Four Lights earn Frontier honors
By George Ferguson
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The season didn’t end the way the Montana State University-Northern Lights were gunning for. However, four Lights were honored by the Frontier Conference at season’s end.

The Frontier announced its 2013 All-Conference Team and postseason awards late last week, and Northern seniors Orin Johnson, Tanner Varner and Jordan Van Voast, and junior John Jansen were all named to the team.

Johnson, a four-year starter at wide receiver, was named All-Conference for the first time in his brilliant Northern career, and he received two accolades for the season. The Cut Bank native earned Second-Team honors as a wide receiver and Second-Team honors as a punt returner.

Johnson caught 59 passes for 754 yards and five touchdowns in his final season with the Lights, while he averaged 12 yards per catch, and returned 16 punts for 201 yards, averaging 12.6 yards per punt return this fall.

Varner and Van Voast also earned Second-Team defensive honors. Van Voast, a senior from Havre High, recorded 57 tackles and had a team-high two interceptions from his outside linebacker position. The former Blue Pony was also named All-Conference in 2011. Varner, a cornerback from Baker, had 45 stops and one INT this season. He was also an All-Conference performer in 2011.

Jansen, a junior tight end from Broadview, started every game for the Lights this season, and had six grabs for 71 yards.

For the second straight year, Southern Oregon quarterback Austin Dodge was named Frontier Offensive Player of the Year. A junior, Dodge threw for 4,383 yards and 47 touchdowns. Carroll College linebacker Sean Blomquist was named Defensive Player of the Year. The junior had 179 tackles, 19 tackles for loss, six sacks and one interception this season, and is a candidate for NAIA Defensive Player of the Year. Rocky Mountain College head coach Brian Armstrong was named Coach of the Year after guiding the Battlin’ Bears to the playoffs for the first time since 1999.

Carroll led the way with 16 All-Conference selections, while RMC had 12. SOU had the third-most selections with 10.

Frontier All-Conference

First Team Offense

RB-Dustin Rinker Carroll College, 5-10 205 Jr. Riggins, Idaho; Chris McGinnis-Parker Eastern Oregon 5-7 185 Sr. Stockton, Calif.

TE-A.J. Smith Montana Western 6-2 235 Sr. Sandpoint, Idaho


OL-Levi Coughlin Carroll College, 6-5 296 Sr. Drummond; Alex Kastens Carroll College, 6-1 278 Jr. Coeur d’Alene, Idaho; Sonny Ahkui Rocky Mountain, 6-3 310 Sr. Makawao, Hawaii; Neal Coon Rocky Mountain, 6-1 275 Sr. Medford, Ore.

First Team Defense

LB-Sean Blomquist Carroll College, 5-11 232 Jr. Helena; Ryan Watson Eastern Oregon, 6-0 220 Jr. Yakima, Wash.; Kasey Griffith Montana Western, 5-9 215 Sr.; Emmett, Idaho; Travis Bertelsen Rocky Mountain, 5-10 205 Sr. Wibaux;

DB-James Dowgin Carroll College, 6-2 190 So. Greeley, Colo.; Mike Siegersma Carroll College, 6-1 195 Sr. Nampa, Idaho; Jesse McCloud Montana Western, 6-0 195 Jr. Manhattan; Josh Leff Southern Oregon, 5-9 190 Sr. San Clemente, Calif.

First Team Special Teams

Second Team Offense

Second Team Defense

Second Team Special Teams
K-Conor Smith Carroll College, Fr.; P-Josh Borm Dickinson State, Jr.; KR-Jace Billingsley Eastern Oregon, Jr.; Randy Tyler Southern Oregon, Jr.; PR-Orin Johnson MSU-Northern, Sr.;