Lights add a pair of local grid standouts
Havre's Jace Billy, North Star's Jaxon Simonson will play football at MSU-N
By Chris Peterson
April 2, 2015

While the Montana State University-Northern football team is busy with spring football practice, the recruiting season never stops, and recently the Lights added two local recruits to the 2015 class that will bolster the trenches on both sides of the ball.

This past week, the signing of former Havre defensive standout Jace Billy to an NAIA national letter of intent was announced by Northern head football coach Aaron Christensen as was the signing of former North Star All-Stater Jaxon Simonson.

Billy, who was a three-year starter at multiple positions for the Blue Ponies including defensive end and linebacker, came into his own down the stretch for HHS at the defensive end spot, finishing the 2014 campaign with 60 tackles, five sacks and six tackles for loss.

After starting the season at linebacker, he was moved to defensive end due to injuries, but with his hand in the ground, Billy flourished. He quickly became the Ponies best pass rusher but also one of the team's toughest run defenders as well.

And after a stellar senior season, Billy was honored for his play by being named to the Class A All State team as well as earning a spot on the roster for the East-West Shrine Game this summer.

The Havre senior had signed on to wrestle for the Lights as he is also a two-time state champion and captured a state title this past march in the 205-pound weight class. However, he instead has decided to join the football team which is good for Christensen.

"Jace, we will look for at a defensive end position at first," Christensen said. "He is definitely a hard-nosed kid, he knows how to use his hands on the line. You look at his frame and I think he can get just a little bit bigger. I think down the line he is definitely someone that will be able to help us along the defensive line."

Simonson, who will have to make the transition from Class C Six-Man football to playing 11-man in the Frontier conference, is coming off back-to-back seasons in which he earned Class C All-State honors. He played both offensive and defensive line for the Knights and was also one of the team's leading pass-catchers a season ago.

Simonson, who played under his dad at North Star, has the size to succeed in the NAIA with a 6-4, 275-pound frame. And he will get his chance to do just that on the offensive line where Christensen views him as a perfect fit.
"He's a big kid, he played smaller football so that will take some getting used to," Christensen said. "But he has the size and we are going to play him at offensive line. He will be a guy that we think can grow into a player for us."