For the better part of the last four seasons, the Montana State University-Northern men’s basketball team has had the Lewis-Clark State Warriors’ number. But in just seven days, the warriors have flipped the script.

Saturday night in Lewiston, Idaho, the No. 5 Warriors turned away the No. 12 Lights 56-45 in a pivotal Frontier Conference clash. LC State’s win came just seven days after the Warriors knocked off the Lights in Havre, and it broke a tie for first place in the league standings. With the loss, Northern fell to 6-3 in the Frontier, while LCSC is 7-2 and alone atop the conference.

And in many ways, Saturday night’s game in Idaho was eerily similar to the way the Warriors beat the Lights a week ago in the Armory Gymnasium.

“We definitely played better in this game than we did against them (Warriors) last week,” MSU-N head coach Shawn Huse said. “Our physical effort was great. I thought we played really hard and battled them for all 40 minutes. But, I thought our mental execution wasn’t there down the stretch and that’s disappointing. We made some key mistakes at really inopportune times and that really hurt us. And again, it’s disappointing because those are things we worked very hard on all well, they were things we prepared for and ultimately, we just didn’t execute them.”

MSU-N did execute well for about 35 minutes Saturday night. The Lights battled through yet another defensive slugfest in the first half, and the Lights found themselves leading 26-24 at halftime, as MSU-N went on a little 7-1 run to close out the half.

However, it didn’t take long for the Warriors to overtake the Lights, and with just over 10 minutes to play, LCSC was ahead by 11 points – in much the same way the second half unfolded in Havre. This time though, the Lights didn’t back down. A Roshawn West 3-pointer ended a MSU-N scoring drought, and the Lights were able to chip away at the LCSC lead. With under four minutes to go, Northern trailed just 50-45 and was well within striking distance.

“I thought we did really well to battle through that tough stretch in the second half,” Huse said. “We were right there, but then we just didn’t execute on a couple of key plays, and that’s the difference in the game really. At this point in the season, with games like this on the line, you have to be able to make those plays, we didn’t make enough of them tonight.”

Indeed. The Lights didn’t score a single point the rest of the way, while the Warriors were able to put the game on ice at the foul line in the final minutes. In all, the game saw 10 lead changes and four ties, while both teams found offense hard to come by. The Lights were held to just 40 percent shooting and a 4-for-20 performance from the 3-point-line, just two nights after MSU-N made 16 three’s against Great Falls. MSU-N’s defense also played well, holding LCSC to just 44 percent shooting. LCSC out-rebounded the Lights 32-24, while Northern committed 11 of its 16 turnovers in the second half.

“I thought, defensively, we played the type of game we needed to,” Huse said. “And credit LC, they are a very good defensive team and they did a great job tonight. The game, for us, came down to a couple of mistakes on a couple of key possessions, and maybe that’s a lack of experience. But it’s something we need to learn from going forward.”

Devin Jackson and Jesse Vaughan each scored 10 points to pace the Lights, while West and Corbin Pearson added eight points each. Will Perry led the Lights on the boards with seven. MSU-N did hold P.J.
Bolte to 13 points Saturday night after he scored 24 last week in Havre. Danny Marshall added 12 points for the Warriors, while Donte Archie scored nine points and grabbed eight rebounds.

With yet another road split, the Lights (18-5) are now alone in second in the Frontier standings, with a slim, half-game lead over Westminster.

MSU-N returns home for yet another huge Frontier game Friday night as the Lights host the UGF Argos. Northern beat UGF 62-49 last Thursday night in Great Falls. The Lights play four of their last five league games on the road.

**LC State 56, Lights 45**

**MSU-N** – Roshawn West 3-10 0-0 8, Devin Jackson 5-12 0-2 10, Corbin Pearson 2-3 4-4 8, Dontae Clark 0-0 0-0 0, Savion Udeh 1-2 0-0 2, Alan Brown 0-1 0-0 0, Mike LaValley 0-1 0-0 0, Will Perry 2-2 0-0 4, Jesse Vaughan 4-10 1-1 10, Alfie Miller 1-4 0-0 3. Totals: 18-45 4-20 45.

**LCSC** – Robert Ellis 3-9 0-0 6, Jacob Champoux 2-2 0-0 4, Joseph Moquino 3-6 0-2 6, Nick Fromm 3-8 0-0 6, Donte Archie 2-3 5-6 9, Danny Marshall 4-6 4-4 12, P.J. Bolte 5-10 3-6, 13. 22-49 15-20 56.