Montana State University-Northern men’s basketball coach Shawn Huse knew this weekend’s three-game road trip to British Columbia wasn’t going to be easy.

And he was right.

Playing three CIS-level (The Division I of Canada) teams in three days, the Lights had to fight hard to keep their early-season record unblemished. And Northern did just that, defeating Fraser Valley University on Friday night, Thompson Rivers on Saturday night and UBC-Okanagan on Sunday afternoon.

Against Fraser Valley, Northern overcame a sluggish start and a 24-23 halftime deficit to win 71-63. The Lights outscored UFV 49-39 in the second half, helped by a 35-point fourth quarter. MSU-N shot just 38 percent from the floor for the game, but the Lights nailed seven 3-pointers in the second half, and they really clamped down on defense.

Jesse Vaughan had a perfect game for the Lights. He went 7-of-7 from the field, 3-for-3 from three and 4-of-4 from the free-throw-line for a game-high 20 points. He also grabbed eight rebounds. Savion Udeh added 11 points and Corbin Pearson and Devin Jackson each chipped in with nine. Pearson and Will Perry also grabbed eight boards each.

And while the Lights out-lasted UFV, a CIS Final Four team a year ago, things got even closer on Saturday. Northern had to go to overtime to beat Thompson Rivers 81-76. The Lights trailed by two points with two seconds left in regulation, but Jackson saved the day, hitting a shot at the buzzer to send the game into an extra frame. From there, Northern out-scored Thompson 13-8 to earn the hard-fought victory.

“We had to grind it out to beat the host team, a very good team,” Huse said. “Very proud of the guys for finding a way to win in overtime. We executed really well down the stretch, especially for such a new squad.”

Vaughan and Jackson were huge in the win. Vaughan scored a game-high 25 points, making four of the Lights’ 11 three’s. Jackson not only hit the game-tying shot, he poured in 20 points and pulled down eight rebounds. Nilson Santana added nine points and seven boards.

On Sunday, the Lights overcame another slow start to beat UBC-Okanagan 86-75. The Heat led the Lights 38-33 at the half, but Northern fought back, outscoring the Heat 53-37 the rest of the way. MSU-N made 12 three’s, six in each half, and the Lights shot 53 percent in the final two periods, while holding the Heat to just 40 percent and four triples for the game.

Jackson led four Lights in double figures with 23 points and five long-range bombs to go along with seven rebounds. Vaughan added 18 points, while Alfie Miller scored 14. Roshawn West totaled 10 points and Pearson chipped in with eight as the Lights improved to 5-0 on the young season.

“After a sluggish start, our guys dug in and won the last three quarters,” Huse said. “Our forwards did a nice job of going to work inside, opening up the outside to pour on the finishing touches. “I am very pleased with the total team effort of these guys, yet I know we have a lot of work to do to get where we want to be,” he continued. “It would be nearly impossible to be in near-perfect form at this point. It was nothing short of a successful early road trip for this new team.”
The Lights will make their home debut on Friday night when they host the University of Lethbridge Pronghorns at the Armory Gymnasium.

**Lights 71, Fraser Valley 63**

**MSU-N** — Jesse Vaughan 7-7 3-3 20; Savion Udeh 4-8 0-0 11; Devin Jackson 2-10 4-6 9; Corbin Pearson 4-13 1-2 9; Nilson Santana 3-8 0-2 6; Allan Brown 1-2 2-2 5; Alfie Miller 2-11 0-0 4; Roshawn West 1-6 0-0 3; Will Perry 1-2 0-2 2; Dontae Clark 1-1 0-0 2; Mike LaValley 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 26-70 10-17 71.

**VFU** — Kyle Grewal 7-23 2-2 17; Jordan Blackman 6-14 0-0 13; Kevon Parchment 5-8 0-1 10; James York 5-11 0-0 10; Andy Khaira 3-5 0-0 6; Sean Ashkenazy 1-3 0-0 3; Klaus Figueredo 1-1 0-2 2; Manjodh Dulay 1-1 0-0 2; Luke Morris 0-0 0-0 0; Sam Freeman 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 29-69 2-5 63.

3-point goals--MSU-Northern 9-34 (Savion Udeh 3-7; Jesse Vaughan 3-3; Roshawn West 1-4; Allan Brown 1-2; Devin Jackson 1-7; Mike LaValley 0-2; Alfie Miller 0-8; Corbin Pearson 0-1), Fraser Valley 3-20 (Sean Ashkenazy 1-2; Jordan Blackman 1-7; Kyle Grewal 1-5; Sam Freeman 0-2; James York 0-4). Fouled out--MSU-Northern--None, Fraser Valley--None. Rebounds--MSU-Northern 46 (Will Perry 8; Jesse Vaughan 8; Corbin Pearson 8), Fraser Valley 41 (Kyle Grewel 16).

**Lights 81, Thompson River 76 (OT)**

**TRU** — Brett Rouault 8-13 5-5 21; Will Ondrik 7-10 5-10 20; Kevin Pribilsky 5-13 7-8 17; DJ Oates 4-6 0-0 10; Blaz Bozinovic 3-4 0-0 6; Zach Usherwood 1-1 0-0 2; Ivan Bozinovic 0-0 0-0 0; Akeem Pierre 0-3 0-0 0; Therons Haslom 0-2 0-0 0; Vincent Watson 0-0 0-0 0; Brett Parker 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 28-52 17-23 76.

**MSU-N** — Jesse Vaughan 9-16 3-3 25; Devin Jackson 8-19 3-4 20; Nilson Santana 4-6 0-2 8; Alfie Miller 2-8 0-0 6; Savion Udeh 2-12 0-0 6; Allan Brown 2-3 0-0 4; Roshawn West 1-4 0-0 3; Mike LaValley 1-2 0-0 3; Will Perry 1-2 1-2 3; Corbin Pearson 1-3 1-2 3; Dontae Clark 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 31-77 8-13 81.

3-point goals--Thompson Rivers 3-13 (DJ Oates 2-4; Will Ondrik 1-2; Kevin Pribilsky 0-2; Brett Rouault 0-5), MSU-Northern 11-46 (Jesse Vaughan 4-5; Alfie Miller 2-8; Savion Udeh 2-12; Mike LaValley 1-2; Devin Jackson 1-11; Roshawn West 1-4; Dontae Clark 0-2; Corbin Pearson 0-2). Fouled out--Thompson Rivers--None, MSU-Northern--Allan Brown. Rebounds--Thompson Rivers 40 (Blaz Bozinovic 10; Will Ondrik 10), MSU-Northern 35 (Nilson Santana 7).

**Lights 86, Okanagan 75**

**MSU-N** — Devin Jackson 6-10 6-8 23; Jesse Vaughan 7-11 2-6 18; Alfie Miller 5-11 2-2 14; Roshawn West 2-3 4-4 10; Corbin Pearson 4-6 0-0 8; Nilson Santana 3-6 0-2 6; Will Perry 2-5 0-2 4; Savion Udeh 1-8 0-0 3; Patrick Jensen 0-0 0-0 0; Mike LaValley 0-2 0-0 0; Dontae Clark 0-1 0-0 0; Allan Brown 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 30-63 14-24 86.

**UBC-O** — Yassine Ghomari 5-9 7-8 17; Azi Fahandeg-Sadi 4-7 4-6 12; Landry Ndayitwayeko 4-7 2-2 11; Greet Gill 4-8 0-0 9; Bret Macdonald 3-4 0-0 7; Mitch Goodwin 2-12 2-2 7; Ed Dane Medi 2-5 0-2 4; Dave Mackay 2-2 0-0 4; Julian Asselstine 1-1 0-0 2; Anwar Faza 1-3 0-2 2; Erickson Evangelista 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 28-58 15-22 75.

3-point goals--Montana State-Northern 12-26 (Devin Jackson 5-6; Alfie Miller 2-7; Jesse Vaughan 2-2; Roshawn West 2-2; Savion Udeh 1-7; Mike LaValley 0-1; Dontae Clark 0-1), UBC Okanagan 4-14 (Mitch Goodwin 1-5; Bret Macdonald 1-1; Greet Gill 1-3; Landry Ndayitwayeko 1-2; Azi Fahandeg-Sadi 0-2; Yassine Ghomari 0-1). Fouled out--Montana State-Northern--None, UBC Okanagan--Yassine Ghomari. Rebounds--Montana State-Northern 33 (Devin Jackson 7), UBC Okanagan 39 (Greet Gill 8).