The Montana State University-Northern men’s and women’s basketball teams had about as good a weekend as a program can have. Last Friday and Saturday in Havre, the Lights and Skylights combined for a four-game sweep of rivals Carroll College and Rocky Mountain College.

But life in the Frontier Conference is never as easy as it seems, and tonight in Lewiston Idaho, both MSU-N teams will have to put last weekend behind them as they face a pair of NAIA powers at Lewis-Clark State.

The Northern men jumped all the way to No. 19 in this week’s NAIA Poll, and the Lights (4-1, 15-5) come into tonight’s game in sole possession of first place in the league standings. The Lights are also the third-best 3-point shooting team in the NAIA and they rank at the top of the Frontier in the same category. Northern has gelled together quickly, as guards Shaun Tatarka, Devin Jackson and LaVon Myers all average double figures, while Joe Simpson has become a force on the inside. And while MSU-N is on a two-game road winning streak against the Warriors (3-2, 13-5), the Lights know tonight’s game will certainly be a huge test. The Warriors are having a great season, unlike their last two, and have been ranked for much of the year. LC State’s size will be a big concern to Northern head coach Shawn Huse. The Warriors have big guards who can shoot the ball, but it’s the likes of 6-6 Alex King, 6-8 Andrew Packwood and 6-9 Donte Roberts which will give MSU-N plenty to deal with tonight.

And if things weren’t difficult enough tonight, the Lights will have an even bigger challenge Saturday night in Salt Lake City. MSU-N has never had much luck at Westminster College, and despite some early struggles the No. 23 Griffins (3-2, 15-4) are still looked at by many as the team to beat in the Frontier. Westminster has it all, including a senior point guard in Michael Stockton who’s having a breakout season. Combined with the inside play of 6-7 Ben Walker and 6-4 Jake Orchard, as well as a veteran team and deep bench, the Griffins are every bit as powerful as ever.

The LC State women will also test the red-hot Skylights (2-3, 11-10) tonight with pure size. The Warriors (3-2, 17-3) have the leading scorer in the Frontier in 5-11 Jasmine Stohr, who averages just over 20 points per game, one point more than Northern’s Samm Schermele. But Stohr is flanked by 6-3 Kirsi Voshell and 6-2 center Alyssa Fierro, all of whom will make life tough on Northern forwards Courtney Blume, who’s coming off a 19-point, six-rebound two-game average last weekend, as well as sophomore Jordan Bruursema. And after the Skylights contend with the 13th-ranked Warriors tonight, they’ll have to deal with 11th-ranked Westminster Saturday. The Skylights come to Salt Lake riding high after their home drubbings of the Saints and Bears last weekend. But the Griffins (4-1, 17-4) are on a high as well, as they crushed then No. 3 LC State by nearly 30 points last Saturday night.

And like the Northern men, Salt Lake has never been kind to the Skylights, and this year, it will be especially difficult. The Griffins come into Saturday’s game averaging a league-best 83 points per game,
and they have four players in double figures, led by guards Allie Eastman and Nicole Yazzie, while 6-0 sophomore Michelle Pace will be a handful in the paint.

But the Skylights have momentum on their side, as do the Lights, and both teams are hoping to carry that into tonight’s pivotal matchups against the Griffins.

Tonight’s women’s game between Northern and LC State will tip off at 7 p.m. M.S.T. in Lewiston, Idaho. The men’s game between the Lights and Warriors is set for 9 p.m. and both games can be heard on 92.5 KPQX FM.