The Montana State University-Northern football team has been hard at work since Sunday morning, preparing to begin the 2013 season.

And by the end of today, the Lights will have already gotten in 12 full practices, including going live-hitting for the first time Tuesday. But Saturday marks the first real test for the Lights as they conduct their first scrimmage of fall camp.

And though the scrimmage won’t be a game-type scrimmage, as it’s still early, and the Lights have a ways to go before heading to Dickinson State for their Aug. 29 opener, head coach Mark Samson said Saturday’s scrum will be an important step.

“‘We just want to see where we are as a team,”’ Samson said after a practice earlier this week. “We aren’t scheming anything for Dickinson State, we just want to see what we have learned in the 12 or 13 practices, and see how much better we have gotten. A lot of kids will play and we will run a lot of plays. It won’t really resemble a game like scrimmage, but it will show us how kids will play given a large number reps. We do have a couple of positions to nail down, but mostly we are looking at our depth, who will be our No. 2s and that type of stuff. We are anxious, but we still have a lot to do.”

Although MSU-N isn’t technically getting ready for the Blue Hawks just yet, the Lights are working on the things they’ll run this season.

Early on in fall camp, Northern’s veterans have showed great improvement and leadership, while newcomers like wide receiver Lavorick Williams and running back Jai Johnson have really shown promise. On the defensive side of the ball, the Lights are young, returning only a handful of starters. But three of those starters are in the secondary and that’s where the Northern defense looks especially sharp so far in camp.

And Saturday’s controlled scrimmage will give the coaching staff a better idea of where the team is at in all three phases of the game, as well as where the Lights need to go in the second week of two-a-day practices.

Northern’s first fall scrimmage will take place at 10 a.m. Saturday at the MSU-Northern practice fields and is open to the public.