Dickinson State upsets struggling MSU-N men
Lights finish third in the Frontier, host Argos Wednesday
George Ferguson
Sunday, February 24th, 2013

The Montana State University-Northern men’s basketball teams haven’t had many losing streaks in recent years. But the Lights are on a mini-streak now.

The No. 13 Lights came into the final weekend of the Frontier Conference’s regular season with a chance to catch Lewis-Clark State for the Frontier’s regular season title. But instead, the Lights lost to Rocky Mountain College Thursday night in Billings, and followed it up with a difficult 64-49 loss to Dickinson State Saturday night in Dickinson, N.D.

Northern finished the regular season with a 10-6 mark in the Frontier, which put the Lights in third place. Northern (22-8) will face Great Falls in the first round of the Frontier playoffs Wednesday night in Havre.

“It’s a tough pill to swallow knowing if we win our last two games we win a league title,” Northern head coach Shawn Huse said. “But we didn’t play our best on this road trip. We just didn’t make shots. And, especially on the road, you have to make shots. So it’s tough knowing what we could have accomplished. But on the other side, we feel really good about where we’re at right now. We have put ourselves in a good position going into the playoffs and this team is probably ahead of where we thought we might be at the beginning of the season. So we’re proud of what we’ve achieved so far.”

The Lights did indeed have a strong regular season, but they couldn’t find a way to finish it in Dickinson.

Northern went up on DSU early Saturday night, but the Blue Hawks overtook the Lights late in the first half and led 27-22 at halftime. Defensively, MSU-N battled the rest of the way, but shooting was again Northern’s undoing. The Lights shot just 31 percent from the floor Saturday night and went a dismal 5-for-24 from the 3-point-line, and that performance came on the heels of a 6-for-34 night in Billings.

“We played very hard at Dickinson and our effort was there, and defensively, we held our own,” Huse said. “But offensively, we looked like a team reeling from an overtime loss at Rocky. When the shots weren’t falling early, it felt like there was a sense of helplessness in our guys and we just could never get clicking. The shots just never fell for us.”

Corbin Pearson led the Lights with 14 points, while Roshawn West and Alfie Miller each scored nine. The Blue Hawks held MSU-N leading scorer Devin Jackson to just eight. DSU got 19 points from Jarek Hanson and another 16 from Robbie Morey in the win.

“I know the guys are disappointed because they really wanted that last win,” Huse said. “And it is tough because we got so close to an outright league title. But this group has done a great job and we still have games to play.”

The Lights will begin defense of their Frontier postseason championship when they host the Argos Wednesday night at 7 p.m. at the Armory Gymnasium. For more on the Frontier playoffs, see related story on this page.
Dickinson State 64, Lights 49

**MSU-N** — Pearson 6-9 2-2 14, Roshawn West 4-6 0-0 9, Alfie Miller 3-11 0-0 9, Jesse Vaughan 0-3 0-0 0, Devin Jackson 3-9 1-1 8, Alan Brown 1-5 5-6 7, Will Perry 1-3 0-0 2, Dontae Clark 0-0 0-0 0, Savion Udeh 0-0 0-0 0, Mike LaValley 0-1 0-0 0. Totals: 18-47 8-9 49.

**DSU** — Johnie Sanders 5-12 0-0 10, Jarek Hansen 7-11 3-4 19, Destry Sterkel 0-1 0-0 0, James Hayden 2-3 4-4 8, John Hanstad 1-4 3-3 6, Ty Ackelson 0-3 0-0 0, Ryan Sullivan 0-3 1-2 1, Robbie Morey 5-6 6-6 16, Brock Boos 1-2 0-0 2, Phillip Johnson, Jr. 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 22-47 17-19 64.

Halftime: DSU 27-22. Total fouls: MSN 14, DSU 9. 3-point goals: MSN 5-24 (Miller 3-9, West 1-2, Jackson 1-5, Vaughan 0-3, Brown 0-4, LaValley 0-1), DSU 3-13 (Hansen 2-4, Hanstad 1-3, Sterkel 0-1, Hayden 0-1, Ackelson 0-1, Sullivan 0-1, Morey 0-1, Boos 0-1). Rebounds: MSN 25 (West 4, Perry 4), DSU 29 (three with five).