



Righetti All-League runningback signs to play at Montana St. Northern

Hale ready to shine for Northern Lights

By Elliott Stern / Sports Editor / estern@santamariatimes.com | Posted: Monday, July 26, 2010 9:55 pm

Michael Hale is headed to Northern Montana.

The former star running back and defensive back at Righetti High School back has accepted a scholarship offer from Montana State University-Northern to play football for the Northern Lights.

The full-ride scholarship offer came late.

"I was planning on attending Hancock College," said Hale during a telephone interview Monday afternoon. "I was planning to go to Hancock College. I practiced with the Hancock football team for a few weeks but then I got this scholarship offer from Montana Northern so I'm taking that."

The 6-foot-1, 170-pound running back played on both sides of the ball at Righetti but will concentrate on offense with the Northern Lights.

"They want me to be a running back and handle kickoff and punt returns," said Hale. He led Righetti's offense with more than 1,200 yards rushing for the 2010 PAC-7 champion Warriors. He added more than 300 yards receiving.

"The scholarship offer was pretty sudden. I spoke with their head coach, Mark Samson, after the Kiwanis All-Star game (on July 16). They asked about my grades and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores and my football stats," said Hale. "They had a running back that quit the team recently so that opened up a spot and a scholarship and they offered it to me."

Hale plans to major in business.

Hale will join fellow 2010 Righetti graduate Derrick Santiago on the Havre, MT school's squad.

"Derrick is a good friend of mine. He's already going to Northern," said Hale of the 6-foot-5, 210 pound defensive end.

MSU-Northern is a small, NAIA school with 1,600 full-time students. They play their home games in Blue Pony Stadium and compete in the Frontier League.

The Northern Lights are looking to rebound from an injury-plagued 2-8 season.

Their season opens on August 28 on the road at the University of Montana-Western in Dillon, MT. The Northern Lights play a 10-game schedule but against just five teams. The schedule calls for two games against each of their opponents — Western, Eastern Oregon, Montana Tech, Rocky Mountain and Carroll.

For local fans who want to follow the exploits of Hale and Santiago, the Lights games will all be broadcast on the Internet at www.msun.edu.

"I'll be leaving for Montana on August 3rd and practices begin on August 8th," said Hale. "I'm really looking forward to it."