Lights bombard Argos
Northern men shoot down UGF with 16 3-pointers
George Ferguson
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Alfie Miller, as well as much of the Montana State University-Northern
men’s basketball team wasn’t there when the University of Great Falls
banked in a 3-pointer to beat the nationally-ranked Lights at the buzzer
last February in Great Falls.

But Miller, and a new-look Lights’ squad sure got some redemption on
Thursday night.

Northern made 16 3-pointers, including six by Miller as the No. 13
Lights toppled the Argos 62-49 Thursday night at the McLaughlin
Center in Great Falls. The win improved the Lights to 6-2 in the Frontier
Conference and helped them stay tied with Lewis-Clark State atop the
league standings.

Equally important was the fact Northern had lost two of its last three
games in league play, while UGF came in having won six of its last
seven. And though momentum was on UGF’s side, as was a huge UGF
crows, the Lights made sure none of it mattered. And instead, they
gave their own large throng of fans a satisfying win.

“Coach talked a lot about the game against Great Falls last year where they banked in a shot at the
buzzer,” Miller, who scored a game-high 19 points said. “So we wanted to come down here and make sure
were we focused. We wanted to get this one back. And I thought we just played really hard and we played
together.”

“Great Falls is a good team, and we knew they’d be tough to beat,” MSU-N head coach Shawn Huse
added. “But I just think these guys came in here and weren’t going to be denied tonight. They were extra-
focused, we had a great week of practice and they wanted this one pretty badly. They wanted to play well
coming off the loss to LC State and they wanted to show we are a better team than we played in that
game. The guys were extra-hungry tonight.”

The hunger certainly showed on the defensive end as the Lights held the high-scoring Argos to just 49
points, 38 percent shooting and just two three’s. MSU-N also did a tremendous job holding down UGF’s
Marcel Towns, who came in scoring 20 points per game but was limited to 11 Thursday night.

“Have to tip your cap to our defense tonight,” Huse said. “UGF is an athletic team that can hurt you in a
number of ways. But I thought our guys just were really focused, and really determined. We got big stops
when we needed them and we came up with big rebounds on both ends of the floor, which isn’t easy to do
against them (Argos). So I’m really proud of our effort and intensity.”

As good as the Lights played on defense, nothing could overshadow MSU-N’s shooting performance.

The Argos struck the first blow as Towns buried a game-opening trey in front of a raucous Argo crowd. But
Roshawn West, Allan Brown and Devin Jackson hit three’s of their own in the first five minutes, and
Jackson’s bomb gave the Lights the lead for good at 9-7.
And the barrage didn’t let up. Miller came off the bench to pour in four first-half trey’s, helping the Lights pull away to a 36-23 halftime lead. In all, the Lights nailed eleven bombs in the first 20 minutes and shot 60 percent from beyond the arc against a normally-tough UGF zone defense.

“We prepared all week for their zone,” Miller said. “We came in here knowing we were going to have to shoot the ball well against it. But I think it started with our defense. We were really focused on coming out and playing good defense and that led to us being able to get going on offense.”

Jackson picked up right where the Lights left off, by opening the second half with yet another trey. However, UGF finally got going on offense, and the Argos ripped off a 13-0 run, highlighted by a thunderous Towns’ dunk. And as a result, the Lights went from leading by 16 points to only up 39-35 with over 13 minutes to go.

The excitement inside the McLaughlin Center was short-lived though. The Lights regained their bearings on defense, while they got hot again from the outside. West answered UGF’s run with another three, followed by two more bombs from Miller, one by Mike LaValley and another from West. In all, Northern went on a 18-6 run and buried the Argos for good.

“I thought we did a great job of answering their (Argos) momentum,” Huse said. “I just think we were ultra-focused tonight and we stayed poised. I’m really proud of our guys for that.”

When the dust settled, the Lights finished the game 16-for-30 from beyond the arc. Northern made just four 2-point baskets and went just 6-of-10 from the free-throw-line. It wasn’t a conventional night, but it did the trick against the high-powered Argos, who have developed quite a rivalry with MSU-N recently.

“Really, we just took what their defense gave us tonight,” Huse said. “With their zone, you never know exactly what that’s going to be and tonight it happened to be three’s. Our guys did a really good job of staying patient, of sharing the ball and taking the best available shot tonight. And we were able to exploit some holes in the zone tonight. I think that’s a result of them really buckling down and prepping well for this game and for coming out hungry and focused.”

Miller led the way with six trey’s, while West hit four bombs and scored 17 points to go along with six assists. Jackson hit three triples and added 13 points, while Will Perry and Corbin Pearson combined for 15 rebounds. UGF (5-3, 14-8) got 14 points and seven rebounds from Naren Maynerd as the Argos lost to the Lights for the sixth time in their last seven meetings.

“Really we needed to come down here and play well,” Miller said. “Especially coming off the loss last weekend. We didn’t feel like we played well on either end in that game, so we wanted to come down here and bounce back. This was a big win for us, and we did it by playing together and playing hard.”

Thursday night’s win in Great Falls sets up a second huge showdown between the Lights (18-4) and fifth-ranked LC State. The Warriors beat Northern 79-65 last Saturday, and now, the Lights will try and go into Lewiston, Idaho Saturday night and return the favor.

“We’re excited about coming down here and getting this win,” Huse said. “But I think our guys are still hungry and they want to go down to LC and play well. They know they can play better than they did last weekend.”

Saturday’s game between the Lights and Warriors tips off at 6:30 p.m. in Lewiston, Idaho. The Lights also have a rematch with UGF next Friday night at the Armory Gymnasium.

**Lights 62, UGF 49**

**MSU-N** — Will Perry 0-3 0-0 0, Jesse Vaughn 0-4 2-4 2, Roshawn West 5-8 3-4 17, Devin Jackson 5-11 0-0 13, Alan Brown 1-2 0-0 3, Corbin Pearson 1-1 0-0 2, Savion Udeh 1-5 0-0 3, Alfie Miller 6-11 1-2 19, Mike LaValley 1-1 0-0 3, Pat Jensen 0-0 0-0 0, Anfernee Standing Rock 0-0 0-0 0. Totals: 20-46 6-10.
UGF — TJ Harris 2-5 0-0 5, Miguel Bocachica 2-7 0-0 5, James Holmes 5-13 4-5 14, Naren Maynard 4-8 2-2 10, Marcel Towns 4-10 2-4 11, Reid Tramelli 0-1 0-0 0, David Udadiybo 0-0 0-0 0, Maleek Singleton 1-2 2-2 4, Eric Taylor 0-1 0-0 0. Totals: 18-47 10-13.