

Lights topple Eagles

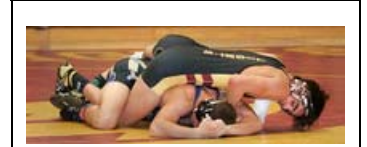
Daniel Horton

Monday, December 5th, 2011

The Montana State University-Northern wrestling team made it through a tough stretch of competition the last couple of weeks, especially with Southern Oregon.

But on Friday the Lights found a way to get back in the win column.

Friday night at the Armory Gymnasium in Havre, the No. 7 Lights hosted a dual with No. 16 Embry-Riddle University. And the Lights felt like they got back on track with a 30-15 win over the Eagles.



Northern's Cameron Neiss takes down an Embry-Riddle oponent durin a 133-pound match between the Lights and Eagles Friday night in Havre.

"Southern Oregon grounded us a little bit," MSU-N head coach Tyson Thivierge said. "So coming back in, getting to wrestle at home and getting to regain our balance and get a win was good for us. I was really expecting our guys to go out there and push the tempo and they did, it was a good dual for us."

The Lights only lost three of the 10 matches on Friday.

The Eagles' sophomore Luke Riley (165) pinned Cole Gorder in 57 seconds. The other two wins came by nationally-ranked grapplers. Sophomore Sean Silva (125) is No. 4 in the Nation and he earned a 7-5 decision over Riley Miller who put up a fight for the Lights. No. 1 Josh Chang Jr (141) also pinned Garret Tennant in 13 seconds.

But overall, the Lights wrestled very well.

The dual started at 157 pounds, and the Lights quickly took a 24-6 lead in the first six matches. Mickey Cheff went the full three periods before earning an 8-2 decision over David Snook. And at 174 pounds, No. 11 Max Payne pinned Jose Cruz in the second period, earning the fall in 4:47. At 187 and 197 pounds, the Lights got two very fast wins by fall. Kody Reed (184) pinned Jonathan Castellow in 1:14 and Evan Hinebauch (197) pinned Troy Killgore in 41 seconds. At 285 pound Nick King earned the 4-0 decision.

"I thought that Mickey Cheff and Nick King really stepped up," Thivierge said. "Those were key matches that we needed to win. We preached all week that these guys weren't going to come in here and roll over for us, so we needed to take the fight to them and I think we did that across the board."

No. 4 Cameron Neiss (133) and No. 3 Anthony Weerheim (149) also earned wins for the Lights, giving them the 30-15 win at home.

In Weerheim's match, he went three periods before winning by a 7-0 decision. And for Neiss, he got a scare early, before grabbing the 11-9 decision. The Eagles' Trace Gutknecht took a 7-3 lead at the end of the first period. And to wind down the second, Gutknecht went up 9-5 on a reversal.

But Neiss got things rolling, shaking off the cob webs he had in his first match out since suffering an elbow injury in the alumni dual. In the third period Neiss earned on point on an escape and two on a takedown to trail 9-8 with one minute remaining in the match. Neiss then erved the two-point near fall with 34 seconds to go to grab the 10-9 lead. Neiss earned an 11-9 decision with riding time.

"He gave me a heart attack," Thivierge said. "It was his first match back and it just goes to show he has a little bit of rust. I know he is frustrated, but he can't be. That rust is there and the injury is in the back of his mind, but he is healthy and he just needs to get a little bit stronger and start taking it to people again."

"I have been in those positions a lot in practice because coach puts me in them." Neiss added. "I just tried to stay mentally tough and not break. I could tell he was breaking, so I just kept after him and I knew the win would come. After the first round I could tell he was starting to break and I was getting tired too. But I knew that I had to stay one step in front of him and just work harder."

The Lights also competed Saturday at the Battle of the Rockies in Great Falls but results were not available at press time.

Northern will return to the mat on Tuesday when the Lights travel to Great Falls for a huge showdown with UGF.

Northern moves to 5-1 in duals

Lights 30, Embry-Riddle 15

125 – Sean Silva, E-R dec. Riley Miller 7-5;
133 – Cameron Neiss, MSU-N dec. Trace Gutknecht 11-9;
141 – Josh Chang Jr, E-R pinned Garret Tennant :13;
149 – Anthony Weerheim, MSU-N dec. Jesse Routsong 7-0;
157 – Mickey Cheff, MSU-N dec. David Snook 8-2;
165 – Luke Riley, E-R pinned Cole Gorder :57;
174 – Max Payne, MSU-N pinned Jose Cruz 4:47;
184 – Kody Reed, MSU-N pinned Jonathan Castellow 1:14;
197 – Evan Hinebauch, MSU-N pinned Troy Killgore :41;
285 – Nick King, MSU-N dec. Garrett Foster 4-0.