George Ferguson Column: Huse has been a credit to coaching at MSU-N
George Ferguson, Havre Daily News sports editor
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Time-and-time again during the course of the great run the Montana State University-Northern men’s basketball team has been on this season, I’ve heard fans refer to the Lights as unselfish. Fans, coaches, players alike, unselfish basketball season to be the theme surrounding this year’s Northern team.

It’s that type of play which has carried the Lights to a Frontier Conference championship and a berth in this week’s NAIA national tournament. And while it’s true that the Lights certainly play team basketball, the word unselfish starts with their coach.

I met Shawn Huse when he was playing basketball at Montana Tech. That was so long ago that I’d be dating just how old I am if I said when. Let’s just say however, basketball shorts were a lot shorter in those days.

But I didn’t truly get to know Huse as a person or as a coach until I became the sports editor at the Havre Daily News, and even that seems like a long time ago. And since I’ve been covering the Lights, going on six years now, I can honestly say that every single thing the Lights do on and off the court is a reflection of what kind of coach, leader and person Huse is.

For starters, I’ve always admired Huse’s coaching style. As a coach myself, it’s refreshing to see someone take command of his job. In other words, Huse does thing his way. But his way is also the right way, and I’m not talking strategy or X’s and O’s. Oh, He’s good at those too, but what I admire most about Huse’s way is that he has a genuine respect for his players that doesn’t end when the balls quit going through the nets.

No, Huse cares about his players 24/7, and that’s not as common this day and age as one might think. We have become good friends over the years, and we spend our share of time together, especially in the offseason. But even if we’re playing golf in the summer, or having a barbeque, you can bet, at some point, Huse will start talking about his players. And it’s not just the current team, it’s players like Larry and Lamar Morinia, Travis Noble, Delvaughn Tinned, Travis Moran, Drew Pettersen, Landon Grant, the list goes on and on. In short, past, present and future, if you’ve worn a Lights’ uniform while Huse is at the helm, you matter to him for life.

And it’s that almost parent-like approach to his players which comes out in his teams. He treats them like family and in turn, they come together as a family, and most importantly, they play like one, and that’s been a joy to watch over the years.

Huse also has a deep-rooted and passionate feeling for Northern and for Havre. He doesn’t miss a Lights’ home football game, or volleyball match or wrestling dual. He goes to Blue Pony games just as often. He and his Lights do ample work in the community and while he is a former Missoula man, by way of Butte, he and his family have become an important part of life in Havre. It’s a special relationship and one we’re all lucky to have.

Because if you’re a basketball fan, the last nine years should have been pure bliss to you. He may be fiery on the court, but that’s because he loves and deeply respects the game of basketball and his chosen profession. But Huse is also a person of faith, a strong family man a good friend and so much more. And as a result, he is a great coach and his teams win games and we all get to witness it.
There’s no doubt in my mind Northern made an outstanding choice nine years ago when they hired Huse to lead the Lights into the future. And lead he has. He’s got the Northern program in a good spot right now and with Huse at the helm, I see no reason why it will change anytime soon.

And hopefully, we have another nine years of Huse and his highly-successful Light’s teams to enjoy each winter.