Carroll Runaway: Saints 42, Lights 14
Powerful Saints hand Lights a frustrating third straight loss
By Daniel Horton
October 28, 2013

For years now, the Carroll College Fighting Saints have had a way of making it a long afternoon when going head-to-head with the Montana State University-Northern Lights. In fact, coming into Saturday's game in Havre, Carroll had done it to Northern 17 straight times.

And on a sunny and windy day at Blue Pony Stadium, the Saints made it 18 long days in a row.

The No. 7 Saints defeated the Lights 42-14 in Frontier Conference play at Blue Pony Stadium in Havre Saturday. Unfortunately it was the third straight loss for the Lights, falling to 4-4 after a great start to the season. With the win the Saints improved to 6-1 in conference play and 7-1 overall as they finished off the two-game sweep of Northern this season.

Northern got the ball to start Saturday's contest, but was to forced to punt after just six plays. But it was a pass in and out of Dylan Woodhall's hands, on what looked like a for sure scoring toss by Derek Lear down the middle of the field that seemed to set the tone moving forward. Things clearly weren't going in favor of the Lights, and the Saints made sure to take full advantage, finding the end zone six total times. Carroll's senior quarterback Dakota Stonehouse connected with his receivers four times to pay dirt, as the Saints pulled away from the lights 21-0 through the first quarter and never looked back.

"We just weren't very good today, at all," Northern Lights head coach Mark Samson said. "In the first quarter we had two opportunities to score touchdowns and the quarterback couldn't get the receivers the ball and had a pick six. We battled pretty good in the second, third, and fourth quarters, but Carroll is big and strong, and they wore us down. We made some dumb plays on defense, but in all honesty, for the third week in a row our offense didn't show up to play. I don't know what is going on there, but we will get it changed, and we will be better against Tech next week."

After a dropped pass on the opening drive, the offense limped through several possessions before scoring. And when the Lights did find the end zone, they couldn't settle into a groove and close the gap on the Saints.

On the second drive of the game for the Lights, James Dowgin intercepted Lear's pass attempt in Carroll territory. The Lights got the ball back with no harm done, but on the ensuing possession Sean Blomquist came up with another Saints' interception on Lear, this time returning the pick 45-yards down the middle of the field for another Saints score. The second interception at the 1:45 mark of the first quarter gave the Saints a 14-0 lead and Samson made a change, playing junior quarterback Travis Dean, who played well against Carroll in Lear's absence last month in Helena. Dean's first drive was a three and out, and adding insult to injury, the Saints scored on a Stonehouse pass to Kyle Griffith as the quarter horn echoed through Blue Pony Stadium. It was a 30-yard connection, giving Carroll the 21-0 lead.

"We didn't play great for a little bit here," Carroll head coach Mike Van Diest said. "But our kids are resilient and if you chew them out they come back, and after a while you don't have to chew them out anymore because they know what to do. We have a lot of great senior and junior leadership on this football team and
it is a tight group. The last couple of years we had teams that didn't bounce back, but this team does, and it is always a lot more fun to win before the ride home than it is to lose.

"And Derek Lear is a good quarterback and has found some success over the years," Van Diest added. "But we have had great success against him. We have sacked him, pressured him, and had some interceptions over the years. Our guys read him well, we aren't staring, but we know the routes and we stay at home. It was unfortunate he had the day he had because he is a great quarterback, and we are glad we don't have to play him anymore."

The second quarter was better for the Lights as they shut out the Saints on three possessions and scored once themselves.

With 28 seconds before the half, Dean connected with a diving Brandt Montelius in the front of the end zone. The scoring drive began on the Lights 44 yard line and came after four plays and two first downs. The biggest play setting up the score was a 32 yard pass to Orin Johnson on the first play to get the Lights deep into the Saints' territory. Zach McKinley also had a 20-yard rush to get the Lights near the goal line on the very next play, and two plays later Dean and Montelius took care of the rest to bring the deficit to 21-7 at the half.

The only other Lights' score came in the third quarter trailing 35-7 after two more Saints' scores. Dean hit a streaking Jake Messerly on a 74-yard touchdown pass. The drive took just one minute and three plays to find the end zone as the gap was narrowed to 35-14 to end the third quarter.

Unfortunately that was the last scoring drive for the Lights. The Saints did add one final score in the fourth quarter to seal the deal at 42-14 with 10:40 left to play. The Lights final two drives were stuffed for no points, including their final drive that went 14 plays for more than 90-yards in five minutes. A quarterback keeper on fourth and goal on the three-yard line was stuffed by the Saints defense.

"We did a good job on defense," Van Diest said. "But we overran some plays, and I thought Northern's receivers did a good job. Our defense doesn't really have a weak spot, but Northern found the holes, and our linebackers didn't do a good job on some of those routes. On the touchdown, we were there, but just weren't quite ready to make the play. (Messerly) did a great job on his score, and the ball was on time, but the play to Orin Johnson before the half to set up their first score, we just blew the coverage."

Though they found two scores and moved the ball well at times, the Northern offense struggled to settle in against a good defensive front by Carroll. McKinley led the rushing attack with 10 carries for 63 yards, while Dean was 8-for-18 for 183 yards passing. The receiving core was paced by Messerly with two catches for 79 yards and a score. Orin Johnson had five catches for 69 yards, while Woodhall finished with two catches for 27 yards and Montelius finished with two catches for 21 yards and a score.

But while a few of the Lights players had decent individual stat lines, the offense totaled just 157 yards rushing and 387 overall. The offense also gave up six sacks on Dean and Lear combined, while also combining for three interceptions. Carroll finished with a stout 250 yards including 149 yards by Dustin Rinker. Stonehouse attempted just 12 passes, but compelled nine for four scores. The Lights were led by Hunter Chandler's 11 tackles, while Tyler Phillips and Josh Baum each had a sack.

"It is about confidence," Samson said about the offensive production the last three games. "We don't have kids that have confidence. We have to get that fixed this week. I don't think we are a bad team, but at times we looked terrible. It just depends on who shows up and what these guys want to do."

On Saturday the Lights will look to get back into the win column as they host Montana Tech under the lights of Blue Pony Stadium in Havre. Kickoff is at 6:30 p.m.

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<th>Carroll</th>
<th>Northern</th>
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<tr>
<td>Points</td>
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First quarter
CC – Dakota Stonehouse 24 pass to Anthony Clarke (Cojo Smith kick)
Drive: 5 Plays, 74 Yards
CC – Sean Blomquist 45 interception return (Smith kick)
Drive: 0 Plays, 0 Yards
CC – Stonehouse 30 pass to Kyle Griffith (Smith kick)
Drive: 2 Plays, 60 Yards

Second quarter
MSU-N – Travis Dean 10 pass to Brandt Montelius (Jordan Rueschhoff kick)
Drive: 10 Plays, 80 Yards

Third quarter
CC – Dontehouse 8 pass to Griffith (Smith kick)
Drive: 3 Plays, 70 Yards
CC – Stonehouse 64 pass to Clarke (Smith kick)
Drive: 3 Plays, 75 Yards
MSU-N – Dean 74 pass to Jake Messerly (Rueschhoff kick)
Drive: 3 Plays, 75 Yards

Fourth quarter
CC – Colter Rood 3 run (Smith kick)
Drive: 10 Plays, 45 Yards

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Individual statistics

Rushing – Carroll: Dustin Rinker 23-149, Colter Rood 7-36, Dakota Stonehouse 7-24, Kyle Griffith 1-11.

Passing – Carroll: Stonehouse 9-12-0-185-4.
Northern: Dean 8-18-1-183-2, Lear 5-10-2-38-0.


Tackles – Northern, Hunter Chandler 11, Josh Baum 8, Trevor Baum 6, Jordan Van Voast 6, Weston Mudge 6, Kaimi Kanehailua 5, David Arteaga 4, Carroll, Sean Blomquist 7, Beugh Meyer 5, Decker Roberts 5, Sean Condon 4, James Dowgin 4.

Attendance: N/A

Weather: 61 degrees, sunny and windy at kickoff