

## Red Raiders, Blue Hawks subdue Lights

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In two duals against top-ranked competition, getting off to a good start was imperative to the No. 15 Montana State University-Northern wrestling team. Instead, the Lights struggled at the start of their first dual and had to play catch up all night in losses to No. 4 Southern Oregon and No. 12 Dickinson State Thursday night at the MSUNorthern Fieldhouse. The first dual of the night featured a Southern Oregon team choosing to sit two of its top wrestlers, but that didn't stop the Red Raiders from building an insurmountable lead. SOU started the dual with a pin from No. 1-ranked Mitch Lofstedt at 125 pounds and back-to-back major decisions en route to a commanding 29-0 lead after the first seven matches. "That was the story of the night," MSU-N head coach Tyson Thivierge said. "Every match, we would fall behind. We were playing catch-up from early on and that's a tough thing to do against solid competition. I thought we came in well prepared, we had a good game plan for these duals, and we prepared properly, but we just didn't show up and execute." In their eventual 33-10 loss to the Red Raiders, the Lights did finally get on the board as sophomore Evan Hinebauch, who had two impressive wins on the night, stopped the bleeding with a dominant pin of SOU's Ethan Hinton at 184 pounds. Northern senior Evan Mattingly followed that up with an impressive performance of his own, earning a 19-8 major decision at 197 pounds for MSU-N's only other points of the night. Things got off to an equally rough start for Northern in the nightcap against DSU, but the Lights didn't take lone to respond to the adversity. After fourth-ranked Angel Olea pinned Chase Dirden at 125 pounds, former Havre Blue Pony Ryan Shelstad looked as if he would spark his team with a thrilling pin of Blake Hunter at 133. Shelstad was trailing Hunter 5-0 in the third period, but found an opening and cradled Hunter for a fall, tying the dual at 6-6. "That's what we needed," Thivierge said. "Ryan did a great job of fighting, of staying with it, and he saw an opening and went for it. "That was a spot where it finally got our home crowd going, and we thought would give us some momentum. But the guys after that match didn't follow it up. We're young, we are sending out quite a few freshmen, we make some young mistakes out there, but that can't be an excuse for us anymore. Each guy needs to step up and be ready to battle when they get their chance, and we just didn't have enough of that tonight." Shelstad's win didn't give the Lights the desired momentum they were hoping for. Instead, the Blue Hawks captured the next four bouts and with it, an 18-6 lead. But the Lights were still alive as senior Austin Ouelette, returning from injury, came out and earned a hard-fought 3-0 win at 174 pounds, and Hinebauch followed suit with a major decision at 184 pounds, making the score 18-13 in favor of the Blue Hawks. Then came a stellar match between Mattingly and third-ranked Jake Kallestad, a one-time Lights and former two-time Class A state champion from Belgrade. The two 197-pounders battled through two scoreless periods before Kallestad was able to do just enough to put together three points in the third period and hold Mattingly off. The win also sealed the dual for the Blue Hawks. DSU closed the match with Frank Lopez' win by fall over MSU-N freshman Jim Eavanson at heavyweight. "We just have to have a short memory," Thivierge said. "We had a few good matches, but we just have to work harder and put this night behind us." The Lights will now travel to Great Falls for one dual in the Battle for the Rockies hosted by the University of Great Falls. MSU-N takes on NAIA stalwart Missouri Valley on Saturday night at 8 p.m. at the McLaughlin Center.