Breaking Sports: Lights beat Argos in a thriller
Northern 63, Great Falls 62
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Friday, January 6th, 2012

It was everything it was billed to be and more. On Friday night, the the MSU-Northern men’s basketball team began defense of its 2011 Frontier Conference championship with a narrow, 63-62 win over a vastly improved University of Great Falls squad at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.

The game was intense from start to finish. There were three technical fouls, physical defense, high-flying dunks and much more, but the night belonged to MSU-N senior Shaun Tatarka, who joined the rare 1,000 point club at Northern by pouring in a game-high 26 points and making seven 3-pointers.

And the Lights needed every point from Tatarka to hold off the Argos. Tatarka helped stake MSU-N to an early 18-14 lead, but the Argos took command via a 12-1 run and 15 first-half Northern turnovers. UGF led 31-30 at the break. UGF then opened the second half by outscoring the Lights 15-3 and the Argos were up 48-40 with 12:29 to go. But Tatarka hit back-to-back three’s as the Lights quickly regained the lead. From there, it was a battle right to the end with Northern's Joe Simpson making two free throws to put Northern ahead by three with :17 left. UGF made one more basket but it wasn’t enough as the No. 19 Lights improved to 1-0 in the Frontier and 13-2 overall.

Tatarka, a Great Falls native was 8-for-16 from the field and 7-of-14 from three, while the rest of the Lights struggled and shot just 39 percent from the floor. Northern also turned the ball over an uncharacteristic 19 times. LaVon Myers added 11 points and Corbin Pearson gave Northern a big second-half spark off the bench. UGF’s (0-1, 12-5) James Holmes scored 20 points in the loss.

The Lights are back at home next Friday against Montana Tech and Saturday against UM-Western.

For full coverage, see Monday's Havre Daily News.