Lights split the mat with Trappers, Cardinals

By Chris Peterson
November 17, 2014

The busy schedule continued for the Montana State University-Northern Wrestling team this past weekend, as the Lights looked to rebound from a loss to the University of Great Falls with back-to-back duals Friday against Northwest College and North Idaho.

The Lights posted mixed results in the two duals, handily defeating Northwest College 39-6 and then falling 31-16 to North Idaho inside the Armory Gymnasium in Havre.

Coming off a loss to UGF last Thursday, the Lights were looking to take out their frustrations and wanted to wrestle with a purpose against the Trappers in the opening dual, which they did. Northwest is the No. 7 team in the NJCAA, but the Lights dominated the dual from start to finish.

Northern got off to a promising start thanks to wins by Riley Miler and Justin Rodgers in the 125 and 133-pound weight classes, which gave the Lights a 12-0 lead.

Rainer Montes followed that up with a win by decision in the 141-pound weight class, and after a forfeit by Northern at 149 pounds, Tommy Cooper pinned Batistia Covolow of Northwest College in 6:49 to give the Lights a 15-6 advantage.

From there, the Lights continued their domination.

Ethan Hinebauch and Willie Miller earned wins by forfeit at 165 pounds and 184 pounds, respectively, while Jared Miller earned a win at 174 pounds by pinning Jacob Beck in 6:08.

To close out the match, Garrett DeMers won a 10-5 decision over Jon Wixom in the 197-pound weight class and Jorrell Jones won a 9-5 decision at 285 pounds over Gabe Escobedo.

“They weren’t happy with how they performed (against UGF),” Northern head coach Tyson Thivierge said. “So we came out to make a statement in the first dual and I think they did that.”

After their win over the Trappers, the Lights went head-to-head with NJCAA power North Idaho. The Cardinals are ranked No. 1 in the NJCAA and brought a lineup full of national title contenders. And in a stark difference in what happened in the dual against Northwest, the Cardinals quickly jumped on top with a 12-3 decision by Michael Nguyen over Riley Miller at 125 pounds.

Then, North Idaho got consecutive pins from Deondre Wilson and Bryce Weatherson over Rodgers and Montes of Northern at 133 and 141 pounds, respectively. Those wins gave NIC a commanding 15-0 lead with many matches left.

Following a Northern forfeit at 149 pounds due to an injury to Drew Randall, the Cardinals were leading 21-0 before MSU-N finally got on the board by way of a Cooper victory. Cooper won a 8-6 decision in overtime over Tyler Booth at 157 pounds to trim the Cardinals’ lead to 22-3.
That set up the best match of the dual, which was between Northern’s Ethan Hinebauch and NIC’s Dajour Reece at 165 pounds. Yet Hinebauch, who is the top-ranked wrestler in the NAIA at 165, was not in top form early and allowed Reece 6-2 after the first period thanks to three early takeowns.

Going into the final period, Reece extended his lead to 9-5 but after notching a couple takeowns, Hinebauch was within one point at 11-10. But, with time running out, he failed to get the pin or score another takeown and ending up losing 12-10 to give North Idaho a key victory and a 25-3 lead.

"Ethan got beat at a little bit at his own game," Thivierge said. "He got tossed around a little bit in that match but he knows that and he will learn from it. He will definitely improve from it."

But even though things looked bleak, the Northern upper weights proved difficult for the Cardinals to handle. At 174 pounds, Jared Miller pinned Cruz del Angel in 4:29, then, at 184 pounds Willie Miller won an 18-7 major decision to get the Lights back within striking distance at 25-13.

“We work hard in the room and build on every period,” Willie Miller, a former Chinook state champion said. “We try to get stronger every period, and once we score right away, once we get to the second and third period we are going to score some more.”

At 197 pounds, the Lights needed a pin from DeMers to keep their hopes alive, but despite a standout performance, DeMers notched a 9-5 win by decision instead of a pin, which got three points for Northern, but clinched the win for North Idaho. In the final match at 285 pounds, the Cardinals put the icing on the cake when Taylor Kennedy pinned Jorrell Jones in 4:36 to wrap up the 15-point win.

The Lights will be back in action this Saturday, when they travel to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, for the Cardinal Duals. Northern doesn’t wrestle at home again until Jan. 6.

**Lights 39, Northwest College 6**

125 – Riley Miller, MSU-N dec. Sam Jones, NW, 10-4;
133 – Justin Rodgers, MSU-N dec. Matt Schmidt, NW, 10-8;
141 – Rainer Montes, MSU-N dec. Adam Baca, NW, 7-5;
149 – Jake Morrow, NW win by forfeit;
157 – Tommy Cooper, MSU-N pinned Batista Covolow, NW, 6:49
165 – Ethan Hinebauch, MSU-N win by forfeit;
174 – Jared Miller, MSU-N pinned Jacob Beck, NW, 6:08;
184 – Willie Miller, MSU-N win by forfeit;
197 – Garrett DeMers, MSU-N dec. Jon Wixom, NW, 10-5;

**North Idaho 31, Lights 16**

125 – Michael Nguyen, NI dec. Riley Miller, MSU-N, 12-3;
133 – Deondre Wilson, NI pinned Justin Rodgers. MSU-N, 2:59;
141 – Bryce Weatherston, NI pinned Rainer Montes, MSU-N, 6:19;
149 – Kit Major, NI win by forfeit;
157 – Jared Cooper, MSU-N dec. Tyler Booth, NI, 8-6;
165 – Dajour Reece, NI dec. Ethan Hinebauch, MSU-N, 12-10;
174 – Jared Miller, MSU-N pinned Jordan Cook, NI, 4:29;
184 – Willie Miller, MSU-N dec. Cruz del Angel, NI, 18-7;
197 – Garrett DeMers, MSU-N dec. Jonathen Dennis, NI, 7-4;