Hi-LIne Athlete Profile: Jesse Vaughan, MSU-N Basketball
Wherever Vaughan goes, success goes
By George Ferguson
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Jesse Vaughan has been an ideal student athlete at Montana State University-Northern since arriving on campus more than a year ago. That might be why other schools, like the University of Montana-Western, were also heavily recruiting the former Spokane, Wash., prep standout.

Luckily for the Northern Lights basketball team, Vaughan fell in love with the program and chose to continue his collegiate basketball career in maroon and gold.

While at Rodgers High School in Spokane, Vaughan played three years of 4A basketball, Washington’s highest classification. His senior year, the Rodgers Pirates were amongst the 3A ranks, and Vaughan continued to shine, earning league honors on the ALL GSL (Greater Spokane League) Team. Vaughan was the GSL scoring leader his senior season. That high school success led to Vaughan playing in the junior college ranks at Shoreline Community College in Seattle, where he played his freshman year, but took a medical redshirt his sophomore season. Vaughan was named First Team All NWACC, averaging more than 26 points and more than 8 rebounds per game.

Now, the 6-5 forward has emerged as one of the key components to the Lights’ program.

Vaughan was named All Conference Honorable Mention in his first season with the Lights, and has already stepped up his game so far this season. In the early stages of this season, Vaughan is shooting over 42 percent from the field and over 55 percent from behind the 3-point arc. His 10 points, three assists, and three rebounds were also crucial in a recent comeback win over Frontier conference rival Carroll, as the No. 24 ranked Lights continue to grow this season.

Vaughan, who’s majoring in elementary education, is in his junior season at Northern, meaning he has yet another season to help impact the Lights, and that’s rare for a junior college transfer. Most Juco players play just two years for an NAIA program, but Vaughan is here for the long haul with the Lights, and Northern is lucky to have him on the court.

Here are five questions with one of Northern’s leaders in the paint as the Lights prepare to host the University of Lethbridge on Thursday night.

**HDN:** The team has already seen some early season adversity, but what has to happen for the Lights to stay at the top of the Frontier Conference?

**Vaughan:** “I think we all just have to pick up our game a little bit especially with Will Perry going down. He did the dirty work for us, the rebounding and getting points around the rim. We all have to chip in and lift our game to the next level. We have to focus up more and do the little things, we can’t just stay the same, and if we can all step up, it will make us a better team.”

Montana State University-Northern junior Jesse Vaughan, right, looks to pass during a men’s college basketball game last month in Havre. Vaughan has had a big impact on the Lights since transferring from Shoreline Community College a year ago.
**HDN**: Coming from a milder Washington climate, how have you handled these cold and harsh winters?

**Vaughan**: “Coach does a nice job of making sure we stay bundled up. He warned us before moving out here, but I just make sure I am wearing a winter coat at all times and a few pairs of sweat pants. The wind is the worse part, but I do an alright job of staying warm. We get quite a bit of snow in Spokane, but it doesn’t get as cold.”

**HDN**: Holding a national ranking and reaching the national NAIA tournament is impressive, but what would a win in the tournament mean to you and the rest of the Lights?

**Vaughan**: “That would be amazing, and that is the ultimate goal, to make some noise at the national tournament. But we understand that this is a marathon and not a sprint so we are just going to take our time and take it one game at a time.”

**HDN**: Local fans love the Northern/Carroll rivalry, but in your time here, who do you enjoy beating the most?

**Vaughan**: “I enjoy beating the other schools that recruited me, but a win is a win to me, it doesn’t matter who it is over. We are always looking to come out on top, but coming to this school you have no choice but to have Carroll as your rival, so it is still nice to beat them as well.”

**HDN**: Basketball has been a part of your life for years now, but when you graduate from Northern, what role will the sport play?

**Vaughan**: “My family is a big basketball family so I know it will never stop being a part of my life. And I do plan to teach and coach when I am done at Northern, so basketball will always play a role for sure.”