

## Hi-Line Coaching Profile: Shawn Huse

MSU-N's Huse happy with the Lights' start to 2011-12 season

George Ferguson

Thursday, December 29th, 2011

The Montana State University-Northern men's basketball team reached some ultimate successes less than a year ago. The Lights cut down the nets as Frontier Conference champions last March in Helena, then a week later, made a trip to Kansas City for the NAIA national tournament.

That success seemed likely to carry over to the 2011-12 season given the fact Northern head coach Shawn Huse returned his entire team and even added more quality players. So it would have been easy for Northern to have a success hangover this fall. Instead, the Lights, who are ranked 19th in the NAIA, have gotten off to a strong start, going 12-2 over their first 14 games.

Now, Northern prepares to play its final nonconference game of the season as the AmericInn Classic comes to the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse today and Friday. And when the dust settles this weekend, the Lights will get ready to defend their Frontier title when they open conference play Jan. 7 against up-start UGF in Havre.



*MSU-Northern head coach Shawn Huse calls out a play during a Frontier Conference men's basketball game last winter in Havre. Huse's Lights have come back strong this season after finding so much success a year ago. Northern plays host to the AmericInn Classic today and Friday at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.*

Here's five questions with Huse about the Lights' progress so far this year, as well as a look ahead.

**HDN:** The Lights have started off well in 2011. What do you attribute that to?

**Huse:** "Experience. That's been the biggest key. Experience and the fact that we have a great, hard-working group of guys who are unselfish on and off the court."

**HDN:** Coming into this season, were you concerned that last year's success might hold your team back a little, or were you confident this team would build on it going forward?

**Huse:** "Before the season started it was 50-50 on that. I felt like this group was hungry to do more. But you never really know until you see them all together after the summer is over."

**HDN:** And now that your 14 games in, are you happy with how this team has responded to last year?

**Huse:** "Definitely. These guys are very humble, very focused and it's as though nobody cares what happened yesterday. For these guys, it's all about today and what's in our future. I'm proud of them for the approach they've taken to this season."

**HDN:** What do you expect from the Frontier Conference as a whole this season?

**Huse:** "I think there's going to be even more parity this season, maybe even then ever before. There are just a lot of really good teams and a lot of quality players. Every night is going to feel like you're playing the Miami Heat in my opinion. The Frontier is going to be a very good league."

**HDN:** Being the defending Frontier champion, and with such a talented team, do you feel like there's a target on your back this season?

**Huse:** "Maybe. But at this point I feel like every team respects each other because we've all seen what everyone else has done in the nonconference games. So every conference game will be a tough one. No matter who's playing who. It was nice to be picked to win the league this year, but I think we're at a point now where everyone is gunning for everyone and we all have a healthy amount of respect for each other."