Lights get it rolling on both sides of the ball
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It’s only spring drills and the Montana State University-Northern football team’s 2012 opener against Carroll College is five months away, but it already looks like the Lights are picking up where they left off last fall.

On Saturday, the Lights held their first scrimmage of spring drills at the Havre High practice fields, and on both sides of the ball, Northern was making strides.

MSU-N ran 63 plays in the scrum and the offense scored five times, while racking up 454 total yards. MSU-N scored four touchdowns and got one Juan Garcia field goal. But not to be outdone, the Lights’ defense had its strong moments too.

“There are still some things that we were rusty on, but it was still a good thing to come out here and go 11 on 11 live,” Northern quarterback Derek Lear said. “It was finally good to put everything together that we have been working on and have a good scrimmage. I think it went well and the defense really showed up to play and really impressed me. Offensively, we were shaky to start, but towards the end we really got going. I think just dusting off the rust was good for us.”

Indeed. The Lights, the Frontier’s leading offensive team a year ago, got it rolling.

After Garcia drilled a 42-yard field goal, Lear hit Orin Johnson for a four-yard score as the Lights ripped off three TD’s on three straight drives. Stephen Silva scored on a five-yard run and Mick Miller capped the scores by hauling in a 40-yard bomb from Travis Dean on the fifth series of the scrum. Brian Torgerson also caught a five-yard TD from Lear on the seventh drive of the afternoon.

Lear went 16-of-21 for 171 yards and two scores, while Dean went 10-of-15 for 168 yards and one TD. Brandon O’Brien caught six balls for 81 yards, Miller hauled in five for 79 and Johnson caught six passes for 56 yards. Kyle Johnston also caught three balls for 50 yards.

The Lights totaled 115 yards on the ground with Lear gaining 34 and Silva racking up 34 on eight carries. Justin Montelius also had 19 yards and freshman Zach McKinley totaled 17 yards.

Defensively, linebacker Jared Rohrback had a big game, totaling four tackles and an interception of Lear. Than Schopp added three tackles and a sack and Marc Evans had a sack as well. Northern’s secondary played well too. Matt Reyant had seven tackles, Ralphie Huizar had seven and Josh Baum had six and a pass breakup.

“I saw some good things. I think we hit well for our first major scrimmage and I think both quarterbacks had their moments,” MSU-N head coach Mark Samson said. “Travis (Dean) came out behind Derek (Lear) and played well, and Lear had his moments as well. Mick Miller and Brandon O’Brien played well and caught a lot of passes and the offensive line did well for being young too. Defensively, what I am really pleased with was I saw kids running hard to the ball. We have to be as physical as we can.
“I have seen a lot of kids growing up, and I see a lot of things we are looking better at,” he added. “I am really looking at our linebackers right now, and I think they are pretty good. We have about five or six kids that can play, and I think Jared Rohrback is going to be a really good mike linebacker for us.”

The Lights will continue with spring practice and scrimmage again on April 13. The April 13 scrimmage will be Northern’s annual Spring Game.

**Spring Scrimmage #1**

**Rushing** — Silva 8-34, Lear 3-34, J. Montelius 3-19, Dean 2 (-2), McKinley 7 17, Johnston 3-13.

**Passing** — Lear 16-21-1-2, Dean 10-15-0-1.