Lights get great mat competition in Reno
By George Ferguson
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It was a big week for the Montana State University-Northern wrestling team. And with all due respect to how prestigious Sunday’s Reno Tournament of Champions was, the Lights’ biggest test came last Thursday night on the road.

Northern, ranked No. 3 in the NAIA, traveled to Ashland, Oregon last Thursday for a showdown with No. 2 Southern Oregon University. And in a bitter battle of Western Region rivals, the host Raiders found a way to come out on top. The Raiders defeated the Lights in the dual, 28-18.

Things started well for the Lights, as Riley Miller picked up a thrilling overtime win at 125 pounds, while Brenton Beard added a pin at 141 pounds. Beard had been out of Northern’s lineup with an injury as of late, but he made an immediate impact on Thursday night. The battle was still close when top-ranked Ethan Hinebauch dispatched Garrett Urruita by pin, but Jared Miller couldn’t stave off top-ranked defending national champion Brock Gutches at 174 pounds. The match was one of the biggest of the season for both wrestlers, but it was Gutches who came out on top. Willie Miller rebounded for the Lights, winning a 4-0 decision at 184, but that was as close as Northern would get as Garrett DeMers lost a heartbreaking decision at 197 in a showdown of two of the best at that weight, while Jorrell Jones was beaten in the heavyweight match as well.

After Thursday night’s dual, a handful of Lights moved on to the Reno T.O.C. The tournament, which features powers from all levels of college wrestling, including NCAA DI stalwarts like Oklahoma State, Oregon State and others, was a great measuring stick for the Lights, and several MSU-N grapplers shined.

Hinebauch led the way by finishing fourth at 165. He suffered an early loss to an Oklahoma's Clark Glass, but he rattled four straight wins to reach the consolation final, including a win over Glass in overtime. DeMers was also sharp, going 4-2 on the day. Included in that run was three straight wins over NCAA DI opponents in the loser-out bracket, before SOU's Johnson ended his day.

Willie Miller also went 2-2 at 184, Riley Miller went 2-2 at 125, Justin Rodgers went 0-2 at 133, Tommy Cooper went 2-2 at 157 and Jared Miller went 1-2 at 174.

Northern will now be off for the holiday's, but will return to the mat to host Western Wyoming on Jan. 6 at the Armory Gymnasium.

**SOU 28, Montana State-Northern 18**

125 – Riley Miller, MSUN, dec. Coleman Johns, SOU, 3-1 (OT);  
133 – Devin Poppen, SOU, p. Justin Rogers, MSUN, 3:14;  
141 – Brenton Beard, MSUN, p. Francis Llorente, SOU, 5:59;  
149 – Tyler Cowger, SOU, p. Logan Foster, MSUN, 1:01;  
157 – Dalton Urrutia, SOU, dec. Tommy Cooper, MSUN, 8-4;  
165 – Ethan Hinebach, MSUN, p. Garrett Urrutia, SOU, 3:59;  
174 – Brock Gutches, SOU, p. Jared Miller, MSUN, 4:30;  
184 – Willie Miller, MSUN, dec. Jacob Abrams, SOU, 4-0;  
197 – Taylor Johnson, SOU, dec. Garrett DeMers, 5-4;  
Reno T.O.C.


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