Like many other sports teams and programs across the state, the Montana State University-Northern Lights football team has been battling the spring weather with the hopes of getting outside and getting on with the practice schedule.

For the most part, Mother Nature has not been cooperative early on.

And for the first several days of spring ball, the Lights were forced to hold practice in the Armory Gymnasium instead of outside on the practice field. And when the Lights took to the field Thursday, they were forced to higher ground as they held practice on a dryer Havre Middle School football field. The MSU-N practice field is still wet and muddy, and also has a border of piled up snow still surrounding it.

But any opportunity to get outside, no matter the locations, is welcomed by coaches and players.

“When the weather cooperates we get really excited to get outside and compete,” MSUN quarterback Travis Dean said. “After being trapped inside and spending time in the weight room all winter long, we just want to get outside and play some football; that is why we are here.”

And with a lot of work still to be done before the start of another season, the Lights are taking full advantage of every snap, drill and rep they can get.

During Thursday’s practice the offense, defense and special teams got some work. The defense and offense both ran individual drills and went head to head. The wide receivers and running backs ran routes for the quarterbacks, and the offensive and defensive lines butted heads against each other as well. The practice was also capped off with 11-on-11 drills, pitting the offense versus the defense, utilizing starters and all of the backups.

Overall, it was a solid practice for returning and new Lights football players.

“We still have some veterans, but we also have a lot of young guys,” Dean said. “A lot of guys don’t have that game experience, and we are still trying to build that camaraderie and get better every day. We are limited indoors, and you can’t really see everything. Out here, it is faster paced, we get a better idea, and this is where we like it.

“And we are getting there, we are getting to where we need to be,” Dean added. “We have a lot of young receivers on offense, and we have some defensive guys moving around. But we are getting the hang of things, and once we get more live situations behind us, we will have a better idea of what we need to continue to work on.”

The Lights will continue to work on all areas through the spring, and the weather looks like it might actually allow the Lights to stay outside through next week at least. And as new and returning players continue to...
improve and prepare for the upcoming season, good weather and practices outside should keep everybody's spirits up through the offseason preparations.