Lights land big, Brazilian
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The Montana State University-Northern men's basketball team is adding size to its front line for upcoming season. And the Lights and head coach Shawn Huse recently landed a true power forward.

Earlier this week, Huse announced the signing of 6-8 Brazilian forward Nilson Santana to an NAIA letter of intent. Santana comes to Northern from Marshalltown Community College of the Iowa Community College Athletic Conference. It’s one of the top junior college leagues in the country. Santana went to E.E. Batista Renzl High School in Brazil.

“This is another great day for the Lights basketball future,” Huse said. “Nilson is first and foremost a great guy to have on our campus, in our program, and in our community, and is a very solid student. With his height and length he makes many plays that help his team on both ends of the floor. He is a very skilled, hard-working, active forward, with great touch around the basket … and runs the floor just as well as he plays in the half-court. He steadily improved both years he was there and I am confident his best basketball lies ahead of him. He provides the size we were looking for this off-season and look forward to watching his integral contributions as a big-man for the Lights.”

While at Marshalltown, Santana earned Honorable Mention All-Conference honors, while helping the team to a 20-11 season. He averaged 11 points and seven rebounds per game on a squad that sent two players to NCAA DI scholarships this spring — one going to the University of Nebraska and the other to the University of Idaho. Santana too garnered some DI attention, including Central Michigan of the MAC. But NCAA academic requirements did not play in Santana’s favor, and it was felt the language barrier could be a problem as far as him getting up to speed with his necessary courses.

Santana will be joined by another Marshalltown teammate at Northern, which the Lights will announce soon, so Huse is getting two more quality players and students to add to a roster which was somewhat depleted by graduation.

“Both (are) great quality kids that will be hard to replace for how hard they work and the people they are,” Marshalltown head coach Brynjar Brynarrson said. “They will find a way to impact a team and impact winning basketball games. If it comes to diving on a loose ball or taking a charge, that’s what they’ll do.”

Huse expects to announce more signees in the coming weeks. The Lights lost eight players and four starters from their back-to-back Frontier Conference championship teams of 2011 and 2012.