

MSU-Northern Notebook: MSU-N's Tatarka shoots into the record books

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Over the course of his career, Montana State University-Northern senior guard Shaun Tatarka has played with some great backcourt mates.

And when Tatarka achieved greatness himself during Northern's 63-62 win over the University of Great Falls Friday night at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse, he couldn't help but think of his teammates, past and present. That's the kind of humble, unselfish player Tatarka has been over his career.

Tatarka scored 26 points and buried seven 3-pointers against the Argos, but it was six three, with came at 13:30 mark of the second which will be remembered forever. That shot put Tatarka into the 1,000-point club at Northern, a club which he and only 16 others now belong to.

"I've been lucky that I've gotten to play with and learn so much from some great players while I've been here," Tatarka said. "My first two years here, I got to play with guys like Travis Noble and Delvaughn Tinned, two great guards, and now I'm playing with another great group of guards. So I've learned from a lot of great players over the years.

"Coach Noble really showed me a lot, especially through his work ethic, so I've just been really lucky to play with a lot of guys like that," he added. "And then there's coach Huse. He's a former Frontier Conference MVP, so I can say I've learned from the best. It's been amazing to be coached by him over the years.

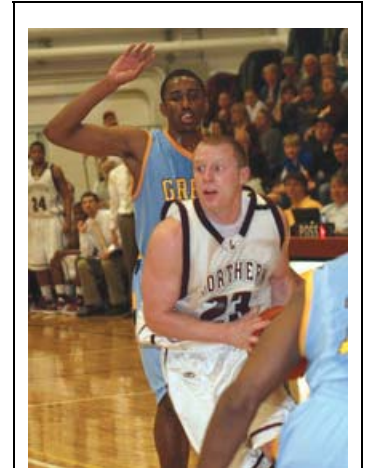
"Tonight was a really special moment for Shaun," Huse added. "And it wasn't like he got it on an easy night. I'm proud of him for getting to 1,000 points, it's a tremendous accomplishment. But I'm even more happy for him for the way he did it tonight. He reached that milestone under some tough circumstances against a really good defensive team.

"I think it also says a lot about our team, because we really do look at individual awards and achievements as team awards, and this is one all of Shaun's teammates can be proud of," Huse continued. "And no matter what happens from here on it, and Shaun will have more nights like this, people won't forget the night and the game in which he broke into the 1,000 club. It was very special and I'm just really happy for him."

Tatarka's special night also lifted the Lights to a big victory over a very game UGF squad. While Northern struggled shooting the ball as a team, Tatarka was a blistering 50 percent from the 3-point-line, making seven of his 14 attempts. And as special a moment as it was for Tatarka, he only reflected for a moment, before looking ahead to things still to come.

"I'm very thankful for the career I've had here," he said. "I'm thankful to have played for a great coach in coach Huse and to have so many great teammates. But we have a lot left to do. We have a lot of memories left to make this season."

The Argos have landed



Montana State University-Northern senior LaVon Myers takes a shot during the first half of Friday night's Frontier Conference men's basketball game between the Lights and the University of Great Falls at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse. The Lights won 63-62.

UGF is 0-1 in the Frontier Conference after Friday night's loss. But make no mistake, the Argos are for real this season.

UGF has finished sixth or worse in the Frontier every year since the Argos reinstated basketball, over 10 years ago. But this season could be very different. The Argos are still off to a 12-4 start for the season, their best in a decade, and they proved they have the talent to hang with the best teams in Montana.

UGF nearly knocked off the University of Montana back in the nonconference season, losing to the Griz by just one point. And Friday night's one-point loss to the defending Frontier champions, on the Lights' home floor shouldn't deter what UGF can accomplish this season.

Now can they be ranked?

There were moments of trepidation for the MSU-Northern Skylights during Friday night's 55-47 win over UGF at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.

But adversity is nothing new to Northern. MSU-N has built its sparkling 14-1 record in spite of multiple injuries, a relatively new team and a vicious road schedule. So overcoming the Argos' hot start and slim lead in the early part of the second half wasn't too much to ask of the Skylights.

And when the new NAIA Women's Top 25 is released later today, if the Skylights aren't in it, it will be a travesty. No one in the Frontier Conference has a better resume at this point, no one has a better winning percentage and no one has streaks of eight and six wins like the Skylights do this season. All that adds up to the fact that the Skylights should have been ranked a long time ago, but now, it will be absurd if they're not.

Big Sandy's Impact

In both the MSU-N women's and men's wins over UGF Friday night, a Big Sandy presence was felt.

Finally healthy, Big Sandy sophomore Laci Keller gave the Skylights big minutes off the bench. Not only did Keller do well to defend UGF's imposing Kindra Jones (6-3), but she also scored a key bucket in Northern's first-half, 12-0 run which gave the Skylights a 27-14 lead.

Former Pioneer Corbin Pearson also made waves in the men's game. Pearson played in both halves, but late in the second half, as Northern was trying to hold off the Argos, Pearson made a great pass to Chris Brown for a score, then had a putback bucket as well, which allowed the Lights to pad their lead and keep the Argos at bay.