled at times last season. Northern starter Matt Stuart led receivers with four catches and a score for 48 yards. Transfer tight end Luke Wildung also hauled in a short touchdown and caught two balls for 15 yards. Starter Kyle Kercher had just one catch on the day, but he ripped off 42 yards on the grab. In all, eight different Northern receivers caught passes on Sunday. Brandt Montelius also had a big gain for 39 yards and Cut Bank's Orin Johnson hauled in two balls for 23 yards. "It went perfectly I think," Lear said. "I don't think there could have been a better scrimmage to end it (spring). We needed a big scrimmage before summer and I think we hit it on the dot." While MSU-N's passing game was effective on Sunday, the Lights' running game did just as well. Northern rolled up 223 yards on 25 carries with freshman Stephen Silva totaling 54 yards on seven carries. Silva also ripped off a 39-yard catch and run on a screen pass. Freshman James Chandless added 34 yards on three carries, while converted linebacker Justin Montelius had 34 yards on two carries as well as 2 big
screen passes for 44 yards. Josh Wilson added 23 yard son four carries. Silva, Chandless and Montelius all scored for the Lights on the ground. The Lights didn't attempt any field goals on Sunday but Kercher was perfect on his point after attempts on the day. Northern, which is working on a new defensive scheme this spring, also had plenty of good moments on that side of the ball Sunday. "Personally, I thought we were kind of sluggish," said MSU-N defensive end Will Andrews, who is back after missing all of 2009 with a foot injury. "I don't know if it was the heat or what, but we set the bar high after our last scrimmage. But when we go back and look at the film I am sure it will be alright and we had some guys making good plays." Wade Kelly had a strong showing for the Northern defense. He led the Lights in tackles and had an interception as did Jeff Handley. Veterans Landry See and Jared Weigel both had good games, and both registered quarterback sacks. The Lights will now be off until fall camp begins in early August. MSU-N opens Frontier Conference play on Aug. 28 at UM-Western.