Eagles nip short-handed Lights
By George Ferguson
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In a tough road dual, the Montana State University-Northern wrestling team, wrestling short-handed, came up just short in Prescott, Arizona.

Last Saturday, the No. 3 Lights were in Arizona to take on Western Region rival Embry-Riddle University in a nationally ranked showdown. And the Lights, who were without No. 2 Jared Miller at 174 pounds, as well as No. 4 Willie Miller at 184 pounds, lost a 27-24 to the ninth-ranked Eagles.

MSU-N, which has been known for some thrilling comebacks in duals in recent years, almost pulled off another one against the Eagles. The Lights lost five straight matches from 125-157 pounds, but their big guns rallied.

Ethan Hinebauch pinned Luke Riley at 165 pounds, then Cole McCarthur pinned Kolby Mays at 174 to get Northern closer. The Lights gave up a forfeit at 184 pounds, but in one of the biggest matches of the night, Northern’s Garrett DeMers pinned Jose Cruz III in just 1:14. Cruz III is ranked No. 5 at 184, but moved up to face DeMers, who’s ranked third. But the match was no contest as the powerful DeMers gave the Lights another six points.

And though Toby Cheff finished things off with a pin in the heavyweight match, the forfeit at 184 pounds had ensured that Northern wouldn’t be able to catch the Eagles in the final score. Still, the rally showed just how loaded the Lights are in the upper weights, and why they’ll be a force come regional and national tournament time.

Northern will have this week off before preparing for their huge rematch with the University of Great Falls. The Lights and Argos will dual Feb. 11 in Great Falls. Northern also hosts the Western Regional Qualifier Feb. 21 at the Armory Gymnasium.

Embry-Riddle 27, Lights 24

125 – Sage Ornelas, ER dec. Riley Miller, 5-4;
133 – Gary Smith, ER maj. dec. Justin Rodgers, 15-4;
141 – Andrew Burr, ER pinned Cesar Montes, 6:20;
149 - Anton King, ER maj. dec. Logan Foster, 4-0;
157 – Colin Merkly, ER maj. dec. Tommy Cooper, 10-0;
165 – Ethan HInebaugh pinned Luke Riley, ER, 2:04;
Cole McCarthur pinned Kolby Mays, ER, 1:58;
184 – Taylor Damico, ER won by FFT;
197 – Garrett DeMers pinned Jose Cruz III, ER, 1:14;
HWT – Toby Cheff pinned David Rupp, ER, 3:15.