Road woes continue for MSU-Northern men
George Ferguson
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The Montana State University-Northern men’s basketball team hasn't had 89 points put on it very often in recent years. The Lights also haven't lost three games in a row too often in recent times.

Yet, that’s exactly two facts which happened to befall the No. 13 Lights on the road this weekend. Northern dropped its second straight Frontier Conference road game Friday night in Dillon, losing to No. 24 UM-Western 89-75. The Lights also struggled again Saturday night in Butte, losing to Montana Tech 63-55.

“The guys played extremely hard both nights,” Northern head coach Shawn Huse said. “I am very proud of them for the fight they showed after getting in early holes both nights.

“They are in an extremely tough stretch right now, given the expectations they have for themselves,” he added. “And they are taking this very, very hard.”

Northern fell behind the Bulldogs 37-24 in the first half Friday night and could never catch up. The Lights came into the weekend still leading the NAIA in defense, allowing 55 points per game. But Western, which scored just 52 points last month in Havre, was clicking on all cylinders. The Bulldogs shots 58 percent from the field and got a career-high 32 points from Kyle Erickson. Western also got 20 points from Tyler Hurley and another 19 from star senior Brandon Brown.

Northern played a much better second half, but the deficit was just too much to make up, especially on the Bulldogs’ home floor, where the Light shave now fallen four straight times. Shaun Tatarka scored 19 points, Joe Simpson added 11 points and seven rebounds and Jordan Harris chipped in with nine.

Saturday night in Butte was just as difficult. The Lights struggled to find any offensive rhythm and found themselves again playing from behind. Tech led 31-23 at intermission, and the Lights mustered only two field goals in the first eight minutes of the second half.

But there was no quit in the Lights as they rallied and cut the Tech lead to four points with a minute to go. However, the Orediggers were up to the task and held the Lights off at the end.

Simpson led the Lights with 15 points and six board, while Ben Mitchell added 11 points off the bench. Devin Jackson scored 10 as well.

The two losses over the weekend dropped Northern’s conference record to just 6-4 with four games left. The 20-6 Lights also fell out of first in the Frontier for the first time this season and now trail the Bulldogs by 1.5 games.

MSU-N returns to Havre for its final two regular season games of the year. Northern hosts Rocky Mountain College Friday night and Carroll College at a special 7:30 p.m. start time on Saturday night.

“No one is more disappointed in the last three games than this group,” Huse said. “But there’s nothing we can do about that now. We owe it to ourselves to look forward and give it all we have in our final two regular season home games.”

Western 89, Lights 75
MSU-N — Devin Jackson 2-10 0-0 6, Ben Mitchell 0-1 1-2 1, Chris Brown 0-0 2-2 2, Sean Kelly 3-4 2-3 8, Joe Simpson 5-9 1-2 11, LaVon Myers 5-15 2-4 14, Shaun Tatarka 6-12 2-2 19, Jordan Harris 4-8 0-0 9, David Maddock 1-5 0-0 2, Corbin Pearson 0-0 0-0 0, Baird Henning 0-1 0-0 0, Pat Jensen 0-1 0-0 0, Mike LaValley 1-1 0-0 3. Totals 27-67 10-15 75.

UM-W — Brandon Brown 5-12 8-9 19, Levi Simon 0-0 0-0 0, JC Isakson 0-0 0-0 0, Gabe Rucker 0-1 0-0 0, Jake Owsley 1-3 1-2 3, Tyler Miller 3-6 0-0 7, Jordan Overstreet 0-0 0-0 0, Austin Mailey 0-0 0-0 0, Kyle Perry 3-7 0-0 6, Tyler Hurley 7-8 6-7 20, Bridger Chambers 0-1 2-2 2, Kyle Erickson 10-11 11-12 32, Vince Turk 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 29-49 28-32 89.


Montana Tech 63, Lights 55

MSU-N — David Maddock 2-4 0-0 4, Devin Jackson 3-6 1-2 10, Jordan Harris 0-2 0-0 0, Shawn Tatarka 1-11 0-1 2, Lavon Myers 2-6 0-0 6, Sean Kelly 2-3 2-4 4, Chris Brown 1-1 0-0 2, Joe Simpson 5-9 5-5 15, Ben Mitchell 2-3 6-6 10, Corbin Pearson 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 18-47 14-18 55.

MT — Tyree Haynie 8-15 4-5 20, Tanner Neumann 2-2 0-0 4, Cole Conway 0-1 2-2 2, A.J. Paine 1-6 1-3 4, Adam Gregor 5-9 0-0 11, Brian Cummings 1-3 2-2 4, Brandon Rydberg 0-0 0-1 0, Daniel Simon 4-9 9-10 18. Totals 21-46 18-23 63.

Halftime — Tech 31-23. 3-point goals — Northern 5-19 (Jackson 3-6, Myers 2-5, Tatarka 0-4, Maddock 0-2, Mitchell 0-1), Northern 3-9 (Gregor 1-1, Simon 1-2, Paine 1-4, Haynie 0-2). Rebounds — Northern 22 (Simpson 6), Tech 32 (Simon 14). Fouls — Northern 22, Tech 16. Fouled out — none. Technicals — none.