George Ferguson Column: Lights football can't get here soon enough
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
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The Montana State University-Northern football team captured three wins last fall. And while that total didn’t sit well with any of the Lights’ players or coaches, looking back now, I have to say, those three wins mattered just as much as if the Lights had won the Frontier Conference championship in 2010.

I said all season, and still believe that Northern’s record in 2010 didn’t indicate just how good the Lights really were. You could see in every game flashes off a good and talented team, a team that had leadership, skill players and a will to win. There was absolutely no quit in the 2010 Lights.

And while I know football players don’t believe in moral victories, the three wins the Lights put on their resume a year ago has certainly fueled the fire for more.

And spring drills, which wrapped up Saturday at the Havre High practice fields, definitely showcased that the Lights are searching for and striving for much more in 2011.

Now I don’t have a crystal ball. I can’t see the future and if I could, I would be making the big bucks. But after watching the Lights go through spring drills, there’s no doubt in my mind they will be a much-improved football team next fall.

In many ways, they already are, and it starts with attitude.

Prior to the start of spring drills, Northern head coach Mark Samson raved about how hard his players had worked in the offseason and about how excited and enthused they were for this spring and beyond. On top of that, I chatted with many Lights players through the winter, and their focus and attention was solely on 2011 and becoming a very good football team. With great leaders like Will Andrews and Landry See there to motivate and mentor, there’s no question this winter showed the Lights are headed in the right direction mentally.

Then this spring showed they are going in the same direction physically.

Northern’s offense, with two capable quarterbacks, and four of perhaps the fastest skill players in the Frontier in Stephen Silva, Brandon O’Brien, Orin Johnson and Kyle Johnston, looks to be as explosive as it has been in a long, long time. And with a great offensive line in front of all those skill players, the Blue Pony Stadium scoreboard, as well as Frontier opponents better be ready this fall.

Northern’s defense also showed it’s coming into its own this spring. There are certainly question marks up front, as only Andrews really returns. But Northern is as deep as ever at linebacker and young players and newcomers alike were making plays in the secondary this spring, so when it all comes together, MSU-N has a chance to be very complete on both sides of the ball.

Now some might say I’m looking at the 2011 picture through maroon colored glasses, but who really cares what some might say. Glasses or not, I see a good football team with a lot of talent, and perhaps most importantly, a team which is highly motivated and hungry to do things it hasn’t done in a few years. And that could spell doom for a lot of Frontier teams this fall.

Like many things, spring brings a fresh start, a renewed vigor, and that certainly holds true for Lights’ football. MSU-N is headed on the right path and now all we can do is wait for September and the start of a brand new season.
So get your season tickets, BPS parking passes and your tailgate essentials. Because even though summer isn’t even here yet, and winter won’t leave us alone, Lights’ football season is only a few warm months away.