There were not many positives for the Montana State University-Northern football team this season, but one of them throughout the Lights' 11-game season was Zach McKinley.

McKinley, the junior running back for the Lights, put together another spectacular performance in Saturday’s 38-20 defeat the hands of Rocky Mountain College, rushing for 187 yards and adding another 60 receiving to finish with 247 yards from scrimmage and two rushing touchdowns. Those types of performances are nothing new for McKinley, in fact, over the past three seasons they have become the norm. And if there is one thing the Lights could hang their hat on offensively, it was McKinley, who finished the season 1,162 yards and five touchdowns. His game against Rocky ensured he would reach the 1,000 yard mark for the third straight year and also finished with an impressive 105 rushing yards per game.

“It’s an awesome team award,” McKinley said of reaching 1,000 yards. “That just goes to show how the offensive line played. They had their struggles this year, but some of them had never played before so that’s a testament to them.”

McKinley is already the school’s all-time leader in rushing yards and with one more season of eligibility, the Lights can at least count on having arguably the best running back in the Frontier Conference for one more year.

**Finding a rhythm**

All season long, the Lights have struggled to move the football with any consistency, especially through the air. But in the season finale, the Lights may have finally found something to build upon.

In the first half against the Bears, Northern moved the ball well, but thanks to red-zone struggles and missed field goals, the Lights failed to cash in. Yet, in the second half, the flood gates finally opened. Quarterback Jess Krahn and Qwaundre Yancy hooked up for numerous completions, including a 36-yard touchdown and a 57-yard completion that set up a McKinley score.

In the end, even though the Lights lost the game, they may have found something in the Krahn-Yancy connection. And with Krahn a sophomore and Yancy a freshman, it’s a duo Northern fans could see plenty in the coming years.

“We knew (Qwaundre) would be able to get over the top at halftime and we were able to hit him on a couple,” Krahn said after throwing for 293 yards. “It’s good to go into the offseason with that momentum. Right now all we can do is try and build on that and try and get better for next year.”

**Craig makes case for All-Frontier**
Just like McKinley on the offense, Tyler Craig is the heart and soul of the MSU-N defense and once again Craig showed why he is one of the best defensive players in the Frontier — period.

Craig, who earned Second-Team All-Frontier honors last season, has his sights set on making the First-Team this season and Saturday, he helped his cause with nine tackles and two sacks in the loss to RMC.

With his performance, Craig finished second in the Frontier with nine sacks, trailing only Reno Ward of Montana-Western, who finished with 12.5. The junior defensive end also ranked ninth in the NAIA in sacks.

In addition to being a great pass rusher, the former CMR standout, is also tremendous against the run and finished 2015 with 82 tackles and 15.5 tackles for loss. Those numbers, combined with his nine sacks, should make it very difficult to keep him off the First-Team All-Frontier squad this season.

**Andre the great**

It’s usually not hard to spot the best player on the football field and Saturday at Blue Pony Stadium, that player was RMC’s Andre McCullough.

McCullough has put together a fabulous career during his time at Rocky and yesterday he capped it off with six receptions for 114 yards and three touchdowns. For the season, he caught 73 passes, good for third in the NAIA, for 1,077 yards, which ranked sixth. The senior also finished with 12 touchdowns.

It’s not often that players with true NFL potential come through the Frontier Conference, but McCullough is one of them. The receiver should receive interest from professional football scouts and could eventually find his way into an NFL training camp next fall.

The 6-0, 202-pound wide out dominated the Frontier for four seasons, to the tune of 291 receptions, 4,242 yards and 43 touchdowns. And although his football career may not be over, his days in the Frontier are, which is something every defensive back in the Frontier can be thankful for this holiday season.