2012 Frontier Conference Football Preview: Linebackers
Frontier keeps churning out linebackers
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To say there have been some great linebackers who have played their college football in the Frontier Conference would simply not been doing the history of position in the Frontier justice.

Over the years, teams like Carroll College, Montana Tech, Montana State University-Northern and Rocky Mountain College have all had great linebackers pass through their respective programs. In recent years, even Frontier newbie Eastern Oregon has had defensive gems in the middle.

And while some teams are replacing those greats this fall, there are still plenty of stars and playmakers at the linebacker position in 2012.

Northern is one of those teams who lost a truly great one when Landry See graduated last spring. See left MSU-N as the school’s all-time leading tackler, a four-year starter and a four-year all-conference performer, not to mention earning all-American honors in 2011.

But the cupboard is certainly not bare at MSU-N and linebacker should be a strong point of the Lights’ defense this season.

Returning for his junior season is 2011 first-team all-conference performer Jordan Van Voast. A former Havre High standout, Van Voast has blossomed for the Lights, starting every game last season, and making 74 tackles last season. Van Voast has been starting since the middle of his freshman campaign and will be called upon to fill an even bigger role this season.

Also back for the Lights is junior Jared Rohrback, a transfer from Montana State. Rohrback was hoping to make an immediate impact for the Lights last season, but injuries slowed him down for much of the year. However, when healthy this season, Rohrback certainly has the skills to be one of the best in the business.

The Lights also brought in an outstanding transfer this fall in former Central Washington player Kyle Wegar. At 6-3 and 215 pounds, Wegar should really boost what is an already outstanding linebacking crew.

If See was the best in the league a year ago, that title is still up for grabs heading into this season.

Eastern Oregon has a tackling machine in senior Howard McDonald. He stand just 5-9 but is tough as nails, and proved so by racking up a Frontier best 108 stops on his way to all-conference honors last season.

Carroll College also brings back a top-notch backer in junior Joe Dunning, who already has earned preseason all-American honors. A year ago, Dunning was the Saints’ leading tackler with 104 and he is just as good dropping back in coverage.

UM-Western saw the emergence of a great outside backer of its own last year, and big things are expected from junior Kasey Griffith in 2012. Griffith totaled 88 tackles and four sacks as a sophomore and will anchor a very good Western linebacker crew this season.
Rocky must replace a couple of prolific backers this season, but the Battlin’ Bears junior Travis Bertelsen. Last season, Bertelsen, a former Montana State Bobcat, was second in tackles on what was a stout Bears’ defense. RMC also get Trenton Thelen back this season, and he too is one to watch from the linebacker position.