Lights ready to go after Maroon/Gold Dual
By George Ferguson
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The Montana State University-Northern wrestling team will enter the 2014-15 season as the No. 5 team in the country. The Lights come into the new season fresh off back-to-back third-place finishes at the NAIA national tournament. And, as always, expectations and hopes are high.

Thursday night, the Lights ran a dress rehearsal for the season-opening meet next weekend as they held their Maroon/Gold Dual at the Armory Gymnasium.

"It didn’t go too bad," Northern head coach Tyson Thivierge said. "It’s hard to gauge where we are because we wrestle each other every day. But there was a few good surprises tonight, and I thought we learned some things we can work on going forward."

The Gold team captured the dual 18-9, while several of the matches were for determining varsity spots, while others were exhibitions.

In one of the most competitive matches of the night, senior Jared Miller outlasted Kris Newport at 174 pounds, 4-2. The match, with Miller a returning All-American, was tight from start to finish, and the result was an example of how some of Northern’s young wrestlers stood up to some of the Lights’ veteran stars.

"One thing we saw tonight is, our freshmen and our new guys are tough," Thivierge said. "Those guys went out and got after it. That was exciting to see."

The dual started with freshman Andrew Caballa besting veteran junior Riley Miller 7-3 at 125 pounds. That match got the Gold off to a good start, but at 133, Justin Rodgers pinned Austin Olson to give the Maroon an early edge. From there however, only three-time All-American Ethan Hinebauch would win for the Maroon. Hinebauch beat Andrew Bartel 7-0 at 165 pounds.

At 141 pounds, Brenton Beard (Gold) beat Rainier Montes 6-4 in a tight match, while Drew Randall (Gold) pinned Logan Foster at 149 pounds. In the last match of the night, 197-pound returning All-American Garret DeMers beat sophomore heavyweight Jorrell Jones 7-1.
The Lights will begin the season next Saturday at the Trapper Open and are ranked fifth in the NAIA preseason Coaches Poll. Individually, the Lights go into the new season with seven nationally ranked grapplers. Hinebauch is No. 1 at 165, Jared Miller is No. 2 at 174, DeMers is No. 4 at 197, Toby Cheff is No. 7 at heavyweight, Beard is No. 10 at 133, Cole McCarthur is No. 10 at 174 and Willie Miller is No. 14 at 184. McCarthur and Miller didn’t see action Thursday night, while Cheff is out with an injury until December.

“It’s a good start,” Thivierge said of Thursday night’s dual. “We saw a lot of things we need to work on, a lot of areas we can improve. But overall, the dual went well.”

**Gold 18, Maroon 9**

125 – Andrew Caballa, G dec. Riley Miller, M, 7-3;
133 – Justin Rodgers, M pinned Austin Olson, G, 5:15;
141 – Brenton Beard, G dec. Rainier Montes, M, 6-4;
149 – Drew Randall, G pinned Logan Foster, M, 1:16;
165 – Ethan Hinebauch, M dec. Andrew Bartel, G, 7-0;
174 – Jared Miller, G dec. Kris Newport, M, 4-2;