

## Lights trap Golden Bears

George Ferguson

Tuesday, January 3rd, 2012

Twenty three days is a long time not to play a basketball game. And for a brief moment, the Montana State University-Northern men looked like they hadn't played in that long.

But, MSU-N's typical hard-nosed defense and a 3-point barrage got Northern to its 13th and possibly 14th win of the season as the Lights closed out nonconference play with a 78-50 win over a tough University of Alberta squad in the AmericInn Classic last Friday night at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.

The Golden Bears came to Havre as the sixth-ranked team in the CIS, the top level of Canadian college basketball. And for a while, they looked the part of a Frontier Conference foe as they gave the Lights plenty of trouble early on.

"That's a very good team we played tonight," Northern head coach Shawn Huse said. "In certain aspects, they are very much like a Frontier team in that, they play really hard, and they are very big and physical.

"Coming off a long break like that, you never know when or if you're going to get hot shooting the ball," he added. "But you do know you can always play good, hard defense and we did that for 40 minutes tonight. Fortunately, we also shot the ball well from three in some stretches."

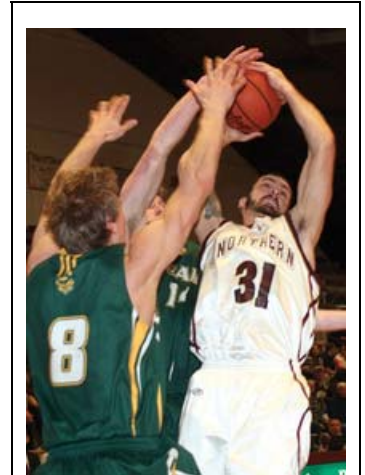
Point of fact, the Lights lit it up from beyond the arc midway through the first half. Trailing 12-11, junior Devin Jackson made three triples on three straight trips down the floor, while Shaun Tatarka and David Maddock buried long-range bombs as well. The five three's came in a span of less than five minutes and was part of a 16-2 Northern run which put the Lights ahead 30-14.

However, the Bears, who pushed UM-Western to the brink of defeat Thursday night in Havre, clawed back to trail by just 11 points at halftime, 38-27.

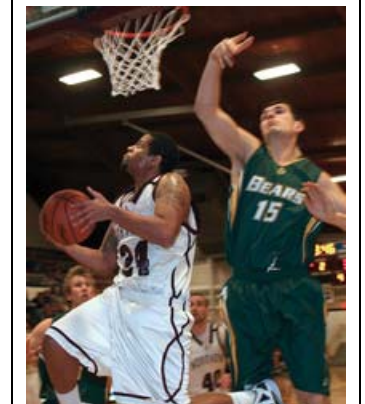
"It was nice to see us getting in a shooting rhythm like that, especially after such a long break," Huse said. "It was key for us to knock down those shots. But I think we got much more balanced in the second half and that was the big difference.

"We started going inside more," he added. "And Joe Simpson, Sean Kelly, Jordan Harris, Chris Brown Ben Mitchell and Corbin Pearson all did a great job of making extra passes and getting us some inside baskets. Once we were doing that, we became a little more difficult for them (Bears) to defend."

The Lights had extended their lead to as much as 18 points for much of the second half, and any chance of an Alberta comeback ended when head coach Greg Francis received two technical fouls and was ejected from the game. While the ejection seemed to fire up the Bears, it also gave Tatarka four straight free throws and Northern an insurmountable 63-44 lead with 5:08 to play.



MSU-Northern's Sean Kelly (right) grabs a rebound during Friday night's men's college basketball game between the Lights and the University of Alberta. Northern won 78-50.



MSU-Northern's LaVon Myers (left) glides in for a shot during Friday's AmericInn Classic game between the Lights and Alberta at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.

Jackson led the Lights in scoring with 18 points on 7-of-12 shooting and a 4-for-6 performance from three. In all, 10 Lights reached the scorebook. Simpson scored 13 points and grabbed five rebounds, while Tatarka chipped in with 11. Pearson came off the bench to give the Lights nine points and two boards, his best scoring outing of the season. As a team, the Lights shot a stellar 9-for-22 from three with seven of them coming in the first 20 minutes.

"We're very pleased with beating this team," Huse said. "It wasn't as easy as the score says. This team gave Western all they could handle on Thursday, so to come out and get an effort from our guys like we did tonight, that's very gratifying.

"We're excited to be where we're at right now," he added. "At the same time, we know we have to keep getting better because our conference is going to be tougher than ever."

Northern currently sits at 13-2 but could be 14-2 if the Lights receive a forfeit victory for their cancelled game with Concordia of Alberta.

Now Northern turns its attention to its Frontier Conference opener which will be much-anticipated. The Lights host the vastly improved University of Great Falls Argos Friday night.

### **Lights 78, Alberta 50**

**UA** — Taylor Riar 0-1 0-0 0, Jason Baillie 0-0 0-0 0, Robert Dewar 1-3 0-0 2, Jordan Baker 7-11 5-6 19, Adam Wier 0-2 1-2 1, Sahr Saffa 0-0 2-2 2, Matthew Cardoza 0-2 0-0 0, Daniel Ferguson 5-12 0-0 12, Todd Bergren-Henenguowen 5-7 0-0 11, Nikola Manojlovic 1-3 1-2 3. Totals 19-41 9-12 50.

**MSU-N** — David Maddock 2-4 0-0 6, Devin Jackson 7-12 0-0 18, Jordan Harris 0-0 2-2 2, Shaun Tatarka 2-8 6-6 11, LaVon Myers 3-7 0-0 7, Sean Kelly 1-1 1-2 3, Mike LaValley 0-0 0-0 0, Chris Brown 1-1 1-2 3, Joe Simpson 6-8 1-2 13, Ben Mitchell 2-5 2-2 6, Pat Jensen 0-0 0-0 0, Baird Henning 0-1 0-0 0, Corbin Pearson 3-3 2-2 9. Totals 27-50 15-18 78.

Halftime: Northern 38-27. 3-pt FG:UA3-10 (Cardoza 0-1, Ferguson 2-7, Bergren-Henenguowen 1-2), MSU-N 9-22 (Maddock 2-4, Jackson 4-6, Tatarka 1-5, Myers 1-3, Mitchell 0-2, Henning 0-1, Pearson 1-1). Rebounds: UA 28 (Baker 5, Ferguson 5), MSU-N 19 (Simpson 5). Fouls: UA 17, MSU-N 14. Fouled out: Bergren-Henenguowen . Technical: University of Alberta Coach.