Road weary Lights win in Jamestown
MSU-N men shake off transportation troubles, loss in Billings with a big win over Jimmies
By Daniel Horton
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It has been a long, tough couple of road trips for the Montana State University-Northern Lights, but every win is much needed and appreciated, and the Lights are more than glad to be returning home on a positive note.

After a couple of road losses last weekend, the Lights were back on the road this weekend. And Northern was looking to get back in the win column with an exhibition game against Montana State University-Billings on Friday evening in Billings, and against the non-conference NAIA DII Jamestown in Jamestown, N.D., Sunday afternoon.

The No. 24 Lights split on the road, losing to the MSU-B Yellowjackets 76-41 in an exhibition game, but ending the weekend with a nice, 69-57 win over the Jimmies on Sunday. The Lights are now 7-2 on the season and are glad to have returned home with a win after what turned out to be another long and stressful weekend.

Northern also had some unscheduled stops on the road trip as they traveled from Billings to Jamestown, making the weekend seem even longer. Having travel problems, the Lights did stay overnight in Bismarck, N.D., before continuing to Jamestown Sunday, but did stay loose and ready to play after finding a junior high gym to practice in.

“That (Jamestown) is the same team that took us to overtime last year in our gym, and they return a lot of the same players.” MSU-N head coach Shawn Huse said. “For us to go there and get the win was a great feeling, especially after we suffered a blow with Will (Perry) still being out, and after losing to a tough MSU-B team on Friday. We are having to find a new identity. Losing a player changes our whole dynamic, but I am proud of our guys for stepping up on this tough road trip. We have faced a lot of adversity the last two weeks and in our last game, I felt like we took a big step forward. I saw our team come together and find a way to start to develop that new identity and that was important.”

The new identity started with several players stepping up and having a nice game against the Jimmies.

There were three Lights who finished with double digit scoring, including Alfie Miller with 12 points and Gabe Finley with 11. And while Rowshawn West finished with nine, and Nicholas Blount finished with eight, it was Jesse Vaughan who led all scorers with 19 points in his more-than 27 minutes on the floor.

Vaughan helped the Lights get out to an early lead. And while the Jimmies did cut the lead to nine points in the second half, a big three-pointer by West helped the Lights’ offense regain control and roll through the second half to claim the 12-point victory.

Offensively, the Lights shot 53 percent from the field in the first half, helping jump out to a healthy 36-23 lead. They also shot 33 percent from behind the 3-point line on the afternoon, and were paced by three treys from Vaughan. The Lights also had eight offensive rebounds and Brown led the team with three assists.

“That (balanced scoring) is exactly what we need,” Huse said. “But I think our forwards did an excellent job giving us minutes including Xavier (Shaw), Gabe, and Pat (Jensen) all giving us solid minutes. But everybody contributed in some way in that win, and Jesse really stepped up. He hasn’t put up numbers yet this year that he is capable of, and he picked a great time to do that. And we really got after that lead and kept our foot on the pedal, and also played exceptional defense.”
Northern did grab five steals and forced 11 turnovers, as well as 24 defensive rebounds. They also allowed just 20 percent shooting from the field in the first half and 44 percent from the field in the second half for just 32 percent on the game by the Jimmies.

Facing the Yellowjackets Friday, Huse summed up the loss as being as simple as they played well and his Lights didn't.

MSU-B, which Northern trounced on Nov. 1, led 38-17 at the break and got great production against the Lights from all over the lineup. Austin Hudson posted a double-double of 25 points and 12 rebounds for the Yellowjackets, while leading the team to 55 percent shooting from the field. Connor Donaldson also added 19 points, including 5 of 6 from 3-point range, and Jonathan Mesghna finished with 11 points as the Yellowjackets looked like a complete different team compared the team that traveled to Havre for a 71-50 loss at the beginning of the month.

"I think it was hard for all of us at this point in the season to not want to get that exhibition game out of the way and get on with our season," Huse said. "But we prepared for that game like we prepare for any other game, and they just played really well and I give them credit. But on the other side, we didn't play very well and they showed that they improved a lot since the first time we played them. We took that loss hard and all of our guys got plenty of playing time while getting the taste of a beat-down, and our guys were not happy with that."

