Lights come up short at Carroll
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
Monday, February 21st, 2011

If the Montana State University-Northern Lights were in a tightly contested Frontier Conference race before Saturday night’s showdown with Carroll College, now they’re in a fight to the finish.

On Saturday night in Helena, the No. 16 Lights lost to the Carroll College Fighting Saints 56-47, meaning Northern split its a last two Frontier road games of the regular season. The Lights beat Rocky Mountain College on Thursday night in Billings. The split also drops the Lights back into a four-way tie with Carroll, UM-Western and Westminster College for first place heading into the final weekend of the season.

The loss at Carroll didn’t come without its good moments for the Lights. Northern started strong and led 27-21 at intermission. The Lights’ trademark defense was in full effect and stymieing the Saints once again, just as it did last month in Havre when MSU-N ran away from Carroll after a tight first half.

But on Saturday night, Carroll stood tall in the second half. The Saints outscored the Lights 46-20 in the final 20 minutes, with the big run coming in the final six minutes. The Lights led 41-40 with under six to go, but from there Carroll caught fire, took the lead and never gave it back.

The catalyst for Carroll was freshman guard Byago Diouf, who scored 19 points and was 7-for-9 from the floor. Northern’s defense shut down star forward Andy Garland yet again, to the tune of just 12 points, but Diouf and Tony Dalton combined for 28 points, mostly during the second half and that was enough to combine with a Northern shooting slump in the second half. The Lights were led by LaVon Myers with 12 points, while Chris Brown gave them 10 off the bench.

Northern fell to 8-4 in league play and 19-8 overall. The Lights will have a chance to seize control of the league for good when they face Westminster on Friday night and LC State on Saturday night. Northern can finish in first alone, finish in a first-place tie or finish as low as fourth in the final Frontier standings depending on what happens in games all over the conference this weekend.

Carroll 56, Lights 47

MSU-N — David Maddock 1-2 0-0 3, Devin Jackson 2-9 0-1 4, Shaun Tatarka 1-8 1-2 4, LaVon Myers 4-9 3-3 12, Sean Kelly 2-4 2-4 6, Chris Brown 5-6 0-1 10, Joe Simpson 1-5 3-6 5, Ben Mitchell 1-3 0-0 3. Totals 17-46 9-17 47.

CC — James MacIntyre 1-2 0-0 2, Andy Garland 2-10 6-6 12, Chase Godecke 1-3 2-2 4, Ben Cutler 1-2 0-0 3, Byago Diouf 7-9 5-6 19, Sam Cartmell 1-3 0-2 2, Chris McGrath 2-4 1-2 5, Tony Dalton 4-4 1-2 9, Nick Jones 0-0 0-0 0, Ben Nearpass 0-0 0-0 0, Jordan Reyes 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 19-38 15-20 56.

Halftime — MSUN 27-21. 3-pointers - Northern 4-15 (Tatarka 1, Myers 1, Maddock 1, Mitchell 1) Carroll 3-8 (Garland 2, Cutler 1). Rebounds - Northern 24 (Jackson 4, Tatarka 4, Myers 4, Mitchell 4), Carroll 30 (Garland 10). Steals - Northern 2 (Myers 2), Carroll 2 (Diouf 1, Cartmell 1); Turnovers - Northern 7, Carroll 9. Fouls - Northern 21, Carroll 14. Fouled out — Carroll (Dalton), Northern (Simpson). Technicals — Carroll 1. A-3157.