George Ferguson Column: Proud Northern seniors fought to the very end

From the Fringe...
By George Ferguson
November 18, 2013

It’s hard to believe the Montana State University-Northern football season is over. It seemed to end as fast as it got here.

But what was even more difficult to grasp, as everybody exited Blue Pony Stadium after Rocky Mountain College defeated the Lights Saturday afternoon, was the fact that one of the most talented and athletic senior classes to play at Northern in recent years, was done too.

And in the moments following Saturday’s game, and even during, all I kept thinking is, what a privilege it’s been to watch those Northern seniors play.

What also stood out to me Saturday was how much fight those seniors had in them, in what they all knew was going to be their last college football game or, even more likely, the last football game of any kind they’ll play.

All day long, Northern quarterback Derek Lear and wide receiver Orin Johnson played as if the Lights were the team fighting for a playoff berth, instead of Rocky. They both took some huge hits from a physical RMC defense on Saturday, yet they both kept getting up and trying again.

Together, Lear and O.J. are two of the most dynamic offensive players the Lights have had in a while. Yes, both of them would trade all of their stats for more wins, and both of them are football players to the core, so wins are what matter most.

But, wins aside, the duo of Lear and Johnson have given their hearts and souls to the Lights for the last five years, and while it will be sad not seeing them on the field on Saturday afternoons form here on out, they both gave me and Northern fans plenty of great memories.

And that really sums up the entire senior class. Like Lear and Johnson, Jordan Van Voast, Tanner Varner, Logan Nathe, Brandt Montelius and Alex Cummings poured everything they had into Lights’ football for the last five years. They all played early in their careers and they all gave Northern some outstanding football while they were in a Lights’ uniform.

To be that dedicated to something is impressive, to give your blood, sweat and tears for five years, all because they loved football and because they loved the Lights, it’s something none of us should ever forget.

And while seniors Josh Baum and David Arteaga weren’t at Northern quite as long, they too exemplified Lights’ football. Both have been talented, impact players for MSU-N in their time in Havre, and both will be tough to replace next fall.

So it was only fitting on Saturday, on the last day that any of them will suit up for the Lights, that they were involved in so many impactful plays. It was only right that the Lights, even in defeat, were led by a group of seniors, who have always played with heart, toughness and character.

Players come and go, that’s the nature of college football. One day they’re here, the next, they’re a name in the annals of history. And this certainly won’t be the last senior class I’ll write about because there’s more to come.
Yes, things change. Time does indeed march on. But the 2013 Northern senior class will be one I most certainly won't forget. This senior class left it on the field every day for the Lights, and they did it one more time on Saturday.

And all I can say now is, thanks for the memories guys. You Northern seniors were an outstanding group to cover, to watch and you are a group the Northern football community will always remember.