Lights will be road warriors in 2011-12

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It was just a few months ago that the Montana State University-Northern men’s basketball team was wrapping up a dream season — a Frontier Conference championship and a trip to the NAIA National Tournament in Kansas City.

Now, the Lights can start to look ahead to the upcoming season.

Northern and head coach Shawn Huse recently released its 2011-2012 schedule, the and one thing that stands out is, the Lights will have to build their nonconference resume on the road.

There's no doubt when the season begins the Lights will be picked as a favorite in the Frontier Conference and they should be highly-ranked in the NAIA as Northern returns its entire roster from last season's league championship team. And that experience will need to pay off as the Lights start the season in a two-month road trip.

Northern's season-opening game will be at home on Oct. 8 against the King's University of Edmonton, Alberta. But after that, Northern won’t play another home game until Dec. 2.

During the months of October and November, the Lights will play in tournaments in Regina, Sask., as well as at UM-Western and Lewis-Clark State. Both the Western and LC State tournaments have opponents for Northern that are yet to be determined, but the Lights will likely play at least one tough NAIA team at each event. Nov. 3-5 the Lights also have a three-game trip to Oregon and Nov. 18-19, they will visit California where they'll play NAIA power Menlo College.

MSU-N has five games at home in the month of December, including a Dec. 8 date against future Frontier rival Dickinson State. Northern then closes out nonconference play with the AmericInn Classic, which runs Dec. 29-30. The Northern tournament will feature the Lights, UM-Western and Alberta schools the University of Alberta and Concordia University.

And while the Lights will be on the road for much of their non-league schedule, they play five of their first Frontier games at home. They open conference play on Jan. 8 with the University of Great Falls, and close the month of January with critical home games against LC State on Jan. 27 and Westminster College on Jan. 28.

February will be a tough month for the Lights as they play five of their final seven games on the road, including a season-ending trip to Westminster on Feb. 23 and LC State on Feb. 25. Northern's final regular season home games will feature rivals Rocky Mountain College on Feb. 17 and Carroll College on Feb. 28.

The Frontier playoffs are slated for March 1-3 and the NAIA National Tournament will run March 14-20 in Kansas City.
Lights 2011-2012 Basketball Schedule

Oct.  8     vs Kings University
Oct. 14    at Regina Tournament
Oct. 15    at Regina Tournament
Oct. 29    at UM-Western Tournament in Dillon
Oct. 30    at UM-Western Tournament in Dillon
Nov.  3     at Portland Bible College
Nov.  4     at New Hope Christian in Eugene, Ore.
Nov.  5     at Warner Pacific
Nov. 12    at LC State Tournament in Lewiston, Idaho
Nov. 13    at LC State Tournament in Lewiston, Idaho
Nov. 18    at Menlo College in Vallejo, Calif.
Nov. 19    at California Maritime Academy in Vallejo, Calif.
Dec.  2     vs Augustana University
Dec.  3     vs Augustana University
Dec.  8     vs Dickinson State
Dec. 29    AmericInn Classic vs University of Alberta
Dec. 30    AmericInn Classic vs Concordia University
Jan.  8     vs Great Falls
Jan. 13    vs Montana Tech
Jan. 14    vs UM-Western
Jan. 19    at Carroll College
Jan. 21    at Rocky Mountain
Jan. 27    vs LC State
Jan. 28    vs Westminster College
Feb.  4     at Great Falls
Feb. 10    at UM-Western
Feb. 11    at Montana Tech
Feb. 17    vs Rocky Mountain
Feb. 18    vs Carroll College
Feb. 23    at Westminster College
Feb. 25    at LC State
Mar.  1-3   Frontier Playoffs
Mar. 14-20  NAIA National Tournament in Kansas City