Northern was led offensively by Corbin Pearson's 13 points and Miller's 11 points. But the Lights also had nine turnovers, shot just 31 percent from the field, and were outrebounded 33-15 in the loss.

The Lights are 7-2 after the weekend and will return to action Saturday when they host the Frontier Conference rival Carroll Saints at the Armory Gymnasium for an 8 p.m. tipoff.

**MSU-Billings 76, Lights 41**

**Montana State University-Northern** - Roshawn West 0-4 0-0 0, Allen Brown 0-4 2-4 2, Corbin Pearson 5-9 2-2 13, Alfie Miller 3-4 4-5 11, Jessie Vaughan 2-5 1-1 6, Nicholas Blount 0-2 0-2 0, Gabe Finley 0-2 4-6 4, Anfernee Standing Rock 0-0 0-0 0, Mike LaValley 0-4 0-0 0, Pat Jensen 1-3 1-2 3, Xavier Shaw 1-2 0-0 2. Totals: 12-39 14-20 41. 3-point goals: 3-17 (Vaughan 1-2, Miller 1-2, Pearson 1-3, Jensen 0-1, Blount 0-2, Brown 0-2, West 0-2, LaValley 0-3). Fouls: 10. Technical Fouls: Team. Turnovers: 9. Assists: 9 (Miller 2, Brown 2). Steals: 2. Blocks: 0. Rebounds: 15 (Vaughan 4).

**Montana State University-Billings** - Kalob Hatcher 3-5 2-2 9, Devon Wallace 1-3 1-2 3, Connor Donaldson 6-10 2-2 19, Jonathan Mesghna 4-11 0-0 11, Austin Hudson 10-12 5-6 25, Danny Desin 0-2 0-0 0, Jace Anderson 0-0 0-0 0, Chase Miller 1-4 0-0 3, Marc Mathews 1-1 0-0 2, Luke Adams 2-2 0-0 4, Tyler Nelson 0-1 0-2 0. Totals: 28-51 10-14 76. 3-point goals: 10-22 (Donaldson 5-6, Mesghna 3-8, Hatcher 1-2, Miller 1-3, Wallace 0-1, Desin 0-2). Fouls: 18. Turnovers: 5. Assists: 18 (Mesghna 5, Hatcher 5). Steals: 4 (Hatcher 2). Blocks: 0. Rebounds: 33 (Hudson 12).

Halftime: MSU-B 38, Lights 17

**Lights 69, Jamestown 57**

**Montana State University-Northern** – Corbin Pearson 1-6 0-0 0, Jesse Vaughan 7-14 2-2 19, Roshawn West 1-4 6-6 9, Allan Brown 1-2 3-4 5, Alfie Miller 3-6 5-6 12, Nicholas Blount 3-9 1-1 8, Gabe Finley 5-7 1-1 11, Mike LaValley 0-0 0-0 0, Pat Jensen 0-0 0-0 0, Zavier Shaw 1-2 1-2 3. Totals 22-50 19-22 69. 3-point goals: 6-18 (Vaughan 3-5, West 1-4, Miller 1-3, Blount 1-6). Fouls: 22. Turnovers: 8. Assists: 14 (Brown 3). Blocks: 5 (Brown 3). Rebounds: 32 (Pearson 6, Brown 5, Blount 5, Finley 5).

**Jamestown** – Matt Wingo 5-9 2-3 12, Beny Collins 2-6 3-3 7, Brequan Tucker 1-10 8-8 10, Breshion Tucker 0-2 4-6 4, Mark Hoge 5-12 6-6 16, Taylor Newton 1-5 2-2 4, Logan Brown 0-2 0-0 0, Jesse Behm 0-1 0-2 0, Dan Janu 2-2 0-0 4, Jacob Havron 0-0 0-0 0. Totals: 16-49 25-30 57. 3-point goals: 5-8 (Tucker 0-3, Wingo 0-2, Hoge 0-2, Collins 0-1). Fouls: 19. Turnovers: 11. Assists: 8 (Hoge 3). Steals: 5 (Tucker 3). Blocks 4. Rebounds: 33 (Collins 8, Wingo 5, Hoge 5).
Halftime: Lights 36, Jimmies 23