Saints trump Lights, again
George Ferguson
Sunday, October 21st, 2012

Last November, Carroll College running back Dustin Rinker racked up 220 yards in place of injured star Chance Demarais as the Fighting Saints beat the Montana State University-Northern Lights to close out the regular season in Havre.

On Saturday afternoon in Helena, the Lights must have gotten a sickening case of Deja vu.

With Demarais in street clothes, Rinker scored three times and rolled up 232 yards on 25 carries as the No. 7 Saints beat the Lights 35-14 at windy Nelson Stadium. The win was Carroll’s 13th straight over Northern, which was without head coach Mark Samson, who is still hospitalized after undergoing surgery late last week.

“They (Saints) are a good football team,” MSU-N offensive coordinator Kyle Samson said. “I thought our kids battled really hard today, and we felt pretty good about things when we tied it up in the second quarter. But we made some mistakes that you can’t make against a team this good.”

The mistakes came in the form of three turnovers by the Lights, but it was a second-quarter outburst by Carroll’s offense which really broke things open.

The Saints led 7-0 on a Rinker 21-yard touchdown in what was an ultra-fast first quarter. Carroll possessed the ball just twice in the first period, while Northern had it once early, then started an outstanding drive near the end of the stanza.

And after a key third-down conversion to Brandon O’Brien, the Lights announced they were in for the fight when junior quarterback Derek Lear scampered 18 yards, delivered a big blow as he crossed the goal-line and scored to knot the game at 7-7.

From there however, it was all Saints.

Carroll ripped off 21 unanswered points on three straight drives in the second quarter, possessing the ball for a total of nine minutes. The first march took just over 20 minutes and was set up by long runs by Rinker and junior quarterback Dakota Stonehouse, before linebacker Sean Blomquist barreled in from five years out to make it 14-7.

Carroll added a Rinker one-yard score and a Stonehouse 20-yard strike to Jared Mayernik to make the score 28-7 at halftime. MSU-N put together a great drive at the end of the first half, but the first 30 minutes ended when Lear was picked off in the endzone.

“I thought we played hard and we did some good things early on,” Samson said. “But we just didn’t execute well enough and we put our defense in some tough spots with short fields and things like that. And Carroll is very good and they take advantage of those situations.”

The Northern defense held Carroll to just seven points in the second half, but it was a back-breaking seven points. After the Lights punted on their first possession of the second half, Rinker broke free right up the middle for a 76-yard jaunt to the house, effectively ending any chance the Lights had at mounting a comeback.

“He’s a good football player and I love how he runs,” Carroll head coach Mike Van Diest said of Rinker. “He just competes and I think he’s faster than a lot of people think. He’s got that second gear.”
Northern battled hard the rest of the way, and tacked on an O'Brien TD catch in the fourth quarter. But a pair of Lear interceptions held them back, as did Carroll’s ability to milk the clock with its ground-and-pound running attack, which wound up totaling 358 yards on the day. Rinker’s huge day was compounded by Stonehouse, who added 80 yards on 11 carries. MSU-N did limit the Carroll junior QB to just 66 yards passing, but it didn’t matter much as the Saints were able to control the game on the ground.

Meanwhile, the Lights got 222 yards passing from Lear, who also rushed for 32 yards despite being sacked six times. O’Brien led all receivers with eight catches for 92 yards, while Brandt Montelius had five grabs for 52 yards. Kyle Johnston added three catches for 31 yards and three runs for 35 yards, while Stephen Silva was held in check by the Carroll defense, totaling just 22 yards on nine carries.

The win was a big one for the Saints (6-1, 6-2), who have to venture to Ashland, Ore., this week for a huge matchup with Southern Oregon. The fate of Carroll’s Frontier title hopes hang in the balance of that game.

It was an emotional fifth loss of the season for a Lights’ team who was without is leader on Saturday. Northern fell to 2-5 on the year with a trip to first-place Montana Tech coming up this Saturday.

“The kids came out and wanted to play hard and play well for him today,” Samson said, speaking about his father back in Havre. “Hopefully we’ll have him back next week.”

“The effort was good today,” he added. “But it still hurts. You come down here wanting to win a football game. So we’ll go back to work and keep trying to figure out a way to get after it and get a win next week.”

No stopping the Saints’ March

*Lights are now 2-5; Next up at Tech on Oct. 27*

**Lights Notes:** Northern was not only without its head coach Saturday, but also two key players. Junior wide receiver Orin Johnson missed the game while covering from an infection in his knee. And junior starting offensive lineman Rostyn Pace served a one-game suspension for being ejected from last week’s game against Southern Oregon. Rinker also rushed for 56 yards in Carroll’s win in Havre back on Aug. 24, and now has 510 yards rushing in his last three games against the Lights. In two losses to Carroll this season, Northern committed seven turnovers.

**Carroll 35, Lights 14**

Northern  0  7  0  7 — 14
Carroll      7  21  7  0 — 35

**First quarter**
CC – Dustin Rinker 21 run (Scott Lyons kick), 12:03

**Second quarter**
MSU-N – Derek Lear 18 run (Trevor Baum kick), 14:43
CC – Sean Blomquist 4 run (Lyons kick), 12:02
CC – Rinker 2 run (Lyons kick), 4:04
CC – Jared Mayernik 20 pass from Dakota Stonehouse (Lyons kick), 1:33

**Third quarter**
CC – Rinker 76 run (Lyons kick), 10:32

**Fourth quarter**
MSU-N – Brandon O’Brien 13 pass from Lear (Baum kick), 6:17
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MSU-N</th>
<th>CC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First downs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushes-yards</td>
<td>31-102</td>
<td>46-358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing yards</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp-Att-Int</td>
<td>22-44-3</td>
<td>4-9-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punts-average</td>
<td>4-20.5</td>
<td>2-24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fumbles-lost</td>
<td>0-0</td>
<td>0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties-yards</td>
<td>4-30</td>
<td>2-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual stats**

**RUSHING** – MSU-N, Kyle Johnston 3-35, Derek Lear 16-32, Stephen Silva 9-22, Trevor Baum 1-7, Justin Montelius 2-6; CC, Dustin Rinker 25-232, Dakota Stonehouse 11-80, Colter Rood 7-29, Jared Mayernik 1-7, Mac Roche 1-6, Sean Blomquist 1-4.

**PASSING** – MSU-N, Lear 22-44-3-210; CC, Stonehouse 4-9-0-66.

**RECEIVING** – MSU-N, Brandon O’Brien 8-92, Brandt Montelius 5-52, Johnston 3-31, Mick Miller 4-27, Brian Torgerson 1-5, Silva 1-3; CC, Dylan Simac 2-30, Mayernik 1-20, Anthony Clarke 1-16.

**Frontier Conference Standings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Conf. W-L</th>
<th>All W-L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montana Tech</td>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>6-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>6-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Oregon</td>
<td>5-2</td>
<td>5-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>4-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Oregon</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSU-Northern</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM-Western</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson State</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>2-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Saturday**

Carroll 35, MSU-Northern 14
Southern Oregon 76, UM-Western 29
Montana Tech 28, Eastern Oregon 20
Rocky Mountain 46, Dickinson State 14

**Saturday, Oct. 27**

MSU-Northern at Montana Tech
Carroll at Southern Oregon
Rocky Mountain at UM-Western
Eastern Oregon at Dickinson